

A Valuable Asset

(Speech by Hon'ble Sri. G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India (7-11-69))

I am deeply grateful to Bhagavan Shri Sathya Sai Babaji for his gracious invitation to me to lay the foundation stone of the new building of the Arts and Science College for Women here. This is an Institution which has the good fortune of receiving the Bhagavan's blessings in full measure and growing under his loving care and inspired guidance. I deem it therefore a rare privilege to be associated with the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of this College building.

Women have always held an esteemed place in Indian tradition. Their lives have always been one of privileges and opportunities. In the dawn of our cultural history, there were women learned in the Vedas. I would mention as an instance the name of the poetess and Rishi Saraswati, whose poetry forms part of the Rig Veda. The example of Bharati, the learned wife of Mandana Misra may also be recalled to show the esteem and respect in which our women were held in the past. As you may know, this lady was so learned that she was accepted as a judge in a philosophical dispute between Mandana Misra and Sankaracharya. Further, we have heard of co-education in the forest Universities of ancient India. Atreyi is said to have studied under the Sage Valmiki together with the sons of Shri Rama.

We have evidence to show that, girls were encouraged to learn not only the fine arts like music, dancing painting etc., but also the use of the bow and arrow and the spear. Experience has proved that their capacity to learn is just as good, as that of men, and in some cases, somewhat better! They have shown themselves capable of doing all the work of man with the same, if not greater, competence. Our country has a brilliant galaxy of women to show: poets, philosophers, rulers, administrators, statesmen and even warriors. The freedom-fight saw, many women in the forefront. In free India they are occupying positions of eminence in many spheres. They are teachers, engineers and doctors; they adorn the bench and the bar; they guide the destiny of the country as elected representatives of the people, administrators, ministers etc. The educated woman in India has a vast field, of opportunities for service before her, in some respects, vaster than in many other countries of the world. It is therefore very necessary that we should have educational institutions for women in greater numbers in our country so as to meet the need for them adequately. It is therefore very gratifying that a fine building will arise here to house the Arts and Science College, for Women.

We are today engaged in the responsible task of nation building, a responsibility which, in the fullness of time, will devolve on the youth of our country and on the next generation. The system of education has to be carefully planned keeping in view the primary purpose of developing our youth into an enlightened, disciplined and patriotic body, involved in building up the nation and, ushering in a New World. In their hands will lie the emergence of a strong and united nation and the realization of the dream of a world in which peace and brotherhood reign. There are many difficult and complicated problems relating to our youth. I feel, however, that a system of education with its roots in our ancient and distinctive culture will alone prove an effective solvent to these problems.

The world today is in a difficult and dangerous plight. It cannot be denied that there has been a sad decline in the importance of spiritual and ethical values. Man has been caught unprepared to carry the burdens and responsibilities of the technological revolution. The surfeit of material power at his command has blinded him to the need for developing the power of the spirit. Spiritual and moral standards have inevitably declined. Only a restatement of, and rededication to, ethical and spiritual values can save mankind in this predicament. It is the purpose of education to instill these values into our thinking and our lives. The future of the nation is very much in the hands of educated women, because as mothers and teachers they can influence the outlook and values of the rising generations to a greater degree than man.

I would urge you, who are students of this College, to remember that wholly temporal education without ethical or spiritual content is incapable of equipping you to play the vital role expected of you as citizens of our country. While such an education may furnish your minds, develop your personalities and teach you to find personal and selfish happiness, it can never help you to fulfil your obligation to society, the nation and the world. The education you receive should bring you to a realization of the value of spirituality, of ethical values, of discipline. Spirituality is one of the fundamentals of our national culture. The hallowed traditions of our civilization continue to draw their strength from a spiritual philosophy which has transcended the limitations of mortal life and withstood the challenge of antagonistic influences. Those principles and teachings of our spiritual thoughts require from you a close study, a more intimate understanding and a greater realization of what they should mean to us. To students of Science let me say that there is no antithesis between science and technology on the one hand and spirituality on the other. They can and ought to go hand in hand. A harmonious development of the two is what is needed. True harmony will be achieved when realisation dawns about the true relationship of a human being with himself, with his fellow beings and with the Supreme Spirit which is God. It is this spiritual enlightenment and realisation which you, students of this College should strive to acquire, in addition to the merely academic knowledge common to all educational institutions. In this respect the students of Shri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College are blessed in a unique way. The presence of Bhagavan Shri Sathya Sai Babaji in this Campus, his interest as President of the Managing Committee of this College, in the progress of this College and its alumni—these are a guarantee that your spiritual development and moral welfare are in the hands of a divine personality who shows abundant grace and compassion towards his devotees. I congratulate the authorities of the College, its teachers and students, on their great good fortune in having a divinely inspired personality like Shri Babaji looking after their welfare and progress. Through his grace this College will doubtless develop into one of the finest institutions of Women's education in this country, and its dedicated alumni will certainly, be a valuable asset in the service of the country and the people.

Before concluding I should like once again to express my profound gratitude for Sri Babaji's grace which has brought me here to participate in this day's significant event. I thank you all for your fine welcome and my Sri Babaji's abundant grace bring you happiness and success in your lives.

I have now much pleasure in laying the foundation stone of the Shri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women and wishing the Institution a glorious future.

Bhagavata Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Sage started narrating the most glorious event revealing the Reality of Krishna Incarnation. He said Devaki and Vasudeva, who spent their days in prison, were indistinguishable from mad persons. They sat with unkempt hair, lean and lanky through want of appetite and the wherewithal to feed their bodies. They had no mind to eat or sleep. They were slowly consumed by grief over the children they had lost. When their prison life entered its second year, Devaki conceived for the eighth time! O, it was wondrous! What a transformation it brought about! The faces of Devaki and Vasudeva, which had drooped and dried up, suddenly blossomed like lotuses in full bloom. They shone with a strange splendour.

“Their bodies which were reduced to mere skin and bone as if they had been dehydrated, took on flesh, became round and smooth, and shone with a charming golden hue. The cell where Devaki was shut in was fragrant with pleasing odours; it cast a wondrous light and was filled with inexplicable music and the jingle of dancing feet. Amazing sights amazing sounds indeed! Devaki and Vasudeva became aware of these happenings, but they were afraid to inform Kamsa lest in his vindictive frenzy he might hack the womb into pieces. They were anxious about the strange future of the son that will be born and were restless with weird forebodings

And what of Kamsa? He knew his time was fast rushing towards its end; he was torn by the greed to continue as unquestioned Emperor of the Realm; he was over come by conspiratorial inclination; he overran the territories of Yadu, Vrishni, Bhoja and Andhaka principalities and added them to his domain; he was so intent on establishing his dictatorial regime that he threw his own aged father, Ugrasena, into prison; thereafter, his will was sovereign.

“When Suka related this story, Parikshit interrupted him with the words, “Alas! What folly is this? Knowing full well that his end was drawing near, knowing that in the eighth pregnancy, the Person who was to destroy him was growing fast, knowing that the Voice that spoke from the Sky cannot be untrue, did Kamsa resolve upon these acts of inordinate greed and unspeakable wickedness? This is indeed, unbelievable!”

Hearing these words, Suka burst into laughter. He said, “Maharaja! Evidently, you think that all those who know their end is drawing near, will, like you utilise the time at their disposal in seeking to realise the Vision of Him who is the embodiment of Time! But, such yearning as yours can arise in the mind, only as a consequence of a favourable balance of merit, acquired in previous lives. It cannot arise all of a sudden. Consider the vast difference between what you are engaged in, when you knew that the allotted span of life is hastening to its finish, and the undertakings Kamsa was engaged in when he knew that his end was in sight! These two attitudes are named, Deva and Asura, Divine and Demoniac. For those who are equipped with the Devi or Divine virtues or eagerness to do good acts, and to have good thoughts, faith in God, compassion towards all beings, contrition for swerving from the straight path, truth, nonviolence, and love, only thoughts of God and urges to do sanctifying deeds, will emerge during the last days.

Instead, those who are immersed in selfishness, egotism greed, vice, violence and unrighteousness will suffer from evil urges, in their last days and destroy themselves. The former attain Kaivalya, or, beatitude; the latter achieve only hell, Naraka.

The eye of the onlooker sees the same consummation—death. But, the goal reached by either is distinct; it is invisible to those around them. The goal is determined by the thoughts that arise in the mind of the dying. Destruction of life is common; the Darshan of God is something to be won, arid earned. That is unique. Hence the proverb, “Vinnasa Kaale, vipareetha buddhi”’: when disaster is imminent, the intellect turns against! Only those who are about to be destroyed will get and welcome such evil intentions. Those who are to be blessed with the vision of God will hold fast to the pure and the elevating, in their last thoughts.

When Suka spoke thus, in all sincerity Parikshit Maharaja said, “No, this is not the result of my effort, or the consequence of the merit acquired by me in previous lives. The fruit of the goodness of my grandfathers and father is directing me along the correct path. More than all, the illumination shed by gems of wisdom like yours and the consecrating effect of the Grace of Krishna—these are heightening the devotion and dedication that rise within me. Of course, the association one is privileged or compelled to share has a promotional (or adverse) effect.

But, luckily, since the moment of birth, the Grace of God has been guide and guardian to me. I have been shaped and sustained by association with good men, comradeship with just and moral personages, acquaintance with great scholars, and the inspiration of the magnanimous deeds of my illustrious grandfathers. I must also acknowledge the help rendered by wise and discriminating ministers who served as my right hand, and earned and enjoyed the love and reverence of my subjects. All this could never be the consequence of my efforts. However, excellent the seed, if the field is unfertile can the harvest be plentiful? However high my ideals are if my kingdom had no high tradition laid down by my ancestors, no sages and scholars to instruct and inspire, no ministers to execute and elaborate inaction, no subjects to appreciate and act up to the ideals, they could only be like the vessel of milk spoiled by drops of acid curd, isn’t it?

Had it not been for them, my ideals would have evaporated and I would have imbibed the vices of people who flatter me, and become another hard-hearted Kamsa! Therefore, I conclude that the sinful acts of Kamsa have to be attributed, to a certain extent, to the vices inherent in the scholars, elders, ministers and subjects of Kamsa’s kingdom.

Of course, you are most competent to pronounce upon the correctness of this inference. Well. Why should I waste the few remaining hours of my life in seeking faults in others or analysing their causes and consequences? It is best, I sanctify every second; tell me, Master, about the holy moment of Birth, when my very Breath, Gopala, appeared upon the earth.” Praying ‘thus, Parikshit fell at the feet of Suka and sat up, with eyes closed, eager to listen. He was yearning in happy expectation, to learn from Suka the amazing mystery of the Birth.

Suka related the story thus: “Maharaja! The foetus of the seventh pregnancy was taken and transferred to the womb of the wife of Vasudeva, Rohini by name, who was in Gokula, under the protection of Nanda. This was done in order that the child may grow into a companion and helpmate for Gopala. Rohini gave birth to a son, who was named by Garga, the family Preceptor, as Balarama, since he was extraordinarily strong in body and he charmed every one by his innocence and intelligence. Since he was transferred from the womb of Devaki to that of Rohini, he was also named Samkarshana (He who was attracted, drawn).

Meanwhile, the eighth pregnancy completed nine months; Devaki and Vasudeva held their lives in the grasp of their palms, for, they were agonised over what might happen any moment, when the delivery would take place: What Kamsa would do to punish them or to destroy the enemy he feared! They sat helpless, in great anguish, without food or sleep. When Kamsa learnt that the nine months had passed, he took extra precautions to see that the child does not escape him. He ordered that Vasudeva and Devaki be shackled with chains, on hands and feet; he locked the doors of the prison with even more formidable contrivances. He placed larger numbers of even more alert and able guards around the prison. He arranged that, once every five minutes, the guards must examine and satisfy themselves that the inmates are within the prison walls. Kamsa was ceaselessly worried and anxious about the birth and what might happen to him, therefrom.

But, who can hinder the inscrutable operation of the Will of God? Can the Divine Mystery be penetrated and unravalled? Fools who cannot grasp the Truth, who cannot recognise Divinity and measure the Power of God, who have no faith in God, live in the delusion that their petty plans will save them and that they can triumph through their own efforts! The fact is, not even the smallest success can be won without God's Grace.

Though this is true, we should not sit with folded hands believing that a thing will accomplish itself, if and when God wills. Human effort is essential, and man must himself make a trial. He must use the strength and skill that he is endowed with, and resolve to proceed with the work, laying the responsibility for success on God. For, without the Grace of God, every effort will be rendered fruitless.

“One night, lying on the floor of the prison room, Devaki developed labour pains; she fixed her mind on God, and looked intently at the flame of the little oil lamp, anxiously asking herself, ‘What is to happen to me? What lies in the future for me?’ Suddenly, the flame went out, and darkness filled the cell. Just then, she beheld an effulgent Form, casting a strange splendour, standing before her. She wondered who it might be; she called on Vasudeva, afraid that it might be Kamsa in that shape; she was lost in confusion and doubt, about the identity of the Phenomenon before her.

“Suddenly, the Form became clear! It was armed with the Conch, the Discus, and the Mace; the Fourth Hand was held in the Abhaya pose (the pose that indicates that one need have no fear). It said softly and sweetly. ‘Do not grieve. I am Narayana. I am to be born in a few moments as your son, with intent to wipe off all your travails, in answer to the promise I made when you visualised Me as a result of your earnest asceticism. Do not be anxious about Me. Be but witnesses of the drama that is about to be staged. In all the fourteen worlds, there is no one born or to be born who can inflict on Me the least harm: be assured of that. Even when some little anxiety affects you as a consequence of affection for the child you bore and of Delusion fogging the mind, you will be able to witness immediately miracles that will reveal My nature.

No sooner am I born than the shackles will fall off from your hands and feet. The doors of the prison will open by themselves. Take Me from here without any one's knowledge, to the home of Nanda in Gokula, and place Me by the side of his wife, Yasoda, who is having labour pains, this very moment. Bring from her side the baby girl that she has delivered, back into this prison and keep her with you. Then, send word to Kamsa. Until he gets the news, no one either in Mathura or Gokula will notice you, or apprehend you: I shall arrange it so.’ He shone in Divine Splendour and blessing Devaki and Vasudeva, He entered the womb of Devaki as an Orb of Light. Within minutes, the child was born.

The time was 3-30 a.m., the auspicious hour of Brahma-muhurtam. The Vishnu-maya (Divine Power to Delude) brought sleep, sudden and log-like, on all the guards and on all the watch and ward. They fell in their places and were caught in sleep. The thick iron chains that bound the hands and feet of Vasudeva fell off, in a trice. The doors and the gates flew open. Though it was the darkest hour of the night, the cuckoo was cooing with a sudden spurt of joy; parrots were announcing the heavenly happiness they felt. The stars were twinkling, for each of them was smiling in inner joy. The Rain-God was showering flower-drops of rain on the earth below. Around the prison, flocks of birds clustered in happy song, twittering sweet melody.

“Vasudeva realised that all this was the manifestation of the charm of God; he turned his eye towards the new born child and was astounded at what he saw. ‘Was it true?’ he asked himself. Or, was it a mental illusion? He was fixed to the spot, like a pillar. For, Maharaja! Encircling the Babe was a brilliant halo of Light! The Babe laughed outright, seeing the mother and the father. It appeared the Babe was about to speak out something! Yes. They heard the words. ‘Now, without delay, take Me to Gokul.’

Vasudeva did not tarry. He spread an old dhoti on a bamboo mat-let, and placed the Babe on it; he tore the scarf of an old sari of Devaki and covered the Babe with it. Then he moved out of the open doors and gates, past the sleeping guards.

He noticed the little drops of rain that fell from the sky, and was sad that the newborn Child would soon be soaked. But, when he turned back, he found the snake, Adi-sesha following his footsteps, preventing the rain from wetting the Babe, holding the ribbed umbrella of its broad hoods over the Child! At every step along the road, Vasudeva noticed auspicious and favourable signs. Though the Sun had not risen yet, the lotus bloomed in all the tanks and leaned on its stalk towards Vasudeva. Though it was a night with no expectation of moonlight, perhaps through the yearning to have a look at the Divine Babe, the full moon peeped through the clouds, its cool rays illumining only the bamboo-mat-let on which the Babe lay, along the entire route! The Babe which attracted all this auspiciousness was placed in Nanda’s home, and the child that had just then been born there was brought and placed into the hands of Devaki. No sooner was this done than Vasudeva burst into tears; he could not stop his weeping

Even while these words came from Suka’s lips, Parikshit exclaimed aloud, “Krishna! Krishna!” Every one turned towards the King and hastened towards him. They saw snake, crawling away fast, after biting the right toe of the Maharaja!

It was clear to all that the end had come. Everyone echoed the words of Parikshit and repeated “Krishna, Krishna!” and “O Dwarakavasa! Brindavana-vihara!” The vast gathering had no other thought than that of God, no other word than the Name of God.

The Maharaja fell on the ground, repeating, “Krishna Krishna!” Men learned in the Vedas recited Vedic prayers, Bhaktas sang the Glory of God in chorus; ascetics and sages were sunk in Japa and Dhyana.

Suka shed tears of inner Bliss; he announced. “The Maharaja has reached Gopala!” He wanted the funeral rites to be undertaken and went away without being noticed.

The word Suka means a parrot. Yes; he was the Parrot that plucked the ripe nectar-filled fruit

called Bhagavata from the Tree of the Vedas and enabled the World to taste it and be nourished by it. May the world relish the Fruit and strengthen itself through it, and derive the Atmic Bliss that it can confer.

May Humanity attain Nanda-nandana!

The Kimkara

—K. V. Ramachandra

Only a kimkara can become a Samkara—counselled Sai Samkara, in the course of a Discourse during Navarathri this year. What limitless mercy! What a profound Truth! It is the quintessence of all that the Vedas and Sastras enjoin.

Who is a kimkara? The word denotes one who is at the beck and call of his master, ever at his service, with the question ever on his lips, 'Kim karomi?' "What can I do?" But, that is not all. No! The kimkara must also feel, "What can I do? kim karomi? Without you, your guidance, your blessings? What can I do, by myself?" What the kimkara does is kaimkarya service voluntarily performed, with joy and faith and not any obligation performed under compulsion. A kimkara has to be convinced that he is but an instrument of the Divine Will. *Nimitta matram bhava*, that is the Divine Command, as revealed in the Gita. "Be only My Instrument."

This dedication to the Master, out of Love and the conviction that He acts in and through every one, an act of the highest Viveka, discriminatory knowledge; that one breathes because He wills it so, one is but His instrument.

To learn to be a real kimkara is to learn to be a real Bhakta. Have not the wise ones declared that the first stage of Bhakthi is the feeling that one is *for* the Lord and *of* the Lord, *thasyaivaaham*, "His I am," Yasoda fostered her Child, Krishna, with the same feeling she was *for* Krishna. The Gopis were saturated with the same feeling. Lakshmana served Rama, with the same 'Yours and yours alone' attitude. Sita tells Hanuman in the Asokavana, recollecting, 'O Lakshmana looked after Rama like a father. He took care of me, like a mother'. He was *for* Rama, of Rama, forever.

Kaimkarya is also an exemplification of Nishkama-karma (action without aspiring for the result), ordained by the Lord, in the Gita. The Gita says that such a one, even if engaged in Karma; does not reap its consequence; and does not get bound thereby. It also helps wipeout the ego, since the knowledge that one is not the karta. (doer) is deep-seated in the mind of the kimkara. Whatever he does is *ad Majorem Dei Glorium*; for the Greater Glory of God, as the Christians declare.

The Gita declares that Nishkama-karma (that is to say, real kaimkarya) leads to salvation, because it attracts the fire of knowledge, which burns into ash, all the Karma consequences. It also helps to wipe out the ego, for the kimkara knows that he is not the doer, and is therefore not entitled to the fruit; he is not entangled in the consequence.

The glory of a kimkara or servant of the Lord is extolled by Avvayar, the Tamil saint. She was asked by Lord Subrahmanya, to tell Him what was mightiest and largest, in the entire Universe. She replied, "Perithu perithu, thondar tham perumai perithu,"—Great, great, the glory of the servants of the Lord is great." Another saint beseeched the Lord, "Let this be the fruit of this my life, let this be my prayer to Thee! Let this be the Blessing you shower! May you remember me as the servant of the servant of the servant of Your servant."

Let us also pray to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His Grace, that we shape ourselves into real kimkaras of this Sai Samkara. May He, in His boundless Mercy, plant His Lotus Feet in our hearts, so that the Ganga that flows from Them will cleanse our hearts.

Let us sing in chorus and pray,

*Raksha raksha jagadeeswara!
Parthipuree Parameswara!
Paahi, paahi, Maheswara
Dehi, dehi, Thava Pada-seva!*

(Save me, save me, O Lord of all the Worlds, O Lord who has taken Human Form at Puttaparthi! Guard me, guide me, bless me with the service of Thy Feet!")

You are not one, but, three persons, really speaking? You are the one, you think you are; the one, others think you are and the one, you really are. Endeavour to be for others and for yourself, what you really are, by realising your Reality.

—**BABA**

Yantra and Mantra

(From Discourse by Baba 14-I-70)

The Makara Sankranti, which marks the Uttarayana Punyakala, is a very holy day in the Hindu Calendar. It is a day of sacred significance when man has to dedicate himself to the North ward Path, that is to say, the Path that the Sun the presiding Deity of the Intellect, of the Inner Vision, takes from today, Samartha Rama Das said, "Dil me Raam, Haath me Kaam", 'Have Goal in the heart, and work in the Hand'. With, out the consciousness of God within, as the source of strength, peace, joy and wisdom, work done by the hand will be drab dreary and disappointing in results.

Joy is not something that can be procured from external objects, or added on to the mind through external means, it is something that wells up from within. On the moon, the body may, experience coolness; but, it cannot confer coolness on the mind. Fill the mind with the sweetness of the Name; then, the Divine, which is Rasa (sweetness, sap, sustenance) will draw you in and mergence is made possible. The scientist is an expert in Yantra: physical contraptions and

contrivances, material implements and instruments. But, the saint is the master of mantra—spiritual formulae, keys which unlock the treasures of the inner layers of consciousness, drills that tap the springs of Ananda within.

Contemplation of this inner Ananda will purify the vision and transform the individual into the Universal. There was a Gopi who was immersed so much in this contemplation that she feared she might be transmuted into Krishna Himself, under the influence of the uplifting experience. She told her companion, "If I become Krishna, how can I derive the Ananda of adoring Him?" The companion consoled her saying, "Do not fear Krishna too is transforming Himself into yourself, for adoration from you reacts as grace from Him. So, there will ever be the Gopi-Krishna duet." The Gopi did not know that it was Krishna Himself, who was, by her side, consoling her. He disappeared soon after the answer.

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

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1969 December:-

- 16-12-1969: Kadiri (Anantapur Dt): Inauguration: Nagarsankeerthan by Samathi.
- 18-12-1969: Rajha-Ke-Sahaspur (Uttar Pradesh): Film Show of Prasanthi Nilayam Celebrations, by Moradabad Seva Samathi.
- 19-12-1969: Chinaparupudi: (Krishna Dt): Bhajan Feeding of the Poor by Bhajan Mandali.
- 20-12-1969: Kajoorbag (Karwar Dt): Instalation of Baba in the new shrine by Seva Sangh.
- 21-12-1969: Tirupur (Coimbatore Dt): Annual Day, Seva Samithi: President: Justice V.Balakrishna Eradi: Gathering of Workers from all units at Dadar: Seva Samithi.
- 23-12-1969: Chebole (W.Godavari Dt): District Conference of Office Bearers of all Organisations of the W.G.Dt.
- 26-12-1969: Los Angeles (U.S.A) Sathya Sai Centre: Bhajan: Meditation.
- 28-12-1969: Amla (Madhya Pradesh) Sevasamithi: 1st Annual Day: Speech: G.K.Dharmadhikari : Trivandrum (Kerala): Samithi: Inauguration of Nagarsankeerthan.
- 31-12-1969: Brindavan (Whitefield): Conference of Office Bearers of all seva Organisations in Mysore State Bhagawan's Discourse.

1970 January:-

- 1-1-1970: Brindavan: Bhagawan's New Year Mesagge.
Kanikarahalli: (Dharmapuri Dt) Inauguration: Seva Sangham
Nellore: Sevasamithi: Balvihar: III Annual Day.
: Salem: Bhaktha Samajam: New Year Day: President: Principal: N.R.
Sithapathi, Engeneering College
: Raipur: (Madhya Pradesh) Inauguration: Sevasamithi
- 4-1-1970: Cherukunnu (Cannore Dt): Inauguration Sevasamithi

:Nagar-Kurnool (Mahaboobnagar Dt) 1st Annual Day of Samithi:
Akhanda Bhajana.

((10-11)-01-1970) Nagapattinam: Samithi: Nagarsankeerthan:
Annual Day: Akhanda Bhajan, Speeches: Kasturi, Sri T.M.Sundara Rajan; Songs
On Bhagawan, sung by Sri T.M.Sundara Rajan.

14-1-1970: Prasanthi Nilayam: Sankaranthi Message, Discourse by
Bhagawan.

Eluru: (W.Godavari Dt) Sevasamithi: Inauguration of monthly
Bullitin (Telugu 'SriSathya Sai Vijayam')

Avatar and Vibhuti

—C. Shanmuganayagam, Colombo

"An Avatar, roughly speaking, is One who is conscious of the presence and power of the Divine born in him, or descended into him, and governing from within his will and life and action; he feels identified inwardly with this Divine power and presence."

"A Vibhuti is supposed to embody some power of the Divine and is enabled by it to act with great force in the world; but, that is all that is necessary to make him a Vibhuti. The power may be very great, but, the consciousness is not that of an inborn indwelling Divinity. This is the distinction we can gather from the Gita, which is the main authority on the subject."

"If we follow this distinction, we can confidently say, from what is related of them, that Rama and Krishna can be accepted as Avatars; Buddha figures as such, although with a more impersonal consciousness of the power within him."

"There are two sides of the phenomenon of Avatarhood: the Divine consciousness and the instrumental personality in Nature and under the conditions of Nature which it uses, according to the rule of the game."

"If Avatarhood is only a flashing miracle, then, I have no use for it. If it is a coherent part of the arrangement of the Omnipotent Divine in Nature, then, I can", accept it understand and accept it."

"The Divine being all-powerful can lift people up, without bothering to come down on earth. But, Avatarhood has meaning, only when it is part of the world arrangement, that he should take upon Himself the burden of humanity."

"The Divinity acts according to another consciousness—the consciousness of the Truth above and the Lila below; and so acts according to the need of the Lila, not according to man's ideas of what it should or should not do. This is the first thing one must grasp; otherwise, one can understand nothing about the manifestation of the Divine."

These excerpts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo on Avatarhood have helped me considerably to accept the Avatarhood of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and to view His Leelas in correct perspective I am therefore eager to share them with others.

Constant Presence

—S. D. Khera

The time which passes in worldly cares and anxieties is in fact time of spiritual death, and the time spent in Baba's remembrance is the time of real life. When we think of worldly objects, forgetting Baba, we invite materialism into our soul, which is nothing short of worries and anxieties. But, when we get worldly possessions, having Baba in our hearts, we gain entrance in the world of splendour and peace. Just as our body is a dreadful thing without soul, likewise the world is horrible without Baba. As our material body gets splendour and beauty from the soul inside, similarly worldly possessions get beauty from Baba. We have to keep our bodies engaged in worldly affairs, having Baba in our hearts—BODY FOR THE WORLD, HEART AND MIND FOR BABA.

Material life is beautiful no doubt, but how much more beautiful would HE be who has given the spark of beauty to the world! If it is right to hanker after happiness then how could it be wrong to meditate upon BABA either? If it is right to be grateful to those who give us comforts of life, then how can it be wrong to be grateful to HIM who has given us all the comforts and pleasures of life?

In fact, when forgetting HIM, we think of this world; then dark anxieties hover upon our minds, and being horrified of this darkness, we cry for help; it comes, and we are instinctively led to faith in BABA.

There are three stages of life:

- i) To live in this world, forgetting BABA
- ii) To be in this world with His remembrance.
- iii) To remain absorbed only in His meditation and to forget all other things.

The majority of people are of the first two types. It is very rare to find out people who are only absorbed in Him and do not care for anything else. We should not think that these persons are devoid of worldly riches. They can get all the riches of the world they may wish by the grace of BABA, but they never think of doing so, because they are quite satisfied and do not need these. But the more practicable for human beings is the second stage, in which BABA and matter both exist.

Still there are people who destroy their spiritual life for the sake of material life. They think that it is quite impossible to have all the worldly possessions without losing spiritual life. They are of opinion that material life must be gained at the cost of spiritual life. They say that those who are too pious, too true, too spiritual, always suffer for lack of worldly possessions and worldly pleasures. They say that they appreciate spiritual life, but they are too weak to get it, because they are afraid to lose all charm of material life.

In fact these conclusions are the result of their shortsightedness. Through their ignorance they see all these aspects from wrong angles of vision, otherwise the facts are quite different. Their conclusions are wrong and are reached by those who never experience truth in the real sense. They are too hasty in jumping to conclusions from insufficient data.

"BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU" (St. Mathews-VI-33)

In this Commandment, one can easily see the first and foremost thing to be realised by man is SPIRITUALITY and Spirituality alone. Man is created to seek God and God alone first, and live in His righteousness and not to hanker after worldly possessions which mislead and take him away from His righteousness. It is clearly shown that man is born only to realise his Creator, who is benevolent Father and merciful Protector.

The word "first" indicates that there is something to be done by man later also. What is that something?

"ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU", that is, the material world for which man strives so much will come automatically, to that person who has accomplished the first duty. It means that the only way to acquire worldly possessions and riches is to realise God first, and the worldly riches and possessions will automatically follow this REALISATION.

Why has the Lord commanded us to "Seek first the Kingdom of God"?

Because it is the bliss of life, and the secret of success and salvation and the means of acquisition of the whole universe. So we have "to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and should not think of worldly objects".

"THEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR YOUR LIFE, WHAT YE SHALL EAT, OR WHAT YE SHALL DRINK NOR YET FOR YOUR BODY, WHAT YE SHALL PUT ON (St: Mathews VI 25)

FOR, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWETH THAT YOU HAVE NEED FOR ALL THESE THINGS (St. Mathews VI 32).

TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW: FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE "THOUGHT -FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF (St. Mathews VI 34)".

Now how and where to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? The first answer to this question is "SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND: KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU: ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU".

But the question again arises "Where to knock?" The answer is "try to find Him out in your heart with earnest desire". One may say "We always try to see Him in the Heart and knock at the door of God, but it is never opened upon us." It is right, but there is something lacking. We never seek Him with earnest will and true desire. We never try to find Him out in the PURE HEART, as the Lord has said, "BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART; FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD". This commandment shows that He is to be realised in the "Pure Heart". BABA says, "I want the unsullied blossoms of Pure Heart and the fruit offerings of Good deeds. Come to Me with empty hands. I shall fill them with gifts and grace. If your hands are full, what am I to fill them with?"

Now the question arises whether it is possible to have such a pure heart in the din and struggle of this world? Most certainly, yes. If it were not possible, then the commandment should not have been in these words. God never orders what is impossible. Therefore, one can have that purity while living a worldly life.

How can one get that purity? There are many ways of purifying the mind:-

- 1) Prayer Earnest prayer
- 2) Truthfulness
- 3) Love towards others irrespective of caste, colour or creed
- 4) Repentance
- 5) Humility
- 6) Faith in God
- 7) Always trying to find out our weakness

When all these qualities find place in the heart, then the heart gets purified, and Baba sheds His Light upon us and illumines us. Then tears and lamentations will be no more. Life and death will lie stretched below, and one would breathe the sweet nectar of the breath of Baba. Deep as the Universe will appear life and nothing will dislodge this knowledge and nothing could do harm. There will be joy beginning but without end. The Journey of journeys will end and thought will be quietly laid aside.

Not as a dream. The earth will remain: the daily life remains and the house and the care of the house remains, but joy fills it full. All things change and are glorified, all old sights become new, with new meaning. The soul having transformed its relationship to the body will be happy beyond words. Under the eye of our Baba we will glide with supernal joy forever and the whole of the eternity will be ours.

Here is happiness without external cause, love without persons, truth without thinking. Here is the native land whence all men came to which they still secretly belong.

For the World Today

—Rama Varma

The unique feature of this Avatar is, to my mind, that Baba remains Divine, superhuman, throughout. His transcendence is reflected, not only in the various acts of Grace conferred in inexplicable ways, but, it fills every act, every word, every gesture of His. He retains His eminence always; He has never played the role of an aspirant, seeker or devotee like others who are adored as Avatars. He is never known to have offered worship to any Form of God. He has no Guru, as those others had. He grew up, untutored in any branch of learning. Yet, He shines as a repository of the highest wisdom and the most meticulous learning. Who will not wonder at the phenomenon of a wholly uninstructed Baba sporting with the precepts of the Upanishads, the highlights of the Bhagavatha, the Bhakthi Sutras of Narada, the Bible and other scriptures and sacred texts of humanity and quoting chapter and verse from them?

How many stories and parables from the experiences of saints and seers from all lands and climes does He relate for the edification of poor souls like us! Here is a story from Kerala which He gave us once: A devotee was riddled by pain in the stomach so much that he sought the intercession of the great Vilvamangala Swami, renowned as a great saint in Kerala. Vilvamangala saw and spoke with Krishna, daily, during the hours of worship. When the case of the devotee was presented to Krishna by Vilvamangala, Baba said, Krishna pleaded His helplessness to cure him! The disease, caused by wrongs done in past lives, has to run its course! Baba said that the devotee was not disheartened by this rebuff; he approached another darling of the Divine, Kururamma (the name was mentioned by Baba), who gave him valuable advice.

She said, "Recite the Name of Krishna; that will compel Him to accede to your prayer." And, the malady was cured! The name has that power to wipe off accumulated demerit and draw down the Grace of God. This incident, which happened hundreds of years ago in a little known part of Kerala was related by Baba, with all the details of a personal experience, as if He was the Krishna, who yielded to the repeated recitation of His Name!

Baba's Discourses are designed to hold aloft the Light of Liberation to a world struggling in darkness. It is mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavatha that the path shown by the Lord (Bhagavan) to attain Him is the Bhagavatha Dharma (Disciplinary Code which will guide the Aspirant). The disciplines laid down in the Discourses, brought under the six successive volumes of "Sathya Sai Speaks" is the Bhagavatha Dharma for the world today.

Surrender unto Me, is the keynote of the teachings of Krishna; it is also the refrain in all the discourses of Baba. The import is that man should, without entangling himself in the world, take refuge in the Lord, who alone is real. Both do not assert that a particular Name and particular Form are alone worthy of adoration. All Names and all Forms have equal sanctity and validity. Baba is never tired of repeating that He has not come to propagate a new cult or a cult of His own. "I affirm that this Sai Form is the Form, of all the Forms, that man uses for the adoration of the Divine," He declares!

To accept Baba alone as supreme and denigrate other Forms and Names would be doing injustice to Baba Himself—for, Baba is no different from any or all. I am bound to receive the Grace of Baba, if I have faith in and pay unstinted homage to Guruvayurappan (the Name and Form under which the Lord is worshipped at Guruvayur, Kerala State), for it is worship done to Baba as well. If you are the darling of Sri Guruvayurappan, I firmly believe you are ipso facto the darling of Baba. If I can invoke in Sri Krishna, who is installed with charming Form and Name of Guruvayurappan at Guruvayur Temple, the feeling that I am His, I know I have succeeded in striking the same chord in the Heart of Baba, and I am sure Baba will take me under His fostering care. Likewise, I am convinced that a votary of Mahadeva in Ernakulam, Sasta in Sabari, Muruga in Palani, or Balaji at Tirupati or of God in any other Form, Installed and adored in other places is equally and near to Baba; each step you take towards any one of them automatically takes you war a seep nearer to Baba Himself.

We must remember that conflicts and differences do not exist in the Highest Plane. In the eagerness to bless the aspirants and grant them the goal, the same Lord assumes the Form they yearn to envision, so that they may be made aware of the Truth in the manner that convinces them beyond doubt.

Coming into the world, at a critical time in its history Baba lays down the Divine Bhagavatha Dharma spreading faith and enlightenment everywhere, Bhagavan is the embodiment of Compassion and Love, urging us on, to cultivate those qualities, from the innermost hearts of all of us. May He guard and guide us, at every turn

Friend! Do not Tarry

—A. Venkata Rao, B.A., B.L.

Has life any meaning? Or, is it a purposeless sojourn on earth? Are we merely being driven remorselessly, like dumb cattle, from the cradle to the cemetery? And, what is the journey like? It is only through a dark vale of tears, with occasional flashes of what is commonly called happiness. It looks as if we are drawn by an inexorable force; we find limitations binding us from every side. These thoughts naturally torment every thinking mind.

Friends! If you sincerely desire to get the answers to these and allied problems, go to Puttaparthi, where the supreme Guru, is ready to give you knowledge and peace. See Him, hear Him speak, grasp the way of life that He is teaching by His own Life, watch the Compassion and patience that is evident in His every act, the limitless Grace that He showers, the tireless enthusiasm He has, for the uplift of Humanity and the spontaneity with which all these Divine qualities are flowing from Him. If you have eyes to see, ears to hear and the capacity to think, it will not take you long to arrive at the Truth.

Life is a beginningless and unceasing manifestation of the One and only Truth, Sath-Chith-Ananda. The good and bad, happiness and sorrow, and similar dualities are mere concepts of your mind. You are, in fact and reality, Sath-Chith-Ananda and, not any of these material

envelopments, body, mind and intellect. The latter change from moment to moment, but, you are the non-changing Entity—the unchanging Witness!

The ego or jiva, which is no other than a thought, but, nevertheless, the root of all other thoughts centering round the notion of 'I' and 'mine' is the cause of all this mischief.

It parades as though it has an independent existence, when in reality it does not and cannot exist apart from the One Truth. Wrong identification by the Jiva or 'I-thought' with the body, the mind and the intellect makes it share the vicissitudes to which the latter, by their very nature, are subject. If this identification is erased and you feel one with the ceaseless fount of Sath-Chith-Ananda, which is deep down in your own heart, the meaning of life stands revealed. The passing panorama, which we call nature, world, including the ego, is mere appearance, fleeting over the canvas of Truth, of Pure Absolute Consciousness.

Friends! We take pride in calling ourselves intelligent! We explore the earth, the sea and space, but, we do not know who we are! Intelligence is misused by us, to tyrannise over one another and over the rest of creation. We use it for amassing riches, and pandering the senses—futile pursuits, since we all must die, leaving all the gains we strove to win. Nor do these pursuits give us a sense of fulfillment, for, one 'achievement' fans the desire for more.

Baba tells us that we are seeking happiness through these means, because our nature itself is happiness or bliss. We resent limitations or finitude, because we are really infinite by nature. The ego seeps infinite or permanent bliss, but, in its ignorance, it seeks it in the finite world. Baba tells us that we are, in fact, seeking our own nature, in striving to find Bliss, here and now. But, we have to find it, in ourselves, and not outside us. It is the kernel of each of us! Reverse the process, Baba says. Instead of running after the fleeting pleasures that the world can offer, try to shut out the mind from the outside a world, and from the turmoil of thoughts gurgling within. Install Sarveswara (the Lord of All), embodied in whichever Form you like—or, without Form, as a Principle or Power in simple Awareness—and train the mind to abide there. A day will come, when the Truth will dawn, in a flash, and the Witness within us, will reveal itself. Try to reach the source from where the ego springs, says Baba. 'Abide there and you will realise your nature, which is Sath-Chith-Ananda'.

Baba is not only the haven of the sincere seeker; He is the refuge of the maimed, the sick, the ailing, the unhappy, the persons afflicted with all kinds of material desires. Each and every one derives comfort and joy from Him.

What is most important is, that all are ultimately weaned from worldly entanglement and snares, and directed to the Abode of Truth, and guided along the road leading to it in conformity with his power of understanding and inclination.

Prasanthi Nilayam (the Abode of Peace) is where the All-pervading Truth has come to preside in Human form. It is spreading the Gospel of Sathyam Sivam and Sundaram, for the benefit of troubled humanity.

Friends! If you have not found your way to Prasanthi Nilayam, and surrendered at the Feet of Baba, make haste. Now is the time! Life is short. If you tarry, great is your loss!

Serve the World as you would serve your Master; be humble, be eager, efficient in that service. If you dare treat the world as your servant, you will be dragged down into disaster.

—**Baba**

Message to Students

If there be righteousness in the heart

There will be beauty in the character;

If there be beauty in the character,

There will be harmony in the home;

If there be harmony in the home,

There will be order in the nation;

If there be order in the nation,

There will be Peace in the world.

(BABA: Message given in English, to the Students of the S. S. N. College, Narasaraopet)

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

1

The Name 'Rama' is the essence of the Vedas; the Story of Rama is an Ocean of Milk, pure and potent. It can be asserted that no poem of equal grandeur and beauty has emerged from other languages or, from any other country, until this very day. It has provided inner inspiration to the poetic imagination of every language and country. It is the greatest treasure inherited by his good fortune by every Indian.

Rama is the guardian deity of the Hindu; the Name is borne by their bodies and by the buildings in which those bodies dwell. It can safely be said that there is no Indian who has not imbibed the nectar of Ramakatha, the story of Rama.

The Ramayana, the epic that deals with the story of the Rama Incarnation, is a sacred text that is reverently recited systematically, by people of all varieties of equipment, the scholar as well as the; ignoramus, the millionaire as well as the pauper. The Name that the Ramayana glorifies cleanses all evil; it transforms the sinner; it reveals the Form that the Name represents, the form that is as charming as the Name Itself.

As the sea is the source of all the waters on earth, all beings are born from Rama. A sea sans water is unreal; a being sans Rama is with out existence, now or ever. The azure Ocean and the Almighty Lord have much in common. The Ocean is the residence of the Almighty, as myth and legend proclaim; they describe Him as reclining on the Ocean of Milk. This is the reason behind the title given by Valmiki (son of, Prachetas; the great poet who composed the epic) to each canto—Kaanda. Kaanda means water, an expanse of water. It also means ‘the sugar cane’. However crooked a cane may be, whichever section you chew, the sweetness is unaffected and uniform, isn’t it? The Stream of Rama's Story meanders through many a curve and twist; nevertheless, the sweetness of Karuna (tenderness, pity, compassion) persists without diminution throughout the entire narrative. The stream turns and tours through sadness, wonder, ridicule, awe, terror, love, despair, and dialectics but, the main undercurrent of the flow is the flood of Dharma (Righteousness, Morality) and the Karuna (Compassion) it fosters.

The nectar in the story of Rama is as the Sarayu river that moves silently by the side of the city of Ayodhya, where Rama was born and where he ruled. The Sarayu has its source in the Manasa-sarovar as the Story is born in the Manasa-Sarovar (the Lake of the Mind)! The Rama stream is of the sweetness Karuna; the stream of Lakshmana (his brother and devoted companion) is of the sweetness of Devotion, (Bhakthi); as the Sarayu river joins the Ganga (Ganges) and the waters commingle, so too, the streams of tender compassion and devotion (the stories of Rama and Lakshmana) commingle in the Ramayana. Karuna and Prema (Love.. Devotion) make up, between themselves the composite picture of the glory of Rama; that picture is the heart's dearest yearning for every Indian; to attain it is the aim of every spiritual striving undertaken by him.

The effort of the individual being is but half the real pursuit; the other half of the struggle consists in acquiring the Grace of God. Man fulfils himself, by self-effort as well as Divine Blessings; the fulfilment takes him across the ocean-of dualities, on to the shore of the Immanent and Transcendent One.

The Ramayana has to be read, not as the record of a human career, but as the narrative of the Advent and Activities of an Avatar (Incarnation of God). Man I must endeavour with determination to realise in his own life experience the ideals revealed in that narrative. God is all-knowing, all-pervasive, all-powerful The words that He utters while embodied in the human form, the acts that He deigns to indulge in during that earthly sojourn, these are inscrutable and extra-ordinarily significant. The precious springs of His Message mark out the path of Deliverance for mankind. Do not look upon Rama as a scion of the Solar Dynasty, or as the sovereign of the kingdom of Ayodhya, or as the princely son of Emperor Dasaratha. Those correlations are but accessory and accidental. This error has become habitual to modern readers; they pay attention only to the personal relationships and affiliations between the characters of the story they read about; they do not delve into tire values they represent and demonstrate.

To explain this error: The father of Rama had three wives; the first was such and such, the second was of this nature, the third had these traits! Her maids were of this ugly type ...The wars fought by Dasaratha, the Father, were characterised by these peculiarities...those specialties ...in this manner, fancy leads man astray into the region of the trivial and the colourful, making him neglect the valuable kernel. People do not realise that the fruitful study of history must enrich life and make it meaningful and worthwhile, rather than cater to the greed for paltry facts and ideas. Their validity and value lie deep within the facts and fertilise them, like a subterranean flow of water. Wear the glasses of Bhakthi (Reverent adoration) and Sraddha (Steady Dedication); then, the eye will endow you with the pure Wisdom that liberates and grants eternal Bliss.

As men squeeze juice out of the fibrous cane, and swallow only the sweetness, as the bee sucks the honey in the flower, regardless of its symmetry and colourful design, as the moth flies towards the brightness of the flame, ignoring the heat and the inevitable catastrophe, the Sadhaka (Spiritual-seeker) should yearn to imbibe the Karuna-rasa (the expression of the emotion of tenderness, pity and compassion) that the Ramayana is saturated with, paying no heed to other subjects. The practice is, when a fruit is eaten, to throw away the skin, the seeds, the fibre. It is in the very nature of Nature that fruits have these components! Nevertheless, no one will eat them on the plea that he has paid for them! No one can swallow the seeds and digest them. No one will chew the outer skin. So too, in this Rama-fruit called Ramayana, the tales of Rakshasas (demons, ogres and the like) form the skin; the wicked deeds of these evil men are the hard indigestible seeds; sensory and worldly descriptions and events are the not-too-tasty fibrous stuff; they are the sheaths and cases for the juicy eatable nourishment in the fruit.

Those who seek the Karuna-rasa in the Rama fruit should concentrate more on the pure narrative than on the supplementary details that embellish or encumber it. Listen to the Ramayana in that mood; that is the best Sravana (Process of spiritual listening).

On one occasion, Emperor Parikshith fell at the Feet of the Sage Suka and asked for instruction on one point that was causing him dire doubt. "Master! One riddle has been worrying me since long. I know that you can solve it for me and that no one else can. Do not think otherwise of me, but, sympathise with me and give me the answer that satisfies. I have listened to the narratives of the lives of my fore-fathers, from the earliest and the first—the great Manu—down to those of my grandfathers and father. I have studied these stories with care. I observe that, in the history of every one of these, there is mention of Sages, (Rishis,) attached to the monarch, some learned scholar—saints who are members of the court, attending durbars and sharing the business of government!

What is the real meaning of this amazing association of scholars (who have renounced attachment and desire, who have realised that the world is a shadow and a snare and that the One is the only Reality) with kings and rulers, playing subordinate roles and counseling when asked? Those revered elders will not, I know, engage themselves in any activity without sufficient and proper reasons. Their behaviour will ever be pure and unsullied. But, this makes my doubt more unsolvable. Please enlighten me".

Suka laughed at the question. He replied, "You have asked a very fine question, no doubt. Listen. The great sages and holy scholars, will always be eager to share with their fellowmen the truth they have grasped, the sanctifying experience they have won, the elevating acts they have

been privileged to perform, the Divine Grace they have been chosen to receive; they seek nearness to those who are in charge of administration, those who are adepts in ruling over peoples, with the intention to use them as instruments for establishing and ensuring peace and prosperity on earth; they implant high ideals in their minds, and valuable ways of fulfilling them; they prompt the performance of righteous actions, in accordance with just laws. The monarchs too invite and welcome the sages, seek out the scholars and plead with them to be in their courts, so that they can learn from them the art of government and act according to their counsel. The monarch was the lord, master and guardian of the people; so, they spent their days with him, for the estimable purpose of realising through him, the yearning of their hearts: "Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu—May all the worlds be happy." They were, eager to see happiness and peace spread over the world. Therefore, they tried to render the kings equipped with all the virtues, saturated with all the moral codes of discipline, armed with all branches of learning, so that they may rule the realm efficiently, wisely and with beneficial consequences to themselves and their subjects.

There were other reasons, too. Knowing that the Grantor of joy to humanity, the Mentor of human morals, the Leader of the Solar line, the Child of Queen Kausalya of Ayodhya, the son of Vasudeva in Gokul, the Beloved of the Gopis, the Dweller in the Heaven of Eternal Bliss—will take birth in the royal line, as mentioned in the Vedas, sages who had the foresight to anticipate events, gained entry into the durbars of rulers, so that they may experience the bliss of contact with the Incarnation, if and when it happens. They feared they may not get such access later; and miss the bliss they could well garner. So, they profited by their vision of the future and established themselves in the royal capitals, in the thick of the community, longing for the Advent.

To this venerable, group belonged Vasishta, Viswamitra, Garga, Agasthya and other sages (Rishis), They had no wants; they were monarchs of renunciation; they sought nothing from any one. They were ever content. They appeared in the halls of audience of the emperors of those days, not for polemics and the pomp of punditry or for collecting the costly gifts placed before such disputants and guests, or for decorating themselves with the burden—some titles those patrons confer on the persons they prefer. They craved rather for the Darshan (Bliss of the Vision) of Vasudeva and for a chance to uphold Dharma (Righteousness) in human affairs; they had no other objective.

The kings too in those days were immersed in thoughts Divine! They approached the hermits and sages in their retreats in order to discover from them, the means of making their subjects happy and firmly content; often they invited them in humility and reverence to their palaces and consulted them about ways and means of good government. Those were days when there were sages with no attachment to self, and scholars with no craving for power; such were the men who rendered advice to the kings. As a consequence, there was no lack of food and clothing, of housing or good health, for the people of the realm. All days were festival days; all doors were decorated with fresh green leafy festoons. The ruler felt that his most sacred duty was the fostering of the people's welfare. The subjects too felt that the ruler was the living heart to the body politic. They had full faith that he was as precious as their own heart; they remembered him as such; they revered him and paid him the homage of gratitude. They saved themselves through

this means." Suka explained the role of the sages in the royal courts, in this clear downright manner, before the large gathering that was sitting around them.

Have you noticed this? Whatever is done by the great, whichever company they choose, they will ever be on the path of righteousness, on the path of the Divine; their acts will promote the welfare of the world! So, when the Ramayana or other narratives of the Divine are recited or read, attention must be fixed on the majesty and mystery of God, on the Truth and straight forwardness that are inherent in them, and on the practice of those qualities, in one's own life. No importance should be attached to extraneous matters; the execution of one's duty is the paramount lesson to be learnt.

God, when appearing with Form for the sake of upholding Dharma, will behave in as human way. He needs must! For, He has to hold forth the ideal life before men, and confer the experience of joy and peace to men. His movements and activities (Leelas) might appear as ordinary and commonplace to some eyes. But, each of such will be an expression of beauty, truth, goodness, contentment and exaltation. It will captivate the world with its charm, it will purify the heart that contemplates it. It will overcome and overwhelm all the agitations of the mind. It will tear off the veil of illusion (Maya). It will fill the consciousness with innate Sweetness. There can be no 'ordinary' and 'commonplace', in the careers of Avatar. Whatever is seen and taken as of that nature is really 'super-human', 'super-natural', deserving high reverence!

The story of Rama is not the story of an individual; it is the story of the Universe! Rama is the Personification of the basic Universal in all beings. He is in all, for all, for all time, in all space. The story deals not with a period that is past, but, with the present and future without end, with beginningless eternal time

No ant can sting, without Rama's Will! No leaf can drop from its branch, without Rama's prompting! Sky, wind, fire, water and earth—the Five Elements that compose the Universe behave as they do, for fear of Him, and in line with His Orders! Rama is the Principle which attracts, and endears through that attraction, the disparate elements in Nature. The attraction that one exerts over another—is what makes the Universe exist and function. That is the Rama principle, without which chaos will be all that is. Hence, the axiom: If there be no Rama, there will be no panorama named Universe.

(To be continued in our next issue)

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2

In the immaculately pure Solar Dynasty was born the highly mighty, the far famed, the strong armed, the intensely loved and revered ruler, Khatvanga His rule showered supreme bliss on the immense populations under his throne and persuaded them to pay homage to him; as if he were himself God. He had a 'one and only' son, named Dileepa. He grew up saturated with the glory of knowledge and virtue; he shared with his father, the joy and privilege of guarding and guiding the people. He moved among his subjects, eager to know their joys and sorrows, anxious to discover how best to relieve pain and distress, intent steadily on their welfare and prosperity. The father watched his son grow, straight and strong, virtuous and wise. He desired to find a bride for him, and after the marriage, to place on his shoulders part of the burden of the scepter. He sought for the bride, in royal houses, far and wide, for, she must be a worthy companion and wife for the prince. At last, the choice fell on the Magadhan princess, Sudakshina; the wedding was celebrated with unsurpassed pomp and exultation by the people of the land, and the court.

Sudakshina was endowed with all the womanly virtues in ample measure. She was saintly, simple, and a sincere votary of her husband; she served her lord, and poured love on him, as if he were her very breath. She walked in the footsteps of her husband, and never deviated from the path of righteousness.

Dileepa, too, was the very embodiment of righteousness, and as a consequence, he saw that neither want nor disappointment affected her in the least. He held fast to the ideals and practices of his father, so far as administration of the empire was concerned, and so he had great success, slowly and without any dislocation, taking upon himself the full responsibility of administration. Thus, he was able to give his father rest, in his old age. Khatvanga rejoiced within himself, contemplating the great qualities of his son and observing his skill, efficiency and practical wisdom.

Some years passed thus. Then, Khatvanga directed the court astrologers to select an auspicious day and hour for the Coronation of Dileepa and on the day fixed by them, he performed that Ceremony to mark the installation of Dileepa as the monarch of realm.

From that day, Dileepa as the Maharaja, shone forth as the Lord and Sovereign of the Empire, stretching from sea to sea with the seven islands in the Ocean. His rule was so just and compassionate, so much in conformity with the injunctions laid down in the scriptures, that the rains came in season, as plentifully as needed and the harvest of grain was rich and profuse. The entire empire was green and glorious, festive and fair. The land was resonant with the sacred sound of the Vedas recited in every village, the purifying rhythm of the mantras chanted in the sacrifices, performed throughout the land; every community lived in concord with all the rest. Nevertheless, the Maharaja was apparently overcome by some mysterious anxiety; his face was losing its effulgence. The lapse of a few years did not improve matters. Despair wrote its deep lines, firmer on his face. One day, he revealed the cause of his gloom to his queen, Sudakshina, thus: Darling! We have children, and sadness is overpowering me, as consequence. I am even

more affected by sorrow, when I realise that the Ikshvaku dynasty will terminate with me. Some sin which I committed must have brought about this calamity. I am unable to decide the process by which I can counter this malign inevitability. I am eager to learn from our family preceptor, the sage Vasishtha the means by which I can win the Grace of God and make amends for the sin. I am very much agitated by grief. What do you say, to this? What do you suggest as the best means to win that Grace?"

Sudakshina did not wait long to reply; she did not even take time to think out the answer. "Lord! This same conviction had entered my mind too, since many days and caused me too much grief. I had not given expression to it, but, smothered it in the mind, for I cannot, I know, reveal my fears, without being prompted by you, my Lord, I am ever willing and eager to support and follow implicitly what appeals to you as the best means of overcoming our sorrow. You know that this is my innate nature. Why should there be any delay; let us hasten to consult revered Vasishtha", she said

Dileepa ordered the royal chariot to be made ready, for the pilgrimage to the hermitage of the Preceptor. He directed that no escort or courtier need accompany the King and Queen, that day. In fact, he drove the vehicle himself and reached the simple cottage of his Gurudev.

At the sound of the chariot, the hermits on the outskirts of the ashram went into the cottage and made known to their Master the arrival of the Ruler of the Empire. Vasishtha showered his blessings on him, as soon as he saw him near the door and lovingly inquired about his health and the welfare of his subjects, his kith and kin. Sudakshina fell at the feet of the sage's consort, the famed Arundhathi, embodiment of all the virtues which adorn the highest type of women. Arundhathi lifted her into her arms and fondly embraced her, prodding her with questions about her welfare. She led her into the inner part of the hermitage. As befitted the monarch of the realm, Dileepa enquired from Vasishtha whether the Yajnas and Yagas the ascetics had to perform as part of cultural tradition were being carried out, without any handicap. Whether the anchorites were experiencing any difficulty in acquiring food, caring on their studies and in spiritual practices, and whether their sylvan campuses were terrorised by wild beasts. He was yearning to make their studies and spiritual exercises progress, without any distraction, due to adverse environment or counter-influences.

When the King and Queen entered the cottage and sat in their places, with the assembled sages and seekers, Vasishtha required the rest to move into their own hermitages, and asked the King the reason for his coming to the place thus, accompanied by the queen and none else. The King communicated to his preceptor the nature and depth of his grief, and prayed for the only remedy that could remove it, namely, his Grace.

Listening to that prayer, Vasishtha was lost in deep meditation; absolute silence prevailed. The king too sat in the lotus posture on the bare floor, and merged his mind in God; the queen attuned her mind with the Divine. Meanwhile, Vasishtha opened his eyes and said, "O King! The will of God can be thwarted by no man, whatever his might or authority. I have no power to over-ride the decree of the Divine. I cannot command enough Grace to confer through my blessings the son you desire. You have drawn on yourself a curse, and this is its consequence."

"I shall tell you, what that curse is, listen! On one occasion, when you were approaching the Capital during your journey home, the Divine Cow, Kamadhenu was reclining in the cool shade of the Divine Tree, the Kalpatharu! Your eye fell on her, but, engrossed in sensual desires, caught up in the tangle of worldly pleasures, you ignored her and passed on, in pride, to the place. Kamadhenu was pained at the neglect, she was hurt that the King had failed to honour her; she felt that the people will start dishonouring the cow, since the king himself had failed in his duty. When the dynasties of rulers who do not revere the Vedas, the Brahmins who learn and practise the Vedas and the cow which sustains the people continue to establish themselves firmly, she argued, there will be no Dharma in the land.

"Thus, Kamadhenu cursed you that day, that you should have no son to succeed to your throne she declared, how ever, that when you take the advice of the Guru and start in humility and reverence, to serve the cow and worship the cow in gratitude, the curse will be rendered anfractuous and you will be rewarded with a son and heir. This is how your sorrow, at the absence of a son, originates. Therefore, worship the cow, from this moment, with your queen, as laid down in the sacred texts and, you are certain to have a son. The hour is near, when cows start returning home from the pasture. My treasure, the divine cow, Nandini (Kamadhenu) is fast approaching the hermitage. Go, serve her, with devotion and steady faith. Give her food and drink, at the appropriate times. Wash the cow, and take her out to the pastures and see that no harm comes to her while she grazes. Vasishta then initiated the King and Queen in the ritualistic vow of 'Cow Worship' (the Dhenu-vrata); he sent them into the cow-shed with sacred water and offerings, for worship and himself walked to the river, for his ablutions and evening prayers.

"One day, while Nandini was grazing happily in the jungle, a lion espied her and followed her, in order to allay his hunger. Dileepa observed this; he used all his skill and might to foil the lion from pouncing on her; he resolved to offer his own body, in exchange. That lion, though feline and ferocious, was a strict follower of Dharma! Moved by compassion at the sacrifice that the king was willing to make to save the cow he worshipped. It released the cow and the king from its clutches, and left the place.

Nandini was filled with an inexpressible sense of gratitude and joy, at the self-sacrificing gesture of Dileepa; she said, 'O King! This moment the curse that afflicts you is lifted! You will have a son, who will subdue the whole world, support the principles and practice of Dharma, earn renown on earth and heaven, enhance the fame of the dynasty, and, more than all continue the Ikshvaku line, wherein, the Lord Himself, Narayana, will take birth!

"May this son be born soon", Nandini blessed the King. Attended by the King, the sacred cow returned to the ashram of Vasishta.

Vasishta had no need to be told! He knew all; as soon as he saw the faces of the, King and Queen, he surmised that their wish was fulfilled; so, he blessed them and permitted them to leave for the City. Then, Dileepa and Queen Sudhakshina prostrated before the Sage and reached the Palace, full of joy at the turn of events.

The child grew in the womb, as the blessing guaranteed. When the months ran their full course, at an auspicious moment, the son was born. When the happy tidings spread over the city

and kingdom, thousands assembled before and around the palace in great joy. The streets were festooned with flags and green leaves; groups of people danced in glee, calling on all to share in the thrill; they waved camphor flames, to mark the occasion. Huge crowds exclaimed 'Jai' 'Jai' and moved on towards the Palace grounds.

Dileepa ordered that the birth of an heir to the empire be announced to the multitude, gathered in the vast grounds of the Palace, by the Minister himself, and when he did so, the joyous acclamation of the throng reached the sky. The applause was loud and long; the jai echoed and re-echoed from one street to another. It took many hours for the gathering to disperse and reach home.

On the tenth day, the King invited the Guru and celebrated the rite of Namakaranam or naming the Newborn. The name Raghu was selected, on the basis of the asterism under which he was born. The child gave delight to all by its prattle and play; he was liked by all as a bright and charming youngster; he crossed his teens and became a brave, resolute, efficient helpmate of his father!

One night, —no one can guess why the king felt so while conversing with the Queen he said, "Sudhakshina! I have achieved many a grand victory! I have succeeded in celebrating many a great ritual sacrifice. I have fought many a grim battle with mighty invaders and triumphed over them all, including even ogres and sub-human Titans! At last, we were blessed with a son who is a precious gem! We have nothing more to gain.

“Let us spend the remainder of our lives in the adoration of God. Raghu is the repository of all virtues; he is fit in all respects to take up the burden of ruling over the Empire. Let, us entrust the realm to him; we shall retire into the silence of the forest, live on roots and fruits, serve the sages who lead austere lives, filled with godly thoughts and godward aspiration, and sane every moment with Sravana (Listening to the sacred teachings), Manana (Meditating on their inner meanings) and Nididhyasana (Practising the path laid down)! We shall not yield for a minute to sloth based on Tamasic qualities." So saying, he called the Minister to his presence as soon as it was dawn; he directed that arrangements be made for the Coronation and Marriage of the Prince. Full of the spirit of renunciation, he asked the Queen what her plans were. She shed tears of joy and gratitude, and said, "What greater good fortune can this person, subservient to you in every way, gain? I am bound by your orders; you only proceed with your plans." Her enthusiasm and willing acceptance only strengthened the resolution of the Emperor.

(To be continued)

Sathyam Sivam Sundaram

Sivaratri attracts mammoth gatherings to Prasanthi Nilayam, to witness the emergence of the Linga from the Divine Body of Baba, and so, to serve the devotees, contingents of Seva Dal members trained for the purpose by the Sathya Sai Seva Samithis of different linguistic regions from Hyderabad, Eluru, Guntur, Vijayawada, Bombay, Mangalore, Bangalore, Kerala, Delhi also arrived in time, to be blessed and directed by Bhagavan, who inspired them with His Divine

Discourse on the evening of 4th March. Dr. S. Bhagavantam spoke to the men and women volunteers on the attitude of surrender that the member of the Seva Dal has to cultivate, for, Seva at the Prasanthi Nilayam as well as everywhere is a Sadhana. Baba exhorted the volunteers to feel that their Seva is a form of worship, (dedicated to the God resident in every one. Seva destroys the ego and confers Ananda, on the giver as well as the receiver, He said. It is a transformation of the mind, the compassion one gets automatically, at the sight of distress, pain or grief.

"Wherever you are, whatever the time, when you meet situations that require help, render it, to the best of your capacity, advised Baba." "You yearn to do some Seva to Me, isn't it? Well! I have a thousand hands and feet, a thousand eyes and hands. Sahasra-seershaa purushah Sahasraakshah-sahasrapaad, says the Vedas. The thousands who come here, the children, the sick the aged, the diseased, the sad, the depressed—they are all Me; serve them and you serve Me", Baba declared. "The badge given to you now must not be cast away, after the three or seven days are over; it must be imprinted on your heart and be a permanent call and reminder of the mission, into which you are initiated now", Baba said. More than 50,000 persons arrived at the Nilayam, by the morning of the 6th; a long unbroken train of hundreds of omnibuses, and cars, scooters and motor cycles, brought thousands in; there were thousands who came by rail, and trekked the distance from Bukkapatnam or even boarded trucks to reach the place in time. When the Sivarathri Day dawned, the gathering shone in grateful joy, and cheered Baba, when He gave darshan, prior to the Hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam. Dr. Divakarla Venkatavadhanulu, Professor of Telugu, Osmania University, addressed the gathering on the significance of Sivarathri. Bhagavan discoursed on the basic faults that corrode into individual and social life. He said, greed or lobha is the root of all the banal competitions in the current world, greed for riches, for power, for authority over fellowmen. He said that this can be overcome by the cultivation of detachment, of tolerance, of the spirit of service and the deepening of faith in an ever present immanent God. He referred to the condemnation of the love for one's language, community, province or religion, and the exaggerated emphasis on the love for the nation. The loyalty to the nation is built on the loyalty to the village, the family, the language spoken at home, the religion learned at the mother's lap etc. You cannot separate the limbs and name the trunk as the source of all strength!" Baba said.

Baba also emphasised the inherent excellences of the customs, conventions, rituals and ceremonies laid down by the sages, for limiting the vagaries of the human mind and regulating and educating his emotions and impulses. He said that the Prasanthi Flag has on it the symbol of the Sadhaka, struggling to attain self-realisation.

At 11 A.M. Baba proceeded to the Auditorium, for the Abhishekam. Bhajan from fifty thousand throats filled the air with a Divine fragrance; the path was a lovely carpet of flowers. The richly caparisoned Sai Geetha (elephant) walked majestically in front. To the right and left, ancient of the ancient Vedas moved with Baba, chanting the mantras. , During the Bhajan, Baba gave the gathering the unique chance of witnessing the creation of a nine-jewelled locket for Sai Baba's silver idol, and when He placed it on the forehead, between the eyebrows, it stuck! Then He poured from a wooden pot an unbroken stream of sacred ash on the idol, precious stones too falling from the pot, when His palm drew the sacred substance created by His touch.

In the evening, devotees gathered before the Santhi Vedika, and the vast expanse of open space was tight packed with men and women, eagerly awaiting the, discourses the emergence of the Linga, and the night long vigil and Bhajan. Dr. V. K. Gokak, and Sri Nakul Sen. I. C. S., Lt. Governor of Goa spoke in English on Bhagawan and His Universal Message of Love. Dr, Pivakarla Venkatavadhanlu spoke in Telugu.

Then, Baba delivered His Divine Discourse. In the Sanskrit Verse which was the prologue to His speech, Baba disclosed His identity; Naham manushyo (I am neither a human being) na cha deva yakshah (nor a god or superman), na Brahmana kshatriya vaisya sudra (nor am I a member of any one of the four castes) na bramhachari, na grhee, vanashthah (nor can you label Me as belonging to any of the four stages or Ashramas laid down by Sanathana Dharma), aham sathyabodhaka (I am the Teacher of Truth,) Sathyam Sivam Sundaram! My Reality is Truth Goodness Beauty!

He said, "Sai Bhaktas have to be pioneers in a new revolution, a transformation of character and endeavour; so, they have to fill themselves with Love so that the shower of unselfish universal Love can scotch the flames of anger, hatred, fear and anxiety that are consuming the world today. Sometimes, despair clouds the vision and people get panicky about the future of this country. But, I assure you that the country will not come to harm, either through internal or, external danger for, it is Bharath, (Bha meaning Bhagavan, God and Rathi meaning Attachment), the Land where the people are attached to God, and whom God loves."

After the Discourse which lasted for one hour, Bhagavan sang a few Namavalis and enthralled the huge gathering into ecstasy. Meanwhile, the first indications of the emergence of the Lingam (symbol of the Formless-All Formful God, Siva) from His Abdomen became apparent, and Baba sat in the silver chair. The gathering sang in chorus, in anxious expectation of the Miracle, the uplifting song, "Om Sivaya, Om Sivaya." About fifteen minutes later, a heavy oval Linga, glowing with divine effulgence, composed of a substance very much akin to opal came up and manifested its splendour to the vast multitude, uplifting them in a wave of adoration and bliss.

On the morning of the seventh, when the Bhajan sessions which began at 8 P. M. ended Bhagavan gave Darshan at the Santhi Vedika and He blessed the mass of devotees with a short discourse. He said, that the 'Kirtan' should not end but, must persist as long as there is breath in the body. Sam-apthi is the word for Finis; but, it does not mean here, the end of progress. It means the apthi attainment of Sama or Brahman. So, until the Universal Absolute is attained, this adoration of the Lord has to be continued. The Sastras of this country will help you to understand Divinity. India is unique in this field - it is one composite culture, composed of a variety of languages, spiritual disciplines, valuable teachings, goals and paths, to suit the various types of people and various stages of development. Each is wholesome and useful, in its place, at the proper time." After the Discourse, Baba blessed the devotees and had Divine Prasadam distributed to every one of the 5,0,000 persons, so that they may break the ritual fast they had vowed the previous day.

On the evening of the 7th, the Meeting held in the Auditorium was addressed by Brahmasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry and by Swamy Karunyanandaji of the Jeeva Karunyasangha, Rajahmundry. Bhagavan spoke about the Guru and his responsibilities. Instead of elevating the

Guru, who is all only a sign-post to God, as God, it is much better to accept the God resident in you, as the Guru and pray to Him to guide you and take you nearer to Him. You cannot cross a river sitting in a boat of stone! You must surrender completely to His Will and dedicate thought, word and deed to Him.

I was asked by some scholars this morning about the adventure of putting man on the moon; I answered that, even on the moon, man has no peace of mind he is anxious that the vehicle that will take him back to earth might not miss him. And, on earth below, he has not yet ensured peace! Journeying into the mind and controlling it by knowing its vagaries is far more profitable than journeying to the outer moon, the moon that has no illumining power of its own. The mind is the inner moon; one must discover it and master it. Love brings hearts together; Love for the sake of Love, that is to say, the greatest expression of Love, namely God. My teaching, My message, My practice, My mission is "Love".

Love for God builds up the path of Bhakthi; it is so powerful that it compels God to assume the Form which it desires to visualise! Cleanse your heart, and invite Him to install Himself in it, in any Form you crave for; God is so compassionate that He moulds Himself in that Form and with that Name! But, chitta shuddhi or cleansing of the heart is essential. All religions have this fundamental requisite in view. If the postage stamp is affixed, even a worthless notepaper on which is scribbled some trash put, into a dirty envelope will reach the addressee! But, not even the most gaudy envelope containing most sacred texts written in golden letters on the costliest of notepapers can reach the addressee, if it is unstamped! So, too, without a pure heart or chitta shuddhi, the most pompous of pundits cannot visualise Him; with it, even the most illiterate, can!

The Gita teaches the highest truth by stages. First, it prescribes Karma; then, it advises you to give up the desire for the fruits of Karma, while engaged in Karma; later, Dharmamarga is prescribed, and after reaching a certain stage, you are exhorted to give up even Dharma and strive for Moksha; lastly, even that is explained away as a 'desire' and the Sanyasa of Moksha is recommended as the Goal."

On the 8th, Baba blessed the thousands of eager visitors from all the States of India, and from all the continents, giving to each one of them the coveted Vibhuti and the chance of Namaskara. On the 9th, 10th and 11th March, Bhagavan selected from among the thousands the old, the sick, the maimed and the afflicted, for being blessed with special interview, with Him and He gave them the consolation, courage, and cure they longed for.

On the 12th, He left for Anantapur, where the Building for the Women's College is fast coming up. He will be at Whitefield for a few days, before proceeding on Tour.

Bring All Your Burdens

—Charles Penn

Have you ever been so laden down with human burdens—burdens so weighty that you begin to crumple? An erstwhile Son whose every action is going against everything you know to be true and right...or a Daughter unable to see as clearly as, you with your longer experience of things a woman only knows!

Dawn was stealthily breaking on that unique morning of January 12, 1970. And as I was looking from the window at the vast Pacific ocean once again I wondered at the sweet compassion and tender understanding of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba whose Presence I had just a short while before been Graced with...in this very room...or was it over there in Puttaparthi?

The lesson, taught to me is far too, wondrous not to impart for was it not for all of us to know?

On awaking I was in a high state of blissful exaltation for did not His laughter and the unbound joy within me send me gently back to this world.

During this experience I found myself in the very bright sunshine walking slowly towards Baba. He was smiling beckoningly towards me. With arms outstretched holding leg and arm like human members the twelve or so feet of distance was covered. As I gave the human burdens to Baba He laughingly said, "Now go and bring the real big ones!"

A feeling of almost disbelief overcame me. I asked myself "Does He really want me to bring Him the real big ones (problems) Can He possibly mean it?"

Then I saw myself returning to Baba with arms once again laden with these much larger flesh coloured round like members of some two or three feet in length. Again Baba was smiling with great understanding at my amazement of His joyful acceptance of these burdens. The depth of the feeling within me at that time is difficult to express.

Again the load seems to disappear right before my eyes. The brightness of Baba exceeded that of the brilliant sunshine and this too made a great impression on me.

Just before `returning' the joyful relief within me turned to happy laughter which became louder and louder until I awoke with His name bubbling on my lips.

We have heard Baba say "Those who are heaviest laden need Me most" and this event that had taken place on the other side of the world repeated this again for those—who may have forgotten to place before the Blue Lotus Feet of the Lord all of their troubles. Let us always remember His words "Bring the real big ones."

(Editorial note: For possible inclusion in a book Charles Penn invites devotees to briefly account any lessons of this nature they have received from Baba. Address letters to him care “Sanathana Sarathi”.)

“Dada” and We

—*John Hislop*

1

The topic of this talk is, who is Swami? Who are you? And, what is the relationship between Swami and you?

Here is the West one starts to learn who Swami is, in the case of most of us; by hearing someone tell about Him. Some people, like Elsie Cowan and my wife, Magdalena, have a different kind of first contact. Elsie, under the pressure of strong emotion, conceived the idea that there must be a supreme guru. She called upon such a guru, and it was Sai Baba who appeared to her inner sight. Magdalena, at the age of about one year, just learning to walk, saw Shirdi Baba standing in characteristic pose in the corner, of the garden of the family home in Havana. She started to toddle towards Him saying "Dada, Dada," then became confused because her real daddy was standing at the entrance to the house. Last year while we were in India, Swami confirmed to Magdalena that her experience was a fact, and He described His costume and how He was standing.

But most of us hear of Sai Baba from someone else. The first wave of information here in California came from Bob Raymer and his friends. The second wave came from Indra Devi and her friends. Indra Devi heard from Mr. Murphet in Madras; Mr. Murphet first heard from Bob Raymer when Bob was in India; Bob heard from the girl who later became his wife; she in turn heard from an European friend. The beginning link in this chain of information is unknown.

When, finally, we meet Sai Baba in person, we expand our knowledge of Him. For Westerners, the first chance, usually, to be close to Swami is when He goes to the room of the foreign group, sits on the floor with them, and invites them to express their spiritual doubts. We see before us what appears to be an Indian man of dark brown skin, slight in build, with a mass of brown hair with golden highlights framing His face. We are naturally as observant as possible when we meet this extraordinary being of whom we have heard such strange stories. All senses are alert. And our mind and our intelligence tend to be wide-awake. We note that His features are sensitive and at once reflect changes of mood and thought. He has a sweet and loving smile, like that of an innocent and affectionate child. His eyes are dark brown, soft and melting, and sparkle with intelligence and humor. His voice is sweet and tender like that of a mother, sometimes gay with laughter and wit like that of a friend and companion, at other time stern and serious like the voice of a father. The movement of His body as He sits, arises, and walks about is graceful and flowing and extremely light. His hands are expressive. There is a faint perfume in the air which Magdalena says is Jasmine. On our way home from India in March I awoke in Honolulu to that perfume which lasted 10 to 12 seconds. Swami does not wear perfume; this I know from close members of His staff who sleep in the same room. Yet; where He is there is perfume in the air.

One would need to be very negative to be other than captivated and delighted by the first impression of Sai Baba. But, as we sit close to Him, we quickly realize that here is far far more than an elegant and charming Indian man. Our perception deepens, beyond the senses, and we become aware of a subtle yet total beauty that has quietly filled the room. And, at that subtle level, where we have awakened, we feel a current of compassion and love and we know that the source is Sai Baba. Suddenly, our mind is at peace and we experience an upflow of happiness in the heart. All care drops away. Our ordinary world has fallen out of sight into the past. Only our happy, blissful state in the present is real. The experience is so real that tears come to the eyes, and some people find themselves crying. But the ecstasy that has come with Swami's presence becomes still more intense when He answers questions and speaks of matter spiritual. The depth and divine wisdom of His words carries such a thrill of truth that it almost seems that one's consciousness cannot bear the intense joy that fills the heart and the mind.

Whereas the senses report that Swami is a man, the more subtle levels of perception are not satisfied with that explanation. The deeper awareness only serves to sharpen the question, Who is Swami? How can one ever penetrate such a mystery and know the truth? At this point it becomes evident that the senses as an instrument of inquiry are not going to be adequate, for they cannot go beyond that which is seen; heard, and touched. To carry on a search that eventually must go far beyond sensory limits, we will need to rely on other tools of inquiry such as intelligence, detachment; and discrimination.

Intelligence at once indicates that two avenues need to be explored. Whatever and whoever Swami is, He is a phenomenon that has occurred in India, so it is obvious that we must ask in India how He is regarded by the Indian people. Also, Swami has given talks which have been translated by Mr. Kasturi, so it is obvious that we must study His own words to see if they give a clue to the question, Who is Swami?

As one begins to ask questions about Swami and engage in conversations about Him, one comes flatly up against the fact that He is regarded as being God Himself. Regardless of how shocking and even dismaying this viewpoint may be to western mind when first directly encountered, the fact is that not only the devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam, but millions of people at all levels of society throughout India look upon Sai Baba as being no other than God Himself. As one enquires further, he finds that the belief in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the Divine Being arises from Indian religious history and tradition, from personal experience, and from Swami's own statements about Himself.

From the reports that one can read and listen to, many many people have personal experiences related to Swami that are so far beyond the normal and customary that Divine Grace seems to be the only explanation. This has nothing to do with the natural glamour of distance. Those who appear to be the closest to Swami, who for years have slept in the same room, and who accompany Him in the car also regard Swami as God Incarnate, this belief is daily confirmed by their personal experiences.

From the viewpoint of Indian history and the sacred scriptures, Swami is seen as a Divine Avatar in the same tradition as Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. The great seers of India, from time

immemorial, have stated that from age to age God fashions for Himself a human form and is born amongst men that His Nature amongst men is Truth and Love and that His purpose is to restore righteousness and subdue the evil that has arisen through human craving and egotism. The ultimate undifferentiated Divine principle, that which is uncompounded that which remains without time and space when all else has been subtracted, that which is manifest in the heart of the atom and in the whole of creation, universe upon universe without end limits itself to human form. This Incarnation in no way violates Its Omni presence (Its universal Presence), its Omniscience (its total knowledge at all times), Its Omnipotence (Its limitless power of creation, preservation, and dissolution). In general, this is what is meant by the term, Divine Avatar. With this as the identity of Swami, nothing can be beyond His Will, all is as play.

And what does Swami Himself have to say on, the topic of His Identity?

All quotations that I will read are from SATHYA SAI SPEAKS, Vol. VI .

Page 84, "The Doctor who is presiding over this Hospital Day is known to Me since many years; he was coming to Shirdi and is very much attached to Me since the first day he came, there. Though the Shirdi body and this body are different, the Person who is in the body is the same; and, so, I recognize and reward all who come to either place."

Swami has said that this Sai Avatar is threefold; that It is Incarnate in time sequence as Shirdi Baba, Sai Baba and Sai Prema.

As I continue with the quotations on the topic of Swami's Identity, may I suggest that you be conscious of their cumulative import 'and' significance.

Page 207, "I do not want the impression to gain ground that I desire this Name and Form to be publicised. I have not come to set afoot a new cult, I do not want people to be misled on this point. I affirm that this Sai Form is the Form of all the various Names that man uses for the adoration of the Divine. So, I am teaching that no distinction should be made between the Names—Rama, Krishna, Ishwara, Sai—for they are all My Names."

Page 227, "I have come to light the Lamp of Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular Dharma, like the Hindu Dharma. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect the followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any other fold. I have come to tell you of this Universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle, this Path of Love, this Dharma of Love, this duty of Love, this obligation of Love."

Page 87, "This Prema (Love) is my distinctive mark, not the creation of material objects or of health and happiness, by sheer exercise of Will. You might consider what you call 'miracles' as the most direct sign of Divinity; but the Love that welcomes you all, that blesses all, that makes Me rush to the presence of the seekers, the suffering and the distressed in distant lands or wherever they are, that is the real sign! It is that which declares that I am Sai Baba."

Page 277, "I am Ananda-swarupa; My nature is Ananda (Bliss); Ananda is My sign. Now that the Formless, Attributeless principle has come in human form, be earnest to observe the orders given for your own Liberation. Do not castaway the nectar of Grace when it is offered."

Page 168, "Dedicate your heart to God; God will be one with you; the heart of your heart. Do not exaggerate the creation and the manifestation of the Linga, it is only the manifestation of an Atom of My Universe, there are things more worthy of adoration; universal love, the teaching of Dharma, the revival of the Vedas, the fostering of the good, the benediction on those who seek the Lord."

Page 67, "The Avatar of Krishna was a full incarnation; with all the sixteen facets of glory. In the Avatar of Rama, out of the sixteen, the three brothers had one each and Parasurama, the contemporary, had one until Rama met Him and overpowered Him and drew within Himself the fraction of the Divine power that He had. Other incarnations were for ad hoc purposes, the suppression of evil represented by one evil person or a group of persons. But in this Kali age, the wicked have to be reformed and reconstructed through love and compassion. That is why this Avatar has come unarmed. It was come with the message of Love. The only weapon which can transform the vile and the vicious is the Name of the Lord uttered with Love."

Page 210, "You elaborate in your lectures the unique powers of Sai, the incidents that are described as 'miracles' in books written on Me' by some persons. But, I request you not to attach importance to these. Do not exaggerate their significance; the most significant and important power is, let me tell you, My Prema (Love). I may turn the sky into earth, or earth into sky; but, that is not the sign of Divine Might. It is the Prema, the Sahana, effective, universal, ever present, that is the unique sign.

"Since at this place, those who have devotion are gathered and people of all nations have come, I cannot but tell you one fact. This is the very first time that a World Conference is held, of persons devoted, while the Incarnation is present before every one, with the body assumed for the purpose, bearing the Name that is chosen for it by Itself. I must tell you this fact, because, ninety nine persons out of one hundred amongst you do not know My Reality.

"In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My Reality either today, or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry even if all mankind joins in the effort. But, in a short time, you will become cognisant of the Bliss showered by the Divine Principle which has taken upon itself this sacred body and this sacred Name. Your good fortune which will provide you this chance is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints and even personalities embodying facets of Divine Glory!

"Since I move about with you, eat like you and talk with you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but an instance of common humanity. Be warned against this mistake. I am also deluding you by My singing with you, talking with you and engaging Myself in activities with you. But, any moment, My Divinity may be revealed to you; you have to be ready, prepared for that moment. Since Divinity is enveloped by human-ness, you must endeavour to overcome the Maya (Delusion) that hides it from your eyes.

"This is a Human Form, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, 'all Names and Forms ascribed by man to God' are manifest. Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only instal, in the altar of your heart, steady Faith in My Divinity, you can win a Vision of My Reality."

So, for whatever weight you choose to give it, Indian tradition, personal experience, and Sathya Sai's statement as to His Nature unite to declare that from time to time the Universal Divine Principle incarnates in human form, that today is such a time, and that the Sai Form is the Divine Incarnation. This is the answer that we come upon when we ask the question, Who is Sai Baba? The words which answer the question have all the limitation of words. They are not the actual perception, the word is not the thing. But Swami assures us that it is possible to go beyond the words and know His Reality.

Gifts of Grace

—Dr. N. Murthy Ph.D.

Who has not felt thrilled at the sight of the Wave of Bhagavan's Hand, creating instantaneously, Vibhuti, sweets of unique flavour and taste, Nectar Divine, fruits, lockets, photographs of Himself by His "quick photography", images of godheads and hundreds of other things? Who has not felt blessed at being the recipient of these Gifts of Grace?

"Don't attach much significance to these manifestations of My Divine power—what you call miracles," warns Bhagavan. "The most important characteristic of my Divinity is Prema," reminds. "When the son comes home for vacation, the mother gives gifts. Doesn't she? That is why I shower on you these gifts," He explains. "Come with empty hands, I shall fill them," He assures. "These gifts are My visiting cards," He smiles!

These gifts of Grace are material things; they are apparently the same as those manufactured and sold in the market. And anyone who has not witnessed the "Phenomenon" of the materialisation will miss its import.

The objects—the products of His Divine Power—are less important than the way Bhagawan showers on us these Gifts of Grace. Watch Him before He creates these gifts. There is a flash of smile. Watch! There! He is waving His Hand, as if it is necessary for Him to wave His Hand to create! No. He waves so that we may not miss the thrill of seeing the Act before our very eyes. It all happens so instantaneously that we may miss it. He wishes that we should see the creation.

"Would you like to have some gift?" He asks you. "Will you have something to wear he if Swami gives?" He waits for your answer. Then He waves His hand, as you watch intently, and shows you the glistening gift—a silver ring which He puts on your finger Himself. Smiling all the time, He says, "You see! The Goldsmith has to take the measurement of your finger before he can make a ring of the right size for you." "But" He beams, "Swami does not have to take any measurements!" He explains, lest you should miss the significance of His Divine Power. He says

all this in a casual way. There is no feeling that He is the Giver and that you are the recipient; there is no touch of ego, speaking from a human standpoint!

These Gifts of Grace remind us all the time, even when we are lost in the humdrum of life, the precious moments when we were face to face with God in human frame. They give courage and faith that He is with us and remind us His reassuring words, "Why fear when I am here!"

My Experiences

The common questions often asked by inquisitive friends, visitors and acquaintances with a desire to know about Sri Sri Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba are (1) What attracted me towards him? (2) How I am attached to him? And (3) Why I revere him? I tried to answer to some extent the last question in the book "At the Lotus Feet." I do not know what exactly attracted me towards Him as I do not have the capacity to clearly understand that but the steps that led me towards Him, I shall try to explain below:

It was the year 1942 when I spent my vacation at Kurnool. , With a group of relatives I visited a place, 'Brahma Gundam' near Kurnool where a sacred spring fills a tank. After a bath in the tank we learnt that a divine lady with super natural powers was staying in a house near by. I got an intense desire to see her though that was not the day on which she would give *darshan*, according to the inmates of the house. When I sent word that I had a great desire to have her *darshan* at least the next day, she called us in. It is for the first time in my life that I have seen miracles being performed. She created a date fruit that was so graciously offered to me with her blessings although I stood behind her out of her sight. While coming out of the place with pleasure and satisfaction one of the co-devotees present at that place informed me of a still greater miracle seen by him in Anantapur district where a kshatriya boy in his fourteenth year turned into a yogi with unimaginable powers of creation. This information thrilled me but I could not go and witness this balayogi although I desired very much having his *darshan*. Can this be called a contact with Him? I do not know as I forgot that incident completely till I was reminded of it by Bhagavan Sri Sri Sri Sathya Sai Baba in my first meeting with him at Hyderabad in 1962.

This is the difference in the memory of an ordinary mortal like me and the Avatar of Bhagavan. What is it that attracted me towards Him? The answer is perhaps that a part of the whole always gets attracted towards the whole from which it has emerged.

At Hyderabad one of the memorable incidents I have witnessed was the *darshan* of Baba by a poor man, with his family. Several *bhaktas* in good positions viz., a Governor, Secretaries and high officials visited the place where Bhagavan was residing, to have his *darshan*. None of them were admitted in, as visitors could get in only under Bhagavan's desire and instructions. Every minute passing by was increasing the anxiety of the *bhaktas* outside. At that time a poor middle-aged man with shabby clothes got down from a rikshaw with his wife and a child. When all the elite of the city were waiting outside the house, this family got in as if they were no strangers to this new house. To the surprise of all of us, they were received by Bhagavan who blessed them in

a private interview. This incident impressed me and confirmed my childhood learning that 'God is with the poor'. Baba has no distinction between the rich and the poor, between the haves and have-nots. He is with His *bhaktas* and the attachment with Him is only known to Him as the yard stick to measure it is in His position.

I had a number of subsequent personal meetings with Baba and had the fortune of learning every time several new points that drive me closer and close; to His feet. On a Sunday I visited Brindavan at Bangalore to have Bhagavan's *darshan*. That was the first initiation on *Dhyana* communicated to about 400 selected *bhaktas* personally by Bhagavan. We were instructed to practice *Dhyana* regularly every day at 5 a.m. in *Brahmamuhurtham*. The pleasure of participating and the fruits of *Dhyana* have to be realised by oneself and cannot be explained or written. After the meeting we were waiting to take leave of Baba. After satisfying a number of His *bhaktas* Bhagavan came to us and in His talk said in a humourous tone, "I shall certainly come to Delhi only when you are there." His patting me on my shoulder with this remark made me recollect how a couple of months earlier when I heard that Baba was visiting Delhi and I was to go in those days abroad, I felt terribly depressed and told my friends that Bhagavan would not come when I was away. When I heard Bhagavan repeating what I said at Delhi, I immediately burst out that I said the same thing at Delhi. Baba nodded and said that He knew it.

In one of my meetings Bhagavan indicated that everybody should visit Puttaparthi at least once. Within a few months, I had the fortune of visiting Puttaparthi in March 1967 with three other senior scientist colleagues of mine. That was a few days before Sivarathri. On arrival at Puttaparthi we were told that normally Bhagavan would not give interviews in those days. I was not sorry because my desire was only to see Puttaparthi as directed by Bhagavan. To our good luck, however, Baba specially favoured us by giving His *darshan*. In all we were six with two other visitors. I had the fortune of being asked to sit very close to Bhagavan and translate His discourses to my friends into English. In a few minutes He created *Vibhuti* with a wave of His hand and distributed it to all of us. Ten minutes later in the middle of His discourse again with a wave of His hand He created and distributed a handful of *halwa* to each one of us. The quantity of *halwa* distributed to us was much more than what could be held in both the palms put together. I being the last to receive the Prasad began to look at His palm to see what remained there. His hands were absolutely clean while our hands were full of grease with *halwa*. After showing a few more miracles during His discourse on '*adhyathmika*'. He asked me to find out whether any of my colleagues would worship. When all of us said yes He again created exactly six copies of Bhagavan's photo and distributed them to us. Being thrilled with the extraordinary grace extended to us by Bhagavan we took leave of Him to return to Bangalore by the evening. Just before our departure at 4.30 P.M. He gave us His *darshan* near our room and enquired whether we were starting back to Bangalore. I told Bhagavan that we would start immediately and reach Bangalore by 9.30 P.M. Bhagavan laughed and said that we would not reach before 10.30 P.M. I went to the extent of contradicting Him by saying that five hours time was mere than enough, when He laughed again and left us. We started immediately with complete satisfaction remembering over and over again the thrilling incidents witnessed by us. The driver who was well acquainted with the route was proceeding with full speed. We recovered from our thrills after about a couple of hours and discovered that with all his acquaintance the driver took us in a wrong direction in the middle of the journey necessitating a retrace of about 20 miles. I

immediately felt how foolish it was on my part to insist on my calculations and how accurate Bhagavan was in giving us the correct time required. We reached Bangalore at 11 P.M.

What is the significance of the miracles performed by Bhagavan? They are certainly not for *pradarsana* (exhibition) as there is no personal gain involved in it but only for *Nidarsana* (visible proof) and create confidence in *bhaktas* to lead them to the path of truth. Whatever Bhagavan spoke and heard by me has come true, sometimes in a short period and sometimes after years. My personal experience during the several contacts with Bhagavan has convinced me that He is an embodiment of *Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, and Prema*—a divine stature in human form—.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3

Dileepa gathered together his ministers, scholars and sages and communicated to them his intention to celebrate the Coronation and marriage of his son; they wholeheartedly agreed and the two functions were held in great pomp. The father then gave the Prince, Raghu, valuable advice on administration, emphasising the need to promote the study of the Vedas, and the fostering of scholars learned in Vedic lore, to lay down laws that will promote popular progress. After this, he moved into the forest, with the queen, bent on acquiring the Grace of God.

Emperor Raghu ruled the kingdom, from that day, in accordance with the directives given by the pundits and with the twin objectives of the happiness of his subjects, and the promotion of moral living. He believed that these two are as vital as breath and he spared no pains in pursuing these ideals, and making his ministers adhere, to that path. Though young, he was rich in virtue. However tough a problem happened to be, he grasped it quick and discovered the means of solving it; he loosened all tangles and rendered his subjects happy and contented. Wicked kings were taught severe lessons by him. He won them over by peaceful approaches, or by clever, diplomatic tactics, or by moving a few steps towards them in order to win them over, or openly breaking with them and defeating them on the field of battle.

He was engaged in activities that ensured the welfare of the people and promoted the culture enshrined in the Vedas. All classes of people extolled his rule, irrespective of age, economic status, or attainments. They said he was proving himself, superior to his father in physical prowess, courage, righteous conduct and compassion. Everyone said that he brought rich significance to the name he bore.

Raghu paid special attention to the care and comfort of the hermits engaged in asceticism in the forests; he saw that they were saved from harassment and himself supervised arrangements for assuring them protection and encouragement. So, he received their blessings and grace in ample measure. One day, the student—hermit, Kautsu, disciple of Varathantu, came to court after finishing his studies—and, prayed to the King to help him in securing the Offering which he had, in duty bound, to submit to his preceptor. Raghu gave him the money that he wanted; Kautsu was happy that the gift he received was pure, collected from the people without causing

them any distress, and paid by them gladly and gratefully; Raghu did not collect even a paisa more than was absolutely needed, for he was ever afraid of the anger of God, seeking as he did, Divine Grace. The money was also handed over, with great love and consideration, and so, Kautsu was overwhelmed with joy and gratefulness. His heart was full and he spoke lovingly to the King, "May you be blessed soon with a son, who will achieve worldwide fame." With this, he left the presence of the ruler.

True to his words, ten months later, Raghu was endowed with a son, dazzling in splendour, like a diamond! The rites of baptism and naming were performed by the palace priests; he was named 'Aja'. He was a most charming babe. He grew into a sprightly boy, full of eagerness to learn all the arts and sciences. He became an adept in each of them. His fame as a great scholar and a very accomplished lad spread throughout the land. In course of time, Raghu also felt his father's urge to place on the prince's head the burden of the sceptre and himself retire into the forest for the contemplation of God, which he longed for. He too called on the ministers to arrange for the transfer of authority by means of the rite of Coronation and to synchronise that rite with the marriage of Aja with a suitable bride Indumathi, the sister of Bhojaraja, the ruler of Magadha was the bride chosen to be the life partner of Aja. After the installation of Aja on the throne, the royal parents left for their forest hermitage.

Aja, with the queen as his loving partner, won the loyalty of the subjects by his wisdom and sympathy; they scrupulously followed the advice given by Raghu about the ways of administration. Aja loved and revered the world and its inhabitants as but the reflections and images of the Indumathi he loved so deeply; so, he was full of happiness and exultation. They used to spend days and weeks in beautiful sylvan retreats, admiring the glory and variety of nature.

Meanwhile, the queen gave birth to a son. The parents were overjoyed at this happy event; they had the news communicated to their revered preceptor, Vasishta; they were busy with the ceremonial rites that had to be done for the newborn baby; he was named Dasaratha.

Dasaratha was indeed, the pet of every one who saw him and had the privilege of fondling him. The child tossed its limbs about and waved its hands as if he was excited and full of vitality and joy. It appeared as if it was fed on Ananda and it lived only for imparting Ananda to all!

One day, Aja and Indumathi betook themselves into the forest as was their wont, for recreation in lap of nature. The silence and the sublimity of that day were even more appealing than on other days. They sat in the shade of a tree, and conversed endearingly, when the wind rose heavy and strong. It brought a fragrance, sweet beyond description! And, they could hear the captivating strains of divine music! They rose and searched all around them for the cause of these mysterious gifts. They found high above their heads, between the clouds in the sky, Narada, the "mental child" of Brahma, (His Manasa Putra, as he is called), moving fast somewhere. Even as they were watching him, a flower from the wreath he was wearing on his tuft loosened itself and wafted by the wind, it fell right on top of the head of Indumathi! Aja was amazed at this incident; but, he was shocked to find that the queen fell instantly on the ground in a faint and closed her eyes forever!

The death of the woman he loved, as intimately as his own breath, caused desperate grief to the ruler; his lamentation shook the forest from end to end. The earth quaked in, sympathy; the trees stood still in their places, rooted, in wonder at the reason for the sorrow that filled the royal heart and overflowed it. Narada heard the wail of the king, and his sobs and groans as he wept over corpse of his beloved. He came down to stand by his side and endeavoured to console his agony. "Raja!" he said, "Sorrow is of no avail when death overtakes: the body is prone to birth and death; what brings about birth brings about death too; to seek to know Why they happen is an exercise of insanity. The acts of God are beyond "cause-and-effect" chains. Ordinary intellects cannot unravel them; they can at best guess the reason, as far as their faculty reaches. How can the intellect grasp something out of reach? Death is inevitable for each embodied being.

"However, since the death today of Indumathi is resonant with some strangeness, I have to tell you a little about its reason" Narada said. He drew Aja near him and said, "Listen! In former days, the sage Thrunabindu was engaged in extreme asceticism, and Indra resolved to test his attainments and the depth of his equanimity. He dispatched a Divine enchantress, named Harini to attract him into the world of sensualism. But the sage was immune to her wiles and remained unaffected. He opened his eyes and said, "You do not seem to be an ordinary woman; you are perhaps a godly damsel. Well, whoever you are; you must suffer the penalty for resolving to execute a fell deed, a nefarious plan! So, be born as a human being, fallen from heaven; learn what it is to be a mortal human." Cursing her thus, the sage closed his eyes and plunged into meditation again.

Harini shook with fear and shed profuse tears of repentance; she prayed for pardon and for the cancellation of her exile from heaven. She pleaded pathetically for the removal of the curse. At this, the sage melted a little and said, "O weak one! It is not possible for me to retake my words; but I shall indicate an occasion when you will be released. Listen! The moment a flower from heaven falls on your head, your human frame will fall and you can return to heaven. Indumathi is that divine damsel and she has found her release this day. When a flower from that garland I wore fell on her, she rid herself of the curse. Why grieve over this? It is of no avail." Narada spoke of the duties of a monarch and his responsibility and the example he must be to all; he spoke of the evanescent nature of life, and the nature of death, the ultimate fate of all things that are born. After this, Narada wended his way, along the sky.

Unable to do anything to save his beloved Aja performed the obsequies and reached the capital city; he was heavy with grief; only Prince Dasaratha gave him some consolation and renewed his will to live; he spent his days in morose dreariness. Since Dasaratha was now a full-grown youth, he made over the kingdom to him and sat on the bank of the Sarayu river, bent on fulfilling the vow of "non-acceptance-of-food,"—Anasna; he did not return to the palace any more, but denying himself the wherewithal to continue life, he caused life itself to become extinct. As soon as Dasaratha heard the news, he hastened quickly to the Sarayu bank, and bewailed the loss of his dear father. He arranged for the funeral without delay and felt some relief that his father had given up life, through a ritualistic vow. He drew strength from this fact and resumed his duties as the ruler, with full mastery of all his faculties.

Within a short time, the fame of Dasaratha illumined all quarters, like the rays of the rising sun. He had the intrepidity and skill of ten charioteers rolled into one and so, the name Dasaratha

(the-ten-chariot-hero) was rendered most, appropriate. No one could stand up against the onrush of his mighty chariot! Every contemporary ruler was mortally afraid of his prowess and paid homage to his throne.

The world extolled him as a hero without equal, a paragon of virtue, a statesman of the highest stature. Ravana, the barbarian King of Lanka, heard of him and of his fame. He was so filled with envy that he determined on a wicked plan to destroy Dasaratha, by any means, fair or foul. Ravana sought for an excuse to provoke Dasaratha into a fight; one day, he sent word through a Rakshasa (barbarian) messenger, that unless tribute was paid to him, he would have to meet Dasaratha on the battlefield and demonstrate his superior might in war. This was against international morality, but, what morality does a Rakshasa respect?

When Dasaratha heard the messenger speak, he laughed outright, in derision. Even while the messenger was looking on, he shot sharp deadly arrows which reached Lanka itself and fastened the gates of that City! Then addressing the envoys, Dasaratha said, "Well, Sirs! I have now made fast the doors of your fortress city; your master cannot open them, however hard he may try; that is the tribute I am paying your impertinent lord." When the envoys returned and informed Ravana of this, he was shocked to find all the doors closed fast; the desperate efforts made by Ravana with all his men met with failure; they could not open the gates. When Ravana was struck with shame at the recognition of his defeat, strangely enough, the arrows returned to Ayodhya and the doors flew open!

Ravana, however, decided that he must overpower all the rulers of the world and, realising that he could do so only by winning Graces he went over to the depths of the forest and selected a favourable, auspicious spot for his ascetic practices.

(To be continued)

Teach Me, Baba!

Mandirs and musjids, and churches in East and West,
Conceal Thy Face, O First and only Fair!
For, Thou art Love Incarnate, Thou dwellest in the heart
To Thee, I turn and pray: Lead me to Thyself
Thou art buddhi, mind, my heart and Will
Thou act my light and joy! My desire, destiny
Thou art my bhakthi, my devotion supreme!

Teach me to cast aside all pride of action
And, in Thy pure service, Pure Nothing be!
Teach me how I may receive Thy Grace
In silent humility! O, sublime One!
Teach me to sing, in silence still,
Like the candle burning in the night!

And like the candle, at dawn,

In silence at Thy Feet,
Expire!

—*SDK*.

The College Day

Thousands gathered at Brindavan, Whitefield, on Friday, the 27th March, to share in the joy and enthusiasm of the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College, who were celebrating that day, their First College Day. The Brindavan garden was tastefully decorated, with festoon] and flags, and floral arches and pathways by the students. Baba moved among them, showering inspiration and instruction, and the Grace that strengthens and sustains.

At 5 P. M., with Dr. V. K. Gokak, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bangalore, Sri T. K. Tukol the present Vice-Chancellor and His Excellency Sri Dharma Vira, Governor of Mysore, the President of the College Day celebrations, Baba proceeded to the College and showed them around the rooms and laboratories; He introduced to them the members of the Sathya Sai Education Foundation, College Committees and the Staff. Then, the distinguished guests ascended the Dais and the Public Meeting began.

Dr. V. K. Gokak while welcoming the gathering, spoke of the College as having been established on the noblest traditions of India; it strove to realise the ideals of the ancient Dharma under the guidance of Baba, who is the 'hand, head, heart and soul' of the institution. "If a vote is taken to discover the most popular teacher of the College, 100% of the votes will be given to Baba Himself!" he declared.

The Principal read the report of the College, and later, Vice-Chancellor Sri Tukol gave away the prizes to the winners in sports, N.C.C. literary and other competitions. The prize for the best student of the College, academically as well as in character, was awarded, amidst cheers, to the blind student, Sudhir.

Sri Tukol said, "Education is a continuous process of spiritual development, and the Gurukula system was best suited for it. The defects that are so glaring in our College education are absent here. This College has a unique discipline and emphasis on moral training and all-round progress, based on love and self-respect. It is a rare event in this world for a divine personality to be associated with the practical details of College f education and administration. I am sure the boys and girls studying in this College feel greater than what they are and are dedicating themselves to noble ideals. With Sai's Blessings, I hope to introduce moral instruction on the same lines in the Colleges of this University, and make amends for the lapse that has persisted so long."

Governor Dharmavira confessed that he was happy to come to a College with a welcome change in outlook and activity. "This College and the others that Baba has established mark a great epoch in the history of education. Attention is paid here to physical improvement, academic proficiency, and character development. In these days of the sinister appeal of chaos and

violence, students are woefully misguided by their leaders; the only response of the students to their persuasion must be a stern refusal to be misguided by these self-seeking people. These are the precious years when you have to go through the preparatory process of building up stamina, character and intelligence, so that you can fulfil the tasks that lie before you. Cultivate the qualities of dedication, application and equanimity; so that you may lead successful lives."

Baba spoke in Kannada for more than an hour, stressing the ancient ideals of Sathyam Vada (Speak the Truth) Dharmam Chara (Act Righteously) and the equally valid twin commands of the Upanishads, "Matr devo bhava (Revere your mother as Divine), Pitr devo bhava (Revere your father as divine). He spoke of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as treasure houses of invaluable examples or which men and women all over the world can model themselves. (Fuller version of the discourse will appear in the May number of this magazine).

Baba gave a synopsis of the Telugu play (written and directed by Him) that was later put on the stage by the students and members of the Staff.

The play 'Pandava Vijaya' reveals, Baba said, that joy is but the gap between two griefs and that grief is but the interlude between two joys. The Five Pandava Brothers and the Queen are exulting in their triumph over to Kaurava cousins, through the Divine intercession of Lord Krishna; the next scene describes the vow taken by Aswathama that he will slay the Pandavas in revenge and present their heads to his dying master, the eldest of the Kauravas! He acquires the Grace of Siva, but is deluded in the slaughter of the 'five sons of the Pandavas,' instead! This plunges the Brothers and the Queen in inconsolable agony. Krishna consol them, telling them about the evanescence of both joy and grief; but He prevents the extinction of the Pandava Dynasty, granting life to the stillborn babe of Arjuna's grandson. That brings the spark of joy, once again into the gloom.

The students rendered the play, with great skill, conveying the lesson Baba had planted in it. The students and guests were entertained at dinner, Baba moving among them until late at night instilling joy and courage in all.

—(Ed.)

“Dada” and “We”

—John Hislop

II

Now, we ask a second question, fully equal to the first question in the vastness of its mystery: The question, who are you? Who am I? If one looks at the question carefully, he finds that he really and truly does not know who he is. Everything that one assumes he knows about himself derives from the appearance of things, how things appear to be to the senses and to the mind. Also, what one thinks he has learned about himself during his lifetime derives from experiences that are not direct and simple, but instead are a mixture and a muddle of reality, delusion, preconceived notions, and personal idiosyncrasy—all of it colored and twisted by desire and prejudice. From these messy experiences one draws conclusions about who he is. And then, finally, there are the contradictory statements about one's nature and identity as made by all the experts: the schoolteacher, one's parents, the preacher, the psychologist, the newspaper, the scientist. Now, put the whole mess together, mix well, and give it a name like John or Mary, and the result is what one carries around in his subconscious as his identity. And, what is worse, if possible—that confused and distorted identity shapes our attitudes to other people and to life in general.

The fact is, one does not even know what a man really is. One accepts a system of ideas in which men are seen as self-willed independent entities separate from, one another. But this is now a self-evident truth secure from any challenge. It is just a system of observations and ideas that accommodates itself to the appearance of things like one of those final and absolute scientific truths that in fact are not absolute at all, for they have to be modified from time to time in the light of new, research and discovery.

What is the reality behind the appearance of oneself? What a fantastic and amazing phenomenon one is! This body here, these other bodies in front of me, what is behind this appearance? To move about, to have life—the air, nature around us, the sky, the emotions and thoughts—how unfamiliar and mysterious they are when we take a fresh look at them! The phenomenon of ourself, and the phenomenon of which one seems to be a part is so strange, so amazing, so incredible that one's heart pounds furiously and one does not know what to do or think.

One really has to reject the entire structure of ideas that one has built up about who and what one is. Under intense scrutiny, the whole structure of ideas about oneself falls apart, and one realizes that he has to begin a new self-inquiry having nothing to do with the old ideas, most of which are second-hand and obviously faulty and inadequate.

So, having seen how full of error and how dangerous are the accumulated ideas of the past as to who one is, let us see what Sai Baba has to say on the subject.

Swami tells us that man is not at all what he thinks he is; that in his real and, true identity man is only a movement of Love, a dance of Bliss against the back ground of the Maya of the Lord,

against the illusion of His Multiplicity. He assures us that the dancer is not different from the Lord, that, indeed, the Dancer is none other than the Lord Himself.

Again, the following quotations are from SATHYA SAI SPEAKS, Vol. VI.

Page 188. "Man is not merely a creature thrown up by nature in the process of an evolutionary gamble. He has a special meaning, a special mission, a unique role. He is Divinity encased in the human frame. Lord Krishna affirms in the Gita, 'A portion of Mine in the world of life is transformed into the individual. It is He who moves and motivates man. So, man is a unit of the Unity, he is a child of immortality, set in the background of this mortal frame. His mission is to merge in the God from whom he emerged. Heaven is not a supra-terrestrial region of perpetual spring; it is an inner experience, a state of supreme Bliss."

Page 224. "Your Reality is the Atma, a wave, of the Param-atma. The one object of this human existence is to visualize that Reality, that Atman, that relationship between the wave and the sea. All other activities are trivial; you share them with birds and beasts; but, this is the unique privilege of Man. He has clambered out of all the levels of animality, all the steps in the ladder of evolution, in order to inherit this high destiny. If all the years between birth and death are frittered away in seeking food and shelter, comfort and pleasure as animals do, man is condemning himself to a further life sentence.

"Man is endowed with two special gifts: the Faculty of Reasoning and the Faculty of Analysis and Synthesis. Use these gifts for discovering the Truth of yourself, which is the Truth of every one else, of every thing else. All bodies are inspired by the same Divine Principle: all are urged by the same inner Motivator. The Vedas declare, 'God is the inner Reality of all beings. All this is enveloped by God. All this is God.' The same God shines in and through every one, whatever be the creed, colour, tribe, or territory. The Divine animates and activates all. Those who see difference are deluded; Love sees all as one Divine Family."

So, whether we choose to accept it or not, we are informed by Sathya Sai Baba as to who we really are. He gives the answer to the question, who are you? Who am I? And, the answer is: Swami's statement as made by Him when He was the Krishna Avatar, "A Portion of Mine in the world of life is transformed into the individual."

Let us now look at the question; what is the relationship between the two? Between Sai Baba, the Absolute Principle, and you, the individual.

Again quotations are from the same volume.

Page 272. "You need to know the answer to two problems only: Who is Baba? Who am I? And, the answer is I am the reflected image of Baba; Baba is the original of which I am the reflection. That is the relationship; that is the bond, whether you know it or not, whether the image is distorted or correct. "Your aim should be to please Me, to satisfy Me, to follow My directions. I have come, with certain tasks as My Mission. I too have certain vows to fulfil! They have been mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, also. I have to establish the supremacy of Dharma; I have to bear the burden of welfare of those who are immersed in thoughts of Me alone. So, the

best way to please Me is to see Me in all beings and serve them just as you would like to serve Me. That is the best form of the worship which will reach me."

Page 333. In previous ages, the incarnations of the Lord were not accepted as such by many. Only a few sages who had cultivated the inner, vision knew Their Reality. But today, while the currents of contradiction and controversy are undermining faith and adoration, the good fortune that has brought you face to face with Me is something for which you must thank the merit . Won through many lives. This is no ordinary good fortune. This Incarnation is moving with you, singing with you, talking with you, sharing with you your joy and grief, in order to console, encourage and cure. This relationship is something unique; it has to be kept unbroken, until the Goal is reached.

Page 161. The experiencer of the Prema is the inner I which is the reflection of the real I, the Atma. When the senses are out of action, that I will shine in its full glory. The senses are one's deadly foes; for, they drag your attention away from the source of joy inside you, to objects outside you, When you are convinced that they are at the bottom of this conspiracy to mislead you, you will certainly stop catering to them.

Page 163: Man's mind is too full of the world; his stomach is demanding too much of time and energy. His desires and wants are multiplying too fast for his capacity to satisfy them; his dreams are far too real for him: they lead him into false victories, absurd adventures. Engrossed in the analysis of the material world, he has lost all sense of sin, sweetness and sublimity; under this new dispensation, truth has become just a word in the dictionary. Compassion is reduced to a meaningless travesty. Humility, patience, reverence these are as invalid as a flame-less lamp in the far distance.

The only hold that man has in this dreadful darkness is the name of God. That is the raft which will take him across this, stormy sea, darkened by hate, and fear, churned by anxiety and terror.

Page 228. "Select any Name of His, any Name that appeals to you, select any Form of His; every day when you awaken to the call of the brightening East, recite the Name, meditate on the Form; have the Name and the Form as your companion, guide and guardian throughout the toils of the waking hours; when you retire for the night, offer grateful homage to God in that Form with that Name for being with you, by you, beside you, before you, behind you, all day long. If you stick to this discipline you cannot falter or fail."

In the quotations just read, as well as in other passages of his talks, Swami has answered the question, what is the relationship between Swami and you? He tells us that we are a reflection of His Reality. It is our Dharma, our, lifetime duty to reflect and express His Nature, which is Truth and Love for that is our real nature also And, it is our primal duty to free ourselves from the illusion of separateness, to merge into God, just as the droplets of spray flung into the air by wind and storm fall back and are no longer separate from the sea. The means to overcome the delusion of separateness are fully explained by Him in His various talks.

The pure Bliss of His Being is omnipresent, within and without, at all times. We may dive within at this very moment and know this Bliss, if we so choose. It is only delusion that we do not. Why not at this very moment open the heart and feel the eternal Bliss, that Swami says, is both Himself and our self? Do it, now.

Keeping Men Human

The aim of every educational institution should be to make man, human! If man does not grow to his full strength, he is made a beast; then, education becomes wasted effort. Discipline transforms the bestial and renders him, human. The teacher has to be well disciplined, in order that he may enforce discipline by example as well as by precept. If the teacher prohibits smoking, with a cigarette between his lips, that order will not be obeyed! When he does not come in time to the classroom, how can he insist on punctuality? It is a great burden that the teacher takes upon himself, when he enters upon that profession.

Steady care, enormous effort, these are essential when students are to be shaped and corrected. Their minds are tender, pure, innocent. The snake gourd is apt to grow crooked; so, gardeners tie a stone to its end and leave it hanging from the creeper. That makes it grow straight. So too, the mind of youth is apt to get crooked, under the influence of the sensuous and the glittering. The stone of discipline will help them grow straight. But, it should not be too heavy a stone! Avoid extremes, at all times, in all cases. Students will be good leaders for the country if proper discipline is enforced, in congenial atmosphere. Unlike the present generation of leaders, they will guide the people along righteous paths. They can serve as good followers, too. If they are led along the lines of morality and service, India will gain the front rank among the nations, truth will be triumphant, Dharma will be untarnished, and peace can be attained. Fine soldiers become fine generals. Young apprentices of peace will become fighters for peace and leaders of peace.

The primary responsibility of elders is to give children regulated food and recreation. Food has vast potency to form attitudes and impulses. When Bhishma partook of the food given by the “wicked” Kauravas, his moral courage failed him when it was most needed to correct their wickedness and cruelty! Observe strict discipline regarding quantity and quality of food; then, the intelligence of the students will grow sharp. They will earn more marks than remarks!

Teachers have to be vigilant, against the lowering of the moral sense among the students. For, the prosperity and welfare of the world and of future generations depend on moral values. Teachers are sculptors, who can carve the young boulders into beautiful idols of Rama or Krishna, Gauri or Sita.

Parents crave only that their children should become graduates, by some means or other; teachers too yearn for good results, in the examinations, but, they want it without putting themselves into any bother, teaching! But, immoral practices render man, sub-human. Honour once lost can never be recovered. One point, which appears small, let me draw your attention to.

When the teacher takes the roll-call, with attendance registers before him, he should call out names, not, serial numbers; he must know the names of the students. When he calls out one two three etc., and the pupils answer yes yes yes, they become ss's, or even asses! Beware! Students are not criminals in goal, remember, to be known only by their numbers!

Let the students learn to obey; that is the way, to learn to command. Inspire them to serve; that is the best instruction to become masters. Such a generation of students will certainly promote national and world welfare. Our schools can adopt many ways of imparting such discipline. Prayer is a good item in the time-table. Silence is an invaluable method. Practising equanimity is a third. Teach them not to get too much agitated or worried. The pendulum will start swinging, only when the key is turned! Help them to control egoistic desires and passions. Do not inflame their senses and enslave them to anger and passion. That is what elders are doing "I love students very much. I pour out My Love towards them. They should not enter the field of politics, clamouring for rights, not caring for the obligation that every right bring in its trail. Let them finish their studies. Develop the skill to distinguish good and bad, and then, there is enough time and chance to act in the field of politics. Instead, if they plunge into it now; they are harming both study and politics. If they stop or interrupt studies, imagine the mental anguish of the parents!

Teachers now have only the percentage of passes in the examination in view, while they teach. So, they teach only answers to likely questions; they don't teach the subjects fully and well. The students too forget what they are taught, as soon as the examinations are over. Their brains become empty, once what they have learnt is poured out! The subjects taught are useful, both in content and in the processes of thinking the learning involves. So, teachers have to place the real interest of the student in his heart; he must see that the matter taught is imprinted in the mind of the young, and is available for use, whenever wanted, later in life.

Students must write to their parent about their schools and their progress and the parents must be in touch with the masters and authorities about their children and the general progress and condition of the school. This will help to correct defects in time, and to the full. Another suggestion: Do not keep the young idle; and unoccupied. Wasting a single second is tantamount to wasting a precious gift. Time well utilised is like food well digested; it sustains and strengthens. Parents, teachers, and educationists must watch carefully for the effect, the consequence and the reaction of every step that they take in the field of education. Parents must observe rules strictly, so that their sons may learn to do the right. Take the case of an Engineer belonging to the Scheduled Castes, whose son is in College. The son is entitled to a scholarship only if the father has an income of less than 3000 rupees per year; so, the father tries tricks and persuasion by M. L. A.'s to bypass the rules! This is not proper; irrespective of the hardship involved, rules drawn up to benefit the needy have to be observed by all.

Again, students have to be taught the equality of all religions. I am arranging the staging of a play at the Sathya Sai Arts and Science College tomorrow, a play based on the Mahabharata incident of Aswathama and Upa-pandavas. The role of Krishna is played by a Muslim; Bhima and Arjuna are Christians; each of us is playing a role in the Grand Drama of Creation. Whatever the role, the individual has to appear in the appropriate costume, and repeat the lines and

gesticulate and act, in conformity. Do not inflict pain, nor suffer it yourself—that is the course one has to take in life.

If a school is not maintaining discipline, if its students are led away into the wilderness by self-seekers, the fault lies not in the children but, in the parents, the teachers, or in the committee. The committee may be caring for comfort (Come-for-tea)! However great a person may be, if he descends to low acts, he is to be judged as low. Convocations may be held in each College, so that friends may know and cheer the Successful students and all may get direct inspiration.

When a thing is well understood, it has its effects on the heart, the feelings and emotions. Duty is God; work is worship. Understand this well. Have a big current deposit in the bank; then, your cheque will be honoured. But, if the bank goes bankrupt, you will have only disaster. If the educational system, on whom all rely, goes bankrupt imagine the calamity! If the system is improved, the lacunae filled, the next generation will have good leaders and good followers.

I shall tell you one incident that happened. As soon as the question papers were distributed in the Hall, all the student examinees stood up as one! The Invigilating Staff were struck with wonder and even fear! But, they stood only, for a minute of silent prayer! This innovation is in vogue at the Sathya Sai College!

Changes like these mark the transformation, which ushers in peace and harmony, in the nation. Colleges should not compete in the number of students admitted and the fees and donations collected—quality, not, quantity should be the goal. A small number ensures greater individual attention, more intense discipline, better teaching and better learning.

—from **Baba's Discourse, Bangarupet 26-3-70**

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4

The asceticism of Ravana was so intensive and satisfying that Brahma was compelled to appear before him and offer to grant him, whatever boon he desired. "Ravana! Ask for anything you want! I shall give your heart's desire, without fail," said Brahma. Ravana revolved in his mind the insult he had suffered at the hands of Dasaratha; he argued that Dasaratha might get sons even mightier from whom he might suffer more; so, he asked the boon he wanted, "Lord! Bless me with this gift of Thy Grace: let no child be born from the loins of Dasaratha." At this, Brahma said, "So let it be" and disappeared froth the scene, lest Ravana might frame any other foul request if He were present before him!

Ravana strutted about, proud and devoid of fear, exulting over his own prowess and skill; meanwhile, another project entered his head! 'Dasaratha is a youth of marital age now; if I so contrive that he does not marry at all, it will make my safety doubly sure', he thought within himself! Looking about with the aid of his Rakshasa capabilities, he discerned that there was

great likelihood that Dasaratha will wed the daughter of the King of Kosala. So, he decided to put an end to that princess! When destruction is imminent, one's own reason turns crooked—as the saying goes! His reason turned turtle! He entered the Kosala kingdom stealthily, in disguise, and kidnapped the princess. Placing her in a wooden box, he cast it over the waves of the sea. Ravana could not see the truth that nothing can ever happen without the concurrence of the Divine Will. Brahma willed! And the box thus thrown by him was carried by the waves on to the shore. The place where it landed was a fine recreation area. The next day, Sumanthra, the Prime Minister of Dasaratha happened to visit the place, for a quiet holiday, to be spent in discussing within himself the problems of the State. His eyes fell on the box; he approached it and opened it. He was surprised to find in it a charming girl, with attractive shining eyes and a halo of divine splendour. Sumanthra was overcome with pity; he spoke soft and sweet to the girl, "Little one! How did it happen that you are inside this box?"

She replied, "Sir, I am the princess of the Kosala kingdom; my name is Kausalya. I am not aware how I came inside this box, nor who placed me in it. I was playing with my companions in the palace gardens; I do not remember what happened to me, afterwards." Sumanthra was moved by her simple and sincere statement. He said, "Such barbarian stratagems are resorted to only by Rakshasas; they are outside the ken of men! I shall take you to your father and place you in his hands. Come with me! Let us go, without delay."

Sumanthra placed her in his chariot and proceeded to Kosala, where he restored her to the King and recited before the Court the details known to him. The King too, interrogated Sumanthra in various ways. He discovered that Sumanthra was the minister at the Court of Dasaratha, King of Ayodhya and that his master was still unmarried. He was filled with joy at the discovery. He said, "Minister! You brought back to me this child of mine, saving her from destruction. So, I have resolved to give her in marriage to your master himself. Please return quickly to your city and inform the king of my offer." He honoured Sumanthra with due ceremony and sent him, with the Court Priest who was to communicate the offer of the bride, in strict Sastraic style, with appropriate auspicious presents.

Sumanthra told Dasaratha in detail all that had happened. In order to confirm his acceptance, Dasaratha sent back with the Court priest of Kosala his own Court Priest with the gifts and offerings of auspicious nature. The date and time were fixed; Dasaratha proceeded to the Kosala capital accompanied by a magnificent array of elephantry, chariotry, cavalry and infantry. The paean of music which marched with him reached the sky and echoed from the horizon. The marriage of Dasaratha and Kausalya was celebrated with resounding grandeur and splendour. The King of Kosala took Sumanthra near him and said, "you are the person who brought about this glory; of course, creation protection and destruction are the attributes of God and nothing ever happens without Him. Nevertheless, how can I repay the debt I owe you and demonstrate my gratitude to you? Please honour my offer and accept it; be wedded this day itself, in my capital city. If you agree, I shall arrange for the celebration of that joyous event this very day."

Dasaratha and Sumanthra gave their consent to the proposal. Sumanthra was married to the daughter of Veeradasa, of the clan of Garga. The news of the marriages of both King and Prime Minister at the same place, on the same day, spread throughout the City, nay, throughout the kingdom! The land was filled with wonder and delight. The festival lasted for three days; the

populace was treated to music, and several other forms of entertainment. Night and day were packed with excitement and joy.

On the fourth day, Dasaratha started back to Ayodhya, with his queen and courtiers as well as Minister Sumanthra with his bride and entourage; they entered the City amidst the acclamation of the people, His subjects were carried away by exultation at the marriages of both King and Minister; they danced in the streets and shouted "Jai" "Jai" till their throats got hoarse. They lined the streets to see their queen; they sprinkled rose water on the roads by which they came and welcomed them, waving flames of camphor before them.

King Dasaratha resumed his royal duties, and ruled the realm with his usual love and care; often, he went with his consort, on excursions into the forests, and spent his days happily. But as time sped through days, months and even years, the shadow of distress darkened the face of the King. For, the pang of childlessness haunted him.

The King consulted the priests, pundits and ministers at court and when he knew that their desires confirmed the earnest prayer of Kausalya, he married another wife, Sumithra.

Sumithra lived up to her name, for she was indeed full of companionable virtues. Kausalya and Sumithra were bound to each other by ties of affection, far stronger than those between a mother and child. Each yearned to give joy, the other; each had deep fortitude, detachment and sympathy towards the other! But, in spite of the lapse of many years, no signs of the King securing a successor to the throne were evident. Moved by despair, the King married a third wife, at the instance of the two queens. She was Kaika, the exquisitely charming daughter of the King of Kekaya, in Kashmir.

The King of Kekaya, however, laid down certain conditions, before agreeing to give his daughter away in marriage! He insisted that the son born of Kaika should have the right of accession to the throne; if the King of Ayodhya could not agree to this, he declared, he will not give his consent to the marriage at all. Garga, the Court Priest, brought back the message to Ayodhya; Kausalya and Sumithra had recognised the ardour of the King to wed the princess of Kekaya whose beauty was being extolled so highly by all. They felt that the duty of the true wife is to obey the least wish of the husband and do her best to help in the realisation of that wish. They also knew full well that the Royal Line of Ayodhya will never be polluted by the birth of a son, who will transcend the principles of Dharma—though Dasaratha might promise this day that the son of the third wife can succeed to the throne, the son of Kaika born in the famous dynasty will be certainly an embodiment of righteousness, free from blemish; so, they pleaded with him, with palms meeting in prayer, "Lord! What greater happiness have we than yours? Accept the conditions laid by the King of Kekaya and wed his daughter and ensure the continuity of this dynasty of Raghu. There is no need to spend even a minute's thought upon this." The words of the queens fanned his native ardour to an even greater flame; therefore, the King sent Garga back with many presents, agreeing to the terms and informing the King that he was following fast, for the wedding ceremony. The ceremony itself was celebrated with lavish magnificence.

Dasaratha returned to his capital shining like the moon amidst the stars when he passed through the streets in procession, accompanied by the three queens. The King treated each of

them with equal consideration; they too, evinced equal love and respect towards each other and the King. They adored him and were afraid to displease him. They endeavoured their best to carry out his wish, and not to hinder his desire, for they revered him as their God, in the tradition of the true wife. They lived with such intimate love that it appeared as if all three had but one breath, though they moved about as three bodies!

Years passed. The king and the queens crossed the bounds of youth and middle age and approached the realm of old age; there were no signs of the birth of a son. Therefore, though the women's apartments of the palace had all the comforts and accessories needed for happy existence, the hearts of the king and his queens were torn by unrest, anxiety and despair. One evening, the four (the king and his queens) sat in a room of the palace spending hours of anxiety over the future of Ayodhya, and the prospects of its prosperity and safety. Each attempted an answer in the way one was drawn; at last, unable to resolve the problem, they rose heavy and sad, deciding that they should consult the family Preceptor, Vasishtha, in the morning and take his advice on what was best.

At break of dawn the next day, Vasishtha was respectfully invited to grant his presence; besides, many Pundits and Counsellors were also called for consultation. The king placed before them the problem of settling upon a successor to the vast realm between the seas, the imperial domain under the sway of the Raghu dynasty. Overcome by despair, Dasaratha prayed to the elders in plaintive terms for beneficial suggestions and blessings.

Vasishtha dwelt long in thought; at last, he opened his eyes and spoke thus: "King! You need not grieve thus. Ayodhya will not be rendered master-less. She will not suffer widowhood. This imperial domain will be ever gay, happy and prosperous, in unbroken festivity and evergreen festoonery. She will be the guardian of right living, reverberating music and triumphant joy. I will not agree to the raising of a prince from some other dynasty to the throne of Ayodhya. The Grace of God is a gift whose nature is inscrutable, the vow of righteousness which you are fulfilling will surely grant you the supreme joy of having a son. Do not delay any further! Invite the sage Rishyasringa, the son of Vibhandaka and perform, with him as the High Priest, the sacred yaga (Sacrifice) called Putrakameshti (the yaga prescribed for those desirous of begetting a son). Make all the necessary ceremonial and ritual arrangements for the Yaga forthwith. Your heart's desire will be achieved, without fail."

The queens listened to these reassuring words spoken so emphatically by Vasishtha. They were filled with Ananda! The flower of hope bloomed anew in their hearts. They retired into their apartments, praying God most earnestly. The King searched among his entourage for the most appropriate emissary to be sent to Rishyasringa, son of Vibhandaka and to invite him to the imperial capital on such a mission. At last, he called near him his old friend, Romapada, the King of the Anga State and sent him with necessary instructions and Equipment. Meanwhile, arrangements for the Yaga were put through, on the bank of the sacred Sarayu River. Attractive sacrificial altars were constructed, in conformity with sacred injunctions. The City was decorated all over with flags and festoons.

As was anticipated, the great sage, Rshyasringa set foot in the city of Ayodhya, to the great delight of all, with his consort Santha.

(To be continued)

Science and Baba

—S. Bhagavantha

I must confess that, with the logic I know and the training I have, I cannot accept that Baba is like you and me and that, He can, transcend the laws of physics and chemistry. I have therefore to declare that He is a Phenomenon that He is a Transcendental, that He is Divine. This is the only way I can get out of the dilemma.

One evening, In a remote village, some one came to me at a public Meeting which Baba was addressing, and asked me to speak a few words about Him. I was bewildered; I had seen many wonders and I was still asking questions and searching for answer! Still, I did go on the stage. I remember saying that Baba reminded me of the Bhagavatha incident, when the Mother of Krishna (who knew very well that He was an incarnation of God and had experienced many leelas and mahimas) asked herself, "Is all this a dream or the deluding strategy of God, or is this the very nature of Divinity?" I quoted the relevant verse from the Bhagavatha of Pothana (in Telugu). I continued, "If the great Mother who gave birth to Lord Krishna is in such desperation, you ear, judge the confusion I am floundering in!"

Today, I have resolved that confusion. I do not ask silly questions. I do not try to find out what law He is breaking and how. When a scientist finds that something happens which cannot be explained or grasped by the laws known already, he just accepts that something and that is a not yet *known* phenomenon. This is, how science has grown. So, since what I have seen (and what I am seeing and what! shall see hereafter) do not come under any of the known laws of science, I simply enunciate the law that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba transcends the laws of science and that becomes a law of science.

The scientists put up a lot of show when they are in their laboratories; they talk only reason, they declare they have discovered this new fact, this new law etc. But, every time we have added a little to what we know already, we have also become alive to many other facts which we do not know anything about! While man is adding to his knowledge, he is also adding to his ignorance. The rate at which man is adding to his knowledge is slower than the rate at which he is adding to his ignorance. What is the net result? As time goes on and on, what we know is becoming a smaller and smaller fraction of what exists around and inside us. But, acquiring knowledge is not an end in itself. It is only a pathway to wisdom. And, wisdom—the experience of reality—can be ours, if we sit at the Feet of Baba.

I am one of those who believe that whatever we can borrow from the rest of the world, the advanced nations, we should borrow. You can borrow money, you can borrow food, you can borrow technological know-how, you can borrow experts—but, you cannot borrow character. We cannot borrow what is proclaimed in our scriptures and traditions as the very core of character, belief in the Supreme Being that guides us and guards us from within us. In fact, as

Bhagavan has told us, every one of us is God Himself. We can realise in ourselves the highest realisation, the realisation of reality. This is what gives meaning to life for every one of us.

Sweetness From the Sands

—P. Lakshmiah.

It was in 1943, when Baba was seventeen years of age. One Full Moon night, about 9 P.M., five of us intent on `examining' Him persuaded Baba to walk out with us to the sands of the Chithravathi River. He led us to a place where the dead are buried! We asked Baba, in Pun, "Well, Baba! Why have you brought us to the burial ground?" "Why? Are you dreading to go through it?" He questioned us. We said, "Yes, Baba. But, we are counting on your Grace, and our luck," and sat around Him.

Whenever we ask for anything, Baba used to answer, "O" "Right" "Why doubt about it?" "We shall see," or some such similar word or words. So, one of us said, "Swami! Give us something to eat!" Baba laughed within Himself, and cast His glance on all of us in turn. I said, "Are you Sai Baba or not?" He replied quickly, "I am; what is it you want? Hot Laddu? Boondi? Masaladosa? Poli? Do you want Suggi? Ask for whatever you desire to eat!"

Those were the days when mangoes could not be had anywhere. So, we planned to ask for mango. "We want here, from these sands, fine mango fruit," Baba sang two lines from an old song,

"Yathna Prayathnamul, manavadharmamu jayapajayamul daivaadheenamu"

"To try and struggle is man's duty; to give or not to give man victory—is God's will." He said, "Try; you will get them." So, one of us took a few steps forward on the sand, as if to pick up the fruit, and shouted from where he stood, "Are they here? Or there? Tell me where they are, and I shall dig the sand in that place, to take them." Baba replied, from where He was sitting, "Dig anywhere." So, he bent low and sat on the sand and dug into it about three feet, in great earnest. He said at last, "Swami! I do not see any mango here!"

Baba said, "Boy! You can get it there! Try, reciting the Name of God! Kashte phale" (Fulfillment only through tireless labour)! So, my friend dug a depth of a few more inches, saying aloud, "Sai Ram," "Sai Ram". All of a sudden He was shocked into a strange terror when his fingers touched something soft and cold! For, it was the burial ground; it might well be a corpse! Seeing him, Baba (young Boy that He was) rolled on the sand laughing loudly at his plight. We too laughed, with Him. "It is not a dead body. My dear fellow!" Baba said, and asked me to go and help my friend. "It is a fruit, a fruit," He told us.

"Go and see," He ordered me and so, I went and peeped into the hole. O, the fragrance of ripe mango! Baba said, "He sees a corpse; you say it is fragrant! Whose word is true? Dig a little more, and bring me what you get!"

We made a wider hole and dug a little deeper; we called out Sai Ram, often. We got a nice Mulgoa mango, cold to the touch as if it had been taken out of a frigidaire just then. We took it to Baba and asked, "Swami! How can this one fruit suffice for five of us?"

Swami had a knife in His hand (wherefrom it came, we could not guess). He started slicing the fruit and distributing the pieces to us, the taste was unimaginably sweet and lasting. Our stomachs soon became overfull. "Enough, Baba! Enough!" we cried.

Swami said, "There is half the fruit still with Me. Who will eat this?" We prayed to be excused. "Impossible, Swami! We cannot eat any more," we swore. But, Baba did not yield. "Look here! The cremation ground, the burial place is here. I shall call ghosts to terrorise you. Eat, without protest," He commanded. As the mother feeds the child persuading it to swallow each morsel threatening it with `a tiger' or `thief', Baba fed us the entire fruit that day!

How I was Translated

—*Laksh Kumar, Khosa, Nefa*

Years ago, I had read the article on Baba, in the 'Illustrated Weekly' and had, at once, rejected the whole description as "trash," sentimental and useless. I used to receive those letters, which most of us get, where the sender appeals to our greed, saying that if we send nine or eleven similar letters to our friends, we will receive, on the ninth day, some good news! A threat is also mentioned therein, that, 'if we do not continue the chain, we will suffer loss or dishonour'. I used to throw these letters in the waste paper basket, without reading them. In September 1969, some one sent me three books on Sathya Sai Baba. I never tried to know who had sent them; I never cared to go through the contents of the books—for, I had such set ideas and attitudes about Baba.

I turned the pages of the books; my eyes fell upon a photograph of Baba; I felt there was nothing worth reading in them. I placed them, in an obscure corner of my bookshelf. This was a unique act: for, I did not, as was my wont, throw them away or give them away to some one. As Divisional Inspector of Schools over a District, I keep receiving books from all over the country; I read the ones I like and late, pass them over to the library of some school. But, in the case of these three books I did not read them, nor did I pass them on. I kept them, with me!

I have a habit of waking up from bed about an hour after midnight to read books for about two or three hours, and going back to bed for further sleep, This was a habit I cultivated while at College; it has stayed with me, ever since. Though the compulsions of study are absent, I still get up at about 1 A. M. and study some book or other for about two or three hours.

I am studying these days, the Ashta-dhyayi (Eight Chapters) of Panini, the Sanskrit Sabdanusasanam, one of the most celebrated works on linguistics, written several hundred years before Christ was born. Panini is the greatest architect of language the world has produced. His book not only deals with the Sanskrit language, but, it is a text illustrating his linguistic methods. The world's linguists have wandered for two centuries fruitlessly in the jungles of language study; at last, they are returning to Panini and seeing light. Panini is an absorbing and fascinating writer, though his work is by no means easy to understand.

It was early September 1969. One night, I woke and took my Ashta-dhyayi and went into the Dining Room, so that the rest of the household might not be disturbed. It was strange that I could not concentrate that night. I closed the book and went out of the house. The time was one O clock, then. Wonderful peace was reigning on Khosa that was sleeping quietly. Only a few lights flickered here and there. A nice cool breeze was blowing softly and I felt refreshed enough to walk in and resume the study.

But, when I sat down and started reading, I found I could not. For a moment I thought why I could not concentrate, when, lo and behold just by my side sitting on a chair near the dining table, near where I was studying, I saw a figure in flowing red robe, with hair typical of Sathya Sai Baba. The instinctive reaction of any one when he sees a stranger in one's house, at dead of night, is, of course, to shout for help. But, I felt no such reaction. On the other hand, I felt great

pleasure, an unearthly peace filling me, on seeing Baba. I had never thought of him, nor, had I desired to see him, even in my dream of dreams! But, He was there before me. Even on seeing him, I was not ready to accept him. Before I could ask him who he was, I heard his clear sweet voice, saying to me, in a reassuring tone, "Do not be afraid. I am with you."

He repeated this twice and I felt really more assured. Still, the question remained who he was. I was just about to put that question, when I heard his voice, again, "I sent you some books"! At once, I associated the books, with the books I had received on Baba, and without even thinking for a moment, I replied, "Yes. I have received some books" I was about to say more—I always like to say more and more—my friends know that I seldom stop short, but, always talk on and on—though I have often felt, unnecessarily) but, Baba then said, "Read them."

I said, "There is nothing in them, it is all trash. There is nothing I can read in them," But, Baba persisted: "Still, there will be something in them; at least, read." And, he smiled—a smile I can never forget. I said, "I will," and got up, and went to the shelf. When I returned with the books, Baba was not there.

I started reading those books. I found therein all the wisdom our books on philosophy contained, described through actual experience by Baba. I found in them the conviction of realisation. Let me make it clear that I have never been drawn towards religion. I recognise three compartments in religion—philosophy, ritual and action. Of these, only philosophy has attracted me from long ago; I had read almost all books available about Eastern and Western Philosophy, and found them mere words, without the sublime experience of what they imply. Baba's words were, however, convincing!

After a few days, I was again reading Panini in the small hours of the night and again feeling that I could not concentrate on the work. I saw Baba again before me in the chair. He asked me. "You have read the books." It was not a question; it was a statement of what he already knew. It forced me to say, "Yes. I have." "You liked them," Baba said, with the same assurance of knowledge. "Yes; some nice things have been described in them," I said. "I knew you would like them; now ... translate," Baba said, with that charming smile of his, and vanished. Translate! What did it mean? From one language to another? Or, from the head to the heart? I took him to mean that I should translate the books, into Hindi or Adi; I took the literal meaning. I started translating the books into the Adi language of the North-Eastern Frontier Agency.

Friends who know Adi will agree that it is very difficult to express in Adi abstract philosophical ideas. However, by the Grace of Baba, I could do this. Still I used to stop the work of translation, in a few places, awaiting guidance. Psychologists might interpret my behaviour as 'an escape from a difficult pursuit like the study of Panini'; they would have been right but for the fact that I am still continuing my study of Panini and what is more, finding it easier and easier, day after day!

Baba came to me a third time! He asked me, "You have started translating." This time, his voice came in the midst of my absorption in Panini! I raised my head and saw Baba in his full glory and replied, "I cannot do it; it is very difficult." But, Baba said, "You can do it. You have

done it. Do not get too much fixed up in words. What is worth doing is difficult." Then, Baba disappeared. This assurance gave me further courage; I continued obeying his behest; I have now not only translated the books into Adi, but, I have translated myself, in thought, action and feeling.

This is the story. On hearing about this, friends ask me, "What more do you desire? You are indeed lucky that you have seen Baba and that so often." I reply that I am indeed blessed and that I do not desire anything. The 'I' is submerged in Baba. I desire not. Baba wishes, Baba orders, Baba gives me strength to do what He wants to be done. Some say, "You may leave this material world soon!" But, can any man do so, without Baba's express will? If Baba wishes so, well, man will.

This experience has given me control over the ego and over hatred of others. I am now afraid of talking slightly of subjects I do not know or beyond my actual experience. Miracles are happening to me, every now and then; if I describe them, this letter will grow too long. Let me conclude with ... SATHYA SAI JAI JAI.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5

Emperor Dasaratha welcomed the sage at the main gate of the Palace; he ceremonially washed the feet of the distinguished saint; he placed on his own head a few drops of that sanctified water; he then fell at the feet of Vasishta and prayed to him to enquire from Rshyasrnga the proper process for the contemplated Yajna.

Rshyasrnga wanted that the ministers and scholars be seated in their appointed order; he directed the King also to sit on his throne. Then he described the various processes of the ceremony, so that the court priests could note them down for their guidance. He gave them in such detail that every one even knew where he was to sit in the sacrificial hall!

The sage decided that the Yajna shall begin on the stroke of seven, the very next day. The news spread all over the City in a trice. Before dawn every street was decorated with green festoons, every road was packed with people pressing forward to the vast open space on the bank of the Sarayu River, where the Yajna was to be performed. The riverbank was thick with the eager populace.

Rshyasrnga, with his consort Santha, entered the specially built Yajna Mantap, with the King and the Queens, while Vedic chanting and the music of bugle, trumpet and clarinet and the cheers of the people resounded from the sky the welcoming acclamation.

Rshyasrnga was installed as the 'Brahma', or the Chief Organiser for the Yajna; he assigned various tasks like worship, recitation, chanting, propitiation, etc., to the scholars, in consideration

of their several qualifications. The offerings were placed in the sacred fire with the prescribed formulae by Rshyasrnga himself, with scrupulous exactitude and deep devotion and faith.

From the fire that was thus scripturally fed, there arose before all eyes, a Divine Person who shone with the blinding splendour of a sudden stroke of lightning! He held a bright vessel in his hands. At this, the vast concourse including the priests were petrified in their places, with wonder, awe, fear and joy. They were overwhelmed with the sudden onrush of bliss and mystery. The King and Queens shed tears of joy: they cast their looks upon the Divine Person and prayed to Him, with folded palms. Rshyasrnga continued the formulae with undisturbed equanimity, steadily, as the texts prescribe, and offering oblations in the fire.

Suddenly, a Voice as on the Day of Dissolution, resounded from the dome of the sky. Rshyasrnga sat aghast and sought to listen to the Message from above. "Maharaja! Accept this Vessel, and give the sacred payasam food therein in appropriate shares to your three queens," the Voice announced. Placing the vessel in the hands of the King, the mysterious Person who had emerged from the flames disappeared into them.

The joy of the people, princes, pundits and priests who witnessed this great manifestation knew no bounds. Soon, the final rituals were completed and the Maharaja returned in procession to the Palace, with the sacred vessel gifted by the Gods in his hands.

The Queens soon finished the Ceremonial Bath (as advised by the Preceptor); they entered the Palace Shrine, where the altar of the Family Deity was; Vasishta completed the ceremony of worship. The payasam (nectarine food) that the Divine Person presented, was there, placed in three separate golden cups. Then, Vasishta called Dasaratha in and said, 'Raja! Give these cups to your wives—first to Kausalya, next to Sumitra and last, to Kaika'. The King acted as ordered. They laid hold of the cups and fell at the feet of Vasishta and Dasaratha. Then, Vasishta directed that they should partake of the payasam, only after falling at the Feet of Rshyasrnga, who officiated at the yajna.

Therefore, Kausalya and Kaika kept their cups safe in the shrine itself and went among their maids to dry their hair, before attending to their coiffures. Meanwhile, Sumitra stepped on to the terrace, and, keeping her cup on the parapet wall, she dried her hair in the sun, ruminating all the time on her circumstances—she was the second Queen; the son of the eldest queen will ascend the throne, as of right; the son of Kaika, the third queen can ascend the, throne, according to the promise made by the King at the time of his marriage with her! But, Sumitra wondered, what will happen to the son she would get? He will be neither here nor there. Why have a son at all, to suffer as a mediocre without status and sovereignty? —she doubted. Better far that a son is not born, than to be born and be thus neglected.

But that was only for a moment. Soon she reconciled herself; she felt that what the Gods decide must happen and no one can stop it. She remembered that it was the command of her Preceptor, the order of the King; so, she went towards the cup, determined to eat the contents, when, to and behold, an eagle flew in from somewhere and whisked it off in its beak—flying far into the sky, in an instant.

Sumitra repented for her negligence of the precious payasam; she felt that the King would be very upset, if he came to know of the mishap; she could not decide on her next step; she went straight to her sister Kausalya and related the whole story to her. Just then, Kaika too came there, with the gold cup, after tying up her dried hair. The three were very loving to each other, like sisters bound by one single bond of affection.

So, to avoid breaking the saddening news to the King, they had another gold cup brought and Kausalya and Kaika poured into it a portion each from their own share, so that all could take their seats together in the shrine and eat the payasam, while Rshyasrnga was pronouncing his blessings and other elders and scholars were chanting auspicious Vedic hymns. They then sipped sacred water and prostrated before the altar, they fell at the Feet of Rshyasrnga and proceeded to their own palaces.

Time rolled by; news that the queens were pregnant spread among the people. The bodies of the queens took on a shining complexion. The tenth month arrived. Maids and nurses awaited the happy event and watched over the queens with vigilant care and early preparation. Meanwhile, they came to know that Kausalya had the pains of labour; they hastened to her palace; while on their way, they learnt that the Royal Consort had delivered a Prince! The glad tidings filled the entire zenana with joy. The next day, Sumitra had the pangs of labour and she delivered twin sons. On the third day, Kaika brought forth a son.

Or the birth of these sons, auspicious signs were seen everywhere. The happy news filled all with immeasurable joy. The earth covered herself with green; trees blossomed all over! Music filled the air. Clouds showered fragrant drops of rain but only on the apartments where the babies were laid in their cradles! The joy of Dasaratha knew no bounds. While he was immersed in agony that he did not have a single son, the birth of four sons, all together, gave him indescribable satisfaction and happiness.

The King invited Brahmins and gave them gold cows and land gifts in plenty. He arranged for the distribution of money to the poor, and of clothes; besides he gifted houses for the homeless. He gave food to the hungry. Wherever one cast his eye, he could see people acclaiming the happy event, shouting jai jai.

The subjects gathered in huge assemblies to express their joy in music and dance. 'We have now princes in the royal line', they prided themselves; they were more exhilarated at this than when they themselves had sons born to them. Women offered worship to God, in gratitude for this act of Grace, for, they were sure that the birth of the sons to their King was a signal act of Divine Mercy.

Dasaratha invited the Preceptor of the Royal Dynasty Vasishta, to the Palace and according to his suggestion; he got a learned astrologer to write down the horoscopes of the new-born. He announced to them that the child of Kausalya was born at a most propitious moment—Uttarayana, (the Divine Half-year). Chaitra month, the bright, fortnight, the ninth day, the Punarvasu star, monday, Simhalagna, (the zodiacal sign of the Sun) and the abhijith period (the period of Victory), when the world was happily resting, when the weather was equable (neither hot, warm nor cold). Kaika's son was born the next day—Chaitra, bright half, tenth day,

Tuesday, gandhayoga. The third day were born the twins—Chaitra, bright half, eleventh day, Aslesha star, Vriddhiyoga. These details were communicated to the astrologer and he was asked to chart and draw the horoscopes, in consonance with science and inform the king of his inferences there from.

Then, Dasaratha prayed to Vasishta to fix the auspicious time for the naming ceremony for the children. The Family Preceptor sat still for a few seconds lost in meditation: he saw revealed in his yogic vision, the future years; rousing himself from that vision, he said, "Maharaja! Your sons are not just ordinary, mortals. They are incomparable. They have many Names; they are not human; they are Divine Beings who have assumed human forms. They are Divine Personalities. The world's good fortune has brought them here. I consider it a great chance that I could officiate at the naming ceremony of these Divine Children. The mothers are three, but, the father is one and so, Vasishta laid down that the ten-day period of 'impurity' be counted from the day when Kausalya delivered her child. The day the ten-day period ends, that is to say, the eleventh day after the birth of Kausalya's son, the sage declared, was an auspicious day for the naming ceremony. The King fell at the feet of Vasishta in thankfulness for this favour and the Preceptor left for his hermitage. The astrologer also approved the day and started writing down the list of materials that had to be kept ready for the ritual. He gave the list into the hands of the Chief Priest and left, loaded with the presents that the King granted him.

Dasaratha had invitations prepared for the ceremony, and sent them to the feudatory rulers, the nobles, courtiers, sages and scholars through out his Empire, addressing them as befitted their rank and status. The messengers who delivered the invitations were either ministers, court pundits, officers or Brahmins, their status being suited to the rank and status of the invitees.

(To be continued)

The Ganga of Grace

Baba left Brindavan for Bombay by car on the 9th May, in the afternoon. He arrived at Dharwar—University Area, the bungalow of Dr. Adke, the Vice-Chancellor of the Karnataka University—at about midnight. Devotees from all over the District had gathered there; in spite of the late hour, they were engaged in Bhajan and Baba rewarded their steadiness by moving among them, giving Darshan to all. The next morning, Baba spoke to the Office Bearers of the Sathya Sai Organisations, for about an hour, on the importance of Nagara-sankirthana, and on the need for discipline. Baba gave Darshan at the Bhajan Sessions held in the huge Shamiana erected on the spacious lawns of the bungalow.

Leaving Dharwar at noon, Baba reached Poona about 9 P. M. where, at the Jamnagar House, He blessed the next morning a huge gathering of devotees engaged in Bhajan. Baba arrived at Dharmakshetra, Bombay, on the 11th, soon after midday. Thousands were awaiting His arrival for the Darshan they were long anxious for. In the evening, Baba inaugurated the Exhibition of Drawings, Paintings and Hobbies of the Members of the Sri Sri Sathya Balavihars of Bombay at

Dharmakshetra. It was an impressive and instructive collection, revealing the many phases of the Dharmic trend that the Vihars are able to foster among the children.

The same night, the children enacted three plays: 'Lava Kusa', (Kannada) from the Ramayana, 'Krishna and the Cowherd Boys' from the Bhagavatha and 'Gauranga', (Hindi) a play based on the life of Mahaprabhu Chaitanya Maharaj. The costume, settings and lighting, as well as the background music were all scrupulously correct and of a high standard. The finely written plays were acted by the little ones, with sincere fervour and enthusiasm the emotions being depicted so effectively that even the hardest was moved into sympathetic response or tears.

On the 12th, the second Annual Day Celebrations of the Dharmakshetra began, with the Inauguration of Akhanda Bhajan by the Bhajan Mandalis of Bombay City; Bhagavan lit the Lamp, which was the signal for the Bhajan to begin. About 12,000 people participated to the Bhajan. By evening, the number more than doubled itself. At the Public Meeting, which began at 5-30 P. M., in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, Dr. S. Bhagavantham, D. Sc. and Dr. V. K. Gokak, D. Litt. addressed the gathering on the significance of the Advent of Baba. Baba deplored the emergence of violence and hatred in this land of Ahimsa and Prema, of Dharma and Sahana. He asked "The same single sky is over every one's head; the same single earth is under every one's feet; the same single air is in every one's lung; the same single Divine spark is activating every one: why then should violence and hatred divide one from the other?" He condemned the utter foolishness, the utter in-humanity of it all. "Look at a tree! The trunk, the bark, the branch, the leaf, the flower, the fruit, each has a distinct taste, touch, smell, appearance, and purpose. But, yet, they have one seed as their common origin. In the Gita, Krishna has said, 'Beejam maam sarvabhutaanaam', (I am the seed of all that is created). The one seed, if known, and realised will destroy all distinction and difference, all divisive forces, Baba declared.

On the 13th, Baba met the members of the Maharashtra Branch of the Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, at the residence of its President, Hon'ble Sri P. K. Savant, Minister for Agriculture, Maharashtra State. Later, Baba inaugurated the Silver jubilee Celebrations of a renowned Seat of Advanced Learning that is rendering yeoman service in bringing education to the very doors of the needy and the handicapped—'Pinge's Classes'. A huge gathering of more than 4000 invitees had met at Rang Bhuvan Bombay City. Hon'ble Sri Bharde, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly welcomed Baba. Dr. Gokak gave a lucid and learned discourse on the Four Educational Principles emphasised by Bhagavan as crucial: Knowledge, Skill, Balance and Insight. In His Discourse, Baba dilated upon the harm being done to progress by (as He said in English, during the Telugu speech), "Politics without principles, wealth without charity, science without humanity, commerce without morality, and education without character"! He described the University Degrees which are sought and gained by hook or crook, as 'begging bowls', with which the holders clamour before offices for jobs; they do not instil self-reliance and self-confidence, which were the landmarks of Bharatiya culture.

'Start the day with love, Spend the day with love, Fill the day with love, End the Day with Love—This is the way to God', He announced. He insisted that spiritual enlightenment should be imparted to the young, so that they may lead happy unruffled lives. He asked the teachers of Pinge's Classes to introduce Prayer and Bhajan in the Time Table and create an interest among the students in their ancient heritage of Dharma. Referring to Dr. Gokak's speech, He said that

"Knowledge now-a-days leads not towards Skill but, only to Skill without the Kill! When this, happens, the third point mentioned by Gokak, "Balance" is upset, and finally, insight becomes 'Out-sight' leading man into the wilderness of the senses and thereby to ruin."

On the 14th, Baba spoke to a large gathering of children come from the various Sathya Sai Bala Vihars in Bombay City. He referred to the Ramayana and Mahabharata stories and drew simple lessons from them to guide the children, in their relations to their parents, brothers and sisters, teachers and elders.

The same day, Baba arrived at Jamnagar, by a special chartered plane. In spite of the scorching heat of the afternoon, a very large gathering awaited His Darshan at the airport. But, He willed that the gathering should not suffer; so, when the plane landed, an umbrella of clouds, granted shade, to the cheering crowds, who recognised His Grace. Baba went direct to the 'Amar Vilas' Palace of H. H. The Rajamatha of Nawanagar. He was received on arrival by a Guard of Honour provided by the Home Guards with the Police Band in attendance. In the evening, Baba proceeded to the spacious Shamiana, put up in the Palace Grounds, where about ten thousand devotees were engaged in Prasanthi Nilayam Bhajan. He spoke to them of the need for practising Dharma, and Prema, serving all fellowmen, and studying the scriptures. He emphasised that Namasankirtan was to be undertaken, in order to cleanse the heart and fill the atmosphere with Prema. As Dr. Chudasama, the State President of Sathya Sai Organisations in Gujarat said, "This evening will inspire and thrill the heads and hearts of every one present here, for years and years!"

On the 15th, Baba left by car, with the Rajamata and members of the party that accompanied Him from Bombay, for Dwaraka, 150 miles away. He reached the place at 12 noon. The people of Dwaraka had gathered in thousands inside the temple as well as on the roads leading to it. So, Baba came out of the temple and stood out to give them Darshan. He left for Mithapur, the Headquarters of the Tata Chemical Complex. The officers and workers of the factories gathered in large numbers at the Guest House where Baba and His party were; Baba gave them Darshan and showered His Grace on all.

While returning to Jamnagar in the evening, Baba halted near the village of Kuranga, where there was a fine patch of sandy seashore. He walked along the waves-swept edge of sea, and sat on the sands, surrounded by devotees. In the midst of a discourse on Krishna, the charming cowherd lad with-the irresistible flute, Baba turned the sands (which He was heaping before Him in playful abandon) into a lovely golden idol of the Krishna He was describing! "Here is the Krishna you longed to see at Dwaraka, but, could not, as a consequence of the rush of the huge congregation." He said. Then, He created by a wave of His Hand an image of Ambabhavani, embossed in gold, and gave it to the chauffeur who drove Him to Mithapur and back (for, when He asked him who his Ishtadevata—favourite Form of God—was, he answered 'Ambabhavani!') No sooner said, than created and granted! The chauffeur got his Ishtadevata Form in an instant from Baba's Divine Hand! Reaching Jamnagar at 9 P. M., Baba moved among the thousands engaged in Bhajan in the Palace grounds and graciously created Vibhuti to alleviate the suffering of quite a few sick persons.

On the 16th, May, Baba visited the Ayurvedic University at Jamnagar, established and endowed by the Nawanager Royal Family. He blessed those working in every section of the huge network of research and teaching. Then, He drove to `Indraprastha', where 39 members of the Sathya Sai Seva Dal, selected from the devotees of Navsari, Nadiad, Porbander, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot, Surat, Jamnagar, Kadi and Kala, were undergoing advanced training for a period of ten days. Baba distributed certificates to each of them. He exhorted them to cultivate the spirit of Seva, for, Seva alone can reveal God that resides in every living being. He wanted that they must ever look out for opportunities of service and not merely wait for such chances to come by them.

In the evening, Baba addressed a special Meeting of the Jamnagar Rotary Club, at the Town Hall. The Hall, as well as the open spaces around were packed thick with eager listeners Dr. Gokak spoke emphasising the basic ideals of the Sathya Sai Organisations, Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema which were fast spreading over this land, and even overseas. Baba, in His Discourse, suggested many lines of service for the Rotarians, among the villages and in the slum areas. He warned them against the futility of mere Speeches and Dinners. He dilated on the joy that one can derive from genuine service to others, who are really kinsmen of the same family, brothers of the same Divine Origin. He called upon doctors to weigh the dangerous consequences of the spread of contraceptives: the spread of disease, the lowering of morality, and the loosening of parental and marital responsibility. Spiritual discipline and mind control alone can overcome these evils, He said.

Later, Baba drove to Balachchadi seashore, near the Sainik school and had a Bhajan Sessions there; on the sands, under the moonlight, by the side of the murmuring waves He created from the sands Rudrakshi japamalas, idols, and other gifts to many among the devotees. He created and gifted to the Sainik School a charming Annapoorna Idol—Annapoorna, who gives sustaining food for the body mind and soul of man.

On the 17th, streams of cars and buses flowed to the great Somnath Temple on the coast of Saurashtra, for, Bhagavan was to open the Digvijayadwar of the magnificently renovated temple of the ancient Someswar shrine. This temple is situated on a spot sung as most holy even in the Vedas; it is praised in the Mahabharata epic; it is said the place is called Somnath on account of the Sparsa Linga of Soma-nath in the temple which was worshipped by Soma (the Moon God), who is the presiding Deity of the Mind. It is associated with the penance of the Pandavas, and the Divine Lives of Krishna and Balarama. It was for centuries the centre of a long line of Sivayogis, who had specialised in Somavidya. It was the celebrated centre of the Pasupatha Cult of Siva worship founded by Lakulisa 1700 years ago. The Pasupathasastra has 168 sections, divided into 5 parts, (assigned to the Five Mukhas of Siva) Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Isana. History reveals that the temple was built and rebuilt, on the same sacred spot, whenever it became dilapidated with age or whenever it suffered from depredation. The Third of this series was the one that was destroyed by the ruler of Ghazni in 1026 A. D. It is said that the Fifth Temple too met with the same fate, at the hands of the rulers of Delhi. On Diwali Day, 1947, when the Indian Army entered the Nawabdom of Junagadh, where Somanath is situated, Sardar Vallabhai Patel announced, "We have decided that Somnath should be reconstructed; this is a holy task in which all should participate."

The new Temple called Mahameru Prasad has been completed and the Entrance Gopuram, named after the late Jamsaheb of Nawanager, the President of the Somnath Trust (who laid the Foundation Stone for the Temple in 1950) was now ready for inauguration by Bhagavan. The Late Jam Saheb had prayed to Baba that He should inaugurate the Gopuram, and the Rajamata of Nawanager was happy that Baba had agreed to do so and come to Saurashtra to fulfil the prayer of the Royal family.

It was a great and significant event, in the history of Somnath, that deserves to be written in letters of Gold. For, Bhagavan had declared that He will reveal that day, the real Somnath, No wonder there was an immense gathering of eager Darshan-seekers not only at Somanath, but, all along the 180 miles—route from Jamnagar to that shrine, at Rajkot, Junagadh and a host of other towns and villages.

Bhagavan opened the lock on the artistically carved and embossed door of the imposing Digvijayadwar with a silver key; then, He proceeded along the red carpet, through the festooned passage to the main Temple. Entering the Holy shrine, He created 108 golden bilva leaves, and 108 golden flowers, by a mere wave of His Divine Hand. The leaves and flowers were reverentially touched by the devotees of His entourage. He then poured them with His Hand on the Siva Idol installed in the shrine while a group of Pundits was reciting the Vedic Mantras. A few minutes later, Baba waved His Hand again; to and be, hold! the Sparsa Linga of Somnath, (which according to the Skanda Purana II 82-83 is a Swayambhulinga of great prowess, as bright as the Sun, of the size of the egg of a hen, situated underground) was present in His palm. That was the authentic Someswara He had promised to reveal, nestling for untold centuries, underground, under the main upper Linga, away from the hands of depredators and invaders. Bhagavan gave It to the Chief Priest, so that It may be worshipped hence—forward without intermission to the full delight of devotees. Then, with the Trustees, the Collector and the local Officers, Baba went round the temple, and unfurled the flag on the 150 feet high tower over the Shrine. Thousands acclaimed Baba, as He gave, Darshan to them at the temple.

Baba then left for Rajendra Bhuvan, at Veraval and. at 2 P. M., He motored to Keshod Aerodrome, from where He emplaned by specially chartered plane to Bombay.

At 5-30 P. M., there was a Public Meeting at Dharmakshetra Grounds; it being a Sunday, there were over a hundred thousand people present. Dr. V. K. Gokak gave an intimate ac. count of the happenings at Jamnagar Dwaraka and Somnath to the vast gathering, who thank, fully drank in, the glory and grace of Baba that the account revealed. Baba elaborated on the immanence of God in every being and said that this can be realised by immersing oneself in service. Sahana and Seva—Tolerance and Service—these will destroy all traces of conceit and promote harmony.

"He who distinguishes and differentiates between the Forms and Names of God are undeserving of Grace; they have not understood the basic Truth of the Divine. Similarly, a believer in God will believe in Man, and in Man being his nearest kinsman and brother "He who believes in Man will also believe in God, for God and Man are inseparable" He said.

Baba visited the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on the 18th May and blessed Dr. K. M. Munshi. That night, Baba blessed the Balavihar Children again, asking them to repeat the dramas they had staged, on the 11th May. The plays in Kannada and Hindi, as well as the Folk Dance item woven around the pastoral sport of Krishna and His Comrades were even more impressive and inspiring than the previous performance. Baba gave each set of characters the precious chance of being photographed with Him; He also blessed the stage, green room and orchestral helpers. Every participant was graciously given a fine picture of Bhagavan, by Bhagavan Himself.

He left Bombay, on the 20th and reached Brindavan, Whitefield. On the 25th, He blessed with His Immediate Presence the Inauguration of the Bharat Engineering Workshop at Kadugodi. In His Message, He spoke of employer—employee relations being a loving partnership, both parties fully aware of mutual rights and responsibilities.

On the 1st June, Baba proceeded by car to the Village of Kalkunte, 12 miles away from Brindavan, to lay the Foundation Stone of the New High School Building. All along the route, villagers had gathered in hundreds, to be blessed by the Divine Darshan. Many wayside villages had erected pandals and prepared Addresses of Welcome; young and old were waiting since sunrise with flowers in their hands to have a glimpse of Baba passing by.

At Kalkunte, Baba visited the far famed Ranganatha Temple and later, He laid the Foundation Stone, and blessed the venture of the Education Committee to construct a bigger building for the School. Baba spoke on the irreverence and irresponsibility that are corroding the educational system, at the present time, and He directed that the youth of this land must be rooted in the culture and traditions of this land itself.

The same evening, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Branch in the State of Mysore,) Bangalore organised a Public Reception to Bhagavan. He was received with ceremonial honours and Vedic Chants at the gaily decorated Headquarters of the Bhavan. The spacious Hall as well as the open spaces all around it was packed to capacity, by eager citizens. Sri. R. R. Diwakar, President Gandhi Smarak Trust and the Lokasikshana Trust welcomed Bhagavan as the greatest moral force in the world today. Bhagavan spoke on the fundamental truths about the Self, the Supreme and the Universe, with extensive interpretations of the slokas of the Gita that throw light on these grand mysteries. He said that, when one approaches realisation, all differences and distinctions vanish, leaving only the full experience of Sovereign Bliss.

Bhagavan left Brindavan and arrived Prasanthi Nilayam, on the 5th June.

"He Has Come to Teach"

(A voice from across the Oceans)

Sathya Sai Baba has taken upon Himself the responsibility of convincing humanity of these things:

Firstly, that, except for the lasting objective of acquiring the grace and knowledge of the Lord Almighty, who is the source of infinite love and power, all other objectives are of purely temporary passing and relative nature.

Secondly, that such lasting objectives can be achieved by any one in this life, even while discharging the duties assigned to him, by virtue of his station in life through the cultivation and pursuit of the absolute values of Sathya, Dharma, Prema and Santhi—that is, truth, righteousness, universal love and the equanimity of peace. These values are taught by all religions and function as the four pillars supporting and maintaining human existence and happiness. As the study of Indian Scriptures, such as the Vedas and the Upanishads which help one to cultivate these values is languishing, He advocates their revival and has opened several schools for the purpose.

His third conviction is that concentration on the material objectives in life is bound to result in the loss of the absolute values and thereby causes unhappiness and misery. Cultivation of the absolute values on the other hand is bound to result in the enrichment of human life and enhancement of human efficiency, even in the performance of earthly duties, through contact with the source of Infinite Power, which such cultivation brings about.

To convince people of the relative nature of things in life and for demonstrating what can be achieved through contact with the Infinite Power, Shri Sathya Sai Baba has, on countless occasions, performed such astounding miracles as curing acute and chronic illnesses, giving eyesight to the blind, speech to the mute, producing articles out of nothing, for presentation to His devotees. Many have been awe-struck and delighted, at having been blessed by the appearance of fragrant Vibhuti or sacred ash and nectar, on (!) the photographs of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, although He was absent! Everyone who has had the good fortune of meeting Him has felt the universal and immeasurable Love and compassion which He radiates. He has a warm and unassuming personality, with a ready smile for every one, which makes one feel that one is meeting an old friend, although he may be meeting Baba for the first time.

How fortunate we are that we have the Avatar of the Lord Himself as our Guru, guiding us and guarding us!

Sunday Chronicle, Guyana, (South America)
3-5-70

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6

Ten days passed. The City of Ayodhya was brightened and beautified, and made most charming to the eye. The melody of music filled the air and spread over the length and breadth of the kingdom, making people wonder whether celestial angels were singing out of the joy. Fragrance was sprinkled on the streets. The city was overflowing with visitors. The Sages and the Courtiers could enter the inner apartments of the Palace and no others. The rest—whether prince or peasant—had separate quarters arranged for them. They had erected pandals in the courtyard of the palace to seat all the guests and invitees. They were accommodated there, so that they could watch the Naming Ceremony with all its attendant ceremonials.

Very soon, music rose from the Durbar Hall; the chanting of Vedic hymns by Brahmins could be heard; the three Queens entered the elegantly decorated Hall, with their babies in arms. They shone like Divine Mothers carrying the three Gods of the Trinity, Brahma Vishnu, and Siva. The bliss and the splendour that pervaded their faces were beyond man's powers of description.

As soon as the people noticed their entry; acclamations of Jai rose from their hearts. Women waved auspicious lamps before them. Three special seats had been placed there for them. Kausalya took her seat first, followed by Sumitra and by Kaika. Emperor Dasaratha sat by the side of Kausalya on her right.

The Brahmins started the ceremony; with due attention to correct detail. They lit the sacred fire and poured oblations with appropriate recitation of formulae. Rice grains were poured and spread on golden plates; soft silk cloth were spread on the rice; then, the babies were placed on the cloth, before the Preceptor, Vasishta. The child of Kausalya stared at Vasishta as if he was long a familiar acquaintance! He endeavoured to go near him, as if he liked his company and would fain be near him! Everyone wondered at this strange behaviour. Vasishta was overwhelmed with joy at this; he shed tears of joy; he had to wipe them, and control himself with an effort; then, holding a few grains of rice in his hand, he said, "O King! The child born to promote the joy of Kausalya will do the same for all mankind. His virtues will bring solace and contentment, joy and happiness, to all. The Yogis and seekers will find in him a great source of joy.

Therefore, from this moment, his name will be Rama, he who pleases." Thus, Vasishta named the child of Queen Kausalya. And, the sages welcomed the Name, as very apt and meaningful. They exclaimed, "Excellent, Excellent!"

Then, Vasishta gazed upon the twin children of Sumitra. The elder one, he felt, would be a hero, a stalwart fighter, and endowed with vast wealth. He knew that he would take delight in the service of God and His Consort, Lakshmi; that service would be for him like the very breath of life. So, he chose the name Lakshmana for him. His younger brother, Vasishta knew, would be a

formidable destroyer of enemies, and withal, a contented follower in the footsteps of his elder brothers. He therefore blessed him with the name, Shatrughna, (the slayer of enemies).

Later, he gazed on the child that was the source of Kaika's joy. That child, Vasishta knew, will fill all hearts with love and joy; he will amaze all by his unbelievable adherence to Dharma; he will rule over his subjects with great compassion and affection. So, he gave him the name, Bharatha (he who rules). The people were happy when they heard the Preceptor dilate on the glorious future of the children; they referred to the princes among themselves and called them from that day—as Rama, Lakshmana, Shatrughna, and Bharatha.

Dasaratha had arranged elaborate banquets for all who attended the ceremony; he filled with contentment every one who had come; he offered each one the hospitality and presents that the status of each deserved; he showered enormous gifts as charity and as penance; he distributed cows, land, gold and other valuables to the poor and the needy; he paid attention to the needs of everyone, so that no one was discontented or disappointed; and, after the ceremony was over, he gave them leave to return to their homes, with due civility.

The children grew on the fond care of the mothers. But, one curious thing was noticed early. It was observed that Lakshmana always Sought Rama and Shatrughna sought to be with Bharatha! Since the day of his birth, Lakshmana was always wailing! The nurses, the ayahs and others tried various remedies and palliatives; but, nothing could alleviate his misery or stop his wail. Some pain inside was suspected and medicines galore were tried. They were of no avail.

So, Sumitra was certain that the child's agony was beyond the reach of drugs; she sent for the Preceptor Vasishta; she fell at His Feet as soon as he entered the room. 'Master', she appealed, "this Lakshmana is weeping, since birth, and clamouring for something, I am not able to discover. I have consulted doctors and treated him, as advised. But, the wailings are increasing day by day; it does not diminish at all. He does not feed on milk regularly and satisfactorily. As for sleep, it is totally absent! How can he be healthy and hearty, if he goes on like this? Kindly tell me why, he is behaving so, and bless him that he may give up this continuous wail."

Vasishta thought within himself for a while. Then, he said, 'O Queen! His pain is unique and you are trying to cure it by familiar means and drugs! His yearning is beyond the ken of mortals to understand. Do as I tell you and the child will be quiet and happy. The moment you do so, the child will cease wailing and begin playing about with gusto. Take him now and lay him beside Rama the child of Kausalya. This is the only panacea for this child. After this, Vasishta left, leaving his blessings on mother and child.

Hearing his words, Sumitra took her child to where the other child was, in its cradle; for; she cared most to keep her child happy. She laid him bay the side of Rama. From that very second, the wailing of Lakshmana stopped! Laughter and play began! Those who saw this transformation took it as a great wonder! Lakshmana who was until then suffering like a fish out of water, began to prattle aloud in joy, kicking his feet about and waving his hands in glee, as fishes do when they are thrown back into water, gliding gleefully along, in quick darts. He was in the presence of Rama, immersed in bliss and aware of the Grace.

The story of Shatrughna was also on similar lines. From that day he did not drink milk. He was melancholy, averse to movement and play. He appeared very weak and tired. Sumitra was worried at this development; so, she invited the Preceptor to the palace, and inquired from him the reason. Vasishta smiled again; he said, 'Mother! Your children are not of the common stamp. They are born to enact a Divine Drama! Place Shatrughna on the same bed as Bharatha! Then, his daily routine will be regular. He will be extremely happy. You need not worry anymore about this problem'. Vasishta blessed her and left.

Sumitra followed his instructions, immediately. Since then, Lakshmana grew in the company of Rama and Shatrughna in the company of Bharatha. They were in unbounded bliss, together; their progress was beyond measure! Like the splendour of the Sun, they grew in intelligence and glory from day to day.

Sumitra had nothing to do now; but, since she loved her twin children as her own dear life, she spent some of her time with Kausalya and some, with Kaika, fondling the children and attending to their needs. She moved from one Palace to the other and relished her chore as the maid caring for the comforts and food of the children. I am not destined to mother them, she sometimes pined in solitude. Often, she wondered how it arose, this tragic situation of her children being, happy with those others and not with her.

At last, she went to the Preceptor, and prayed to him to allay her anxiety. He laid bare the real reason: "Mother! Lakshmana is a 'part' of Rama; Shatrughna is a 'part' of Bharatha." Even as these words fell from his lips, Sumitra exclaimed, "Yes, yes! I realise it now! I am glad. I know the truth," and she fell at the Feet of Vasishta and left for the inner apartments. She said to herself, "When the eagle carried away in its beak, the precious gift of payasam (Divine milk-food) given by the Divine Messenger, I was so frightened at the prospect of the King becoming angry at my negligence that I informed Kausalya and Kaika about the calamity; she poured out for me a share from her cup and the other lady poured out another share from her own cup; so, I alone of the queens had twins, as a result of the twin shares I consumed! O, the will of God is mysterious. It is beyond any one to know His might, and majesty. Who can alter His decree? Yes," she consoled herself, "I bore them for nine months; I went through the pangs of delivery. But, their real mothers are Kausalya and Kaika, there is no doubt." She confirmed herself in this belief and gladly entrusted her children to Kausalya and Kaika, and joined them in fondling and fostering them.

The maids and besides them, many kinsmen of the royal family, derived great joy watching, the children at play. After they left, Kausalya used to insist that rites to ward off the evil eye were performed scrupulously. She was so affectionate and considerate towards the children that she never recognised the passage of day and the arrival of night or the passage of night and the dawn of a new day. She could not leave them out of sight even for the fraction of a second! While taking her bath or when she was engaged in worship inside the shrine, her mind was on them and she would hasten towards them as quick as feasible. All her work she did in a hurry so that she could spend more time for their care.

One day she bathed Rama and Lakshmana; she applied fragrant smoke to their curls in order to dry them and perfume them; she carried them to the golden cradles; she sang, sweet lullabies herself and swung them to sleep. When she found that they had slept she asked the maids to keep watch and she went into her rooms, and prepared the daily food offering to God, in order to complete the rites of worship. She took the golden plate of food and offered it to God. Some time later, she went into the shrine in order to bring the plate out and give a small quantity (if the offering to the children. What was her surprise, when she found in that room, before the altar, Rama Himself sitting on the floor, with the offering before Him, eating with delight the payasam she had dedicated to God! She could not believe what her own eyes told her!

(To be continued)

Sai's Glory

SAI is our Mother
For us there is no other.

BABA we adore
There is Karma no more.

BHAGAVAN is our Light
Giving us Delight.

SATHYA is our Aum
Leading our souls Home.

When (Jai)

When heaven and earth are One
There is no rebirth for anyone.

When cruelty and hatred cease
There is Divine Peace.

When man begins to spiritually explore
There is hope, knocking at God's Door.

When love and happiness expand
There is SAI BABA, walking this land.

Sathya Sai Sadguru

—K. P. Ramachandran

An incarnation is the play of the Absolute as the Related, of the Divine as Man. God is perfection and so, Baba too is perfect, seeking to make us perfect. Being an Avatar, Baba has no relationship based on selfish attachments and motives. 'This avatar has no suffering, no attachment to its career, to the members of the family where He appeared!' All His actions are for the welfare of humanity. If He takes work from others, He does so for their good alone. He is born free; He is always prompted by compassion with suffering humanity.

He, the supreme Guru, transmits illumination and knowledge by mere will or touch. He grants complete immunity from the bondage to the cycle of birth and death.

Our Divine Guru behaves in a human way, so that mankind can feel kinship, but, He rises to superhuman heights so that mankind can aspire to reach those heights. No avatar has accomplished so much, going among the people, the masses, the millions, and counseling them, consoling them, uplifting them, and directing them along the road of Truth to Himself.

Einstein wrote on Gandhi, "Generations to come, will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever walked on this earth in flesh and blood!" How true it is of Baba! Let us all rejoice in the Love Grace Might and Wisdom of our Sad Guru, surrendering ourselves at His Lotus Feet, for His service and our own Liberation.

The Arjuna Attitude

Eternity extends before man; space too is horizonless; but, life is short and very unsure, Therefore, man has to make the best use of the years allotted to him on this world, and try to become one with the Absolute, so that these entrances and exits may be ended. That is his Dharma, the duty he has to do for Himself. Know that Dharma and live according to its dictates—that is the meaning and purpose of life.

So, the Almighty who has made creatures Evolve unto human beings comes down as Man, whenever that creature forgets or ignores this basic duty to itself. The Rishis of India have, through the process of purifying their intuition, discovered this fact and sensed the message that the Incarnations bring, the Avatars carry. Many times in human history, Avatars have come and awakened man. But, the animal past, and the demonic delusion drag him into the mire, where he foolishly revels in sensual physical and transient trivialities.

This is a splendid chance to fulfill your human existence. The Ananda that you hope to derive from kith and kin, from wealth and worldly fame is but a pale shadow of the Ananda that resides in the spring of your heart, where God dwells. Try to contact that spring; go to the very source; be centred in the Atma or God with, in. Few seek real Ananda; the many are led away by

the pseudo-ananda of the senses, the intellect and the mind. Real Ananda springs only from Truth. And, Sathya is the Dharma or Duty of each to himself. Seek Truth, serve Truth, be Truth.

Truth will reveal itself when the heart is saturated in Love. Man's nature is fundamentally Truth; his breath is fundamentally, Love; his blood is fundamentally, Tolerance. Falsehood hatred and faction are characteristics of beastly or demonic natures. They are acquired from society, or ignorance or greed. Today, man is shaped by the head, rather than the heart. It is cleverness that is admired, that pays. But, peace and joy emanate from the heart not the head The heart teaches compassion, awe, reverence, humility equanimity, sympathy—qualities that bind, men in love, and turn him towards righteousness and the source and sustenance of the Universe, namely, God. The pursuit of property and possessions cannot uplift the heart into the heights of Bliss. You are contemporaries of the Avatar come to guard and guide; you have the capacity to catch the message and canalise it into action and activity. Make the utmost of this chance.

The message can be grasped only by those who yearn to know the Duty, to which they have to be loyal. Or else, it will sound hollow and mechanical, like the prattle of a phonograph record. But, if the heart is ploughed by that yearning and made ready for the seed, the harvest will certainly follow.

Arjuna was the brother-in-law of Krishna; he was a close companion and even a chum of the Lord, for many decades! Krishna, remember, was 84 years old, at the time of the Kurukshetra Battle, when He served Arjuna as a non-combatant charioteer! But, yet, it was only on that battlefield that the Message of the Bhagavad-Gita was imparted to him! Why? Arjuna developed the requisite attitude for the reception and retention of the Message only then.

First Arjuna was puzzled about his duty and was tremendously anxious to get light thrown upon it. He was torn between two paths, and in spite of all his discrimination and detachment he was at a loss to discover what his Dharma was. Second, he surrendered his judgement to God, and declared, out of the deepest recesses of his heart: in indescribable agony, "I am your disciple; I dedicate my entire being to your will; tell me what to do and I shall obey".

Arjuna is also called Partha—a name applicable to all men, for, it is derived from Prithvi or earth. It means earthly, earth-born. So, this situation is a reminder to every man on earth. If only you cultivate a deep yearning for guidance about your appropriate Dharma, and if only you surrender your will your intellect your emotions your impulses to God, He will lead you to Himself, and endow you with supreme Bliss.

Thirdly, Arjuna was overcome by Love, though it took on the colour of egoism and delusion. He felt that it was wrong and useless to kill his kinsmen, to plunge the land in misery; to slaughter the armies ranged against him. He preferred a life sustained on alms to ruling over an empire won by the sword. This compassion, though misplaced and based on an unreal sense of values, had its own appeal, to the Lord, who resolved to transmute it into the renunciation of the attachment to the deed, and the fruits of the deed.

Every deed must take man nearer the goal; it must be a step in the pilgrimage to God. It must cleanse the emotions, correct the attitude, clarify the path and co-operate in the consummation. This has to be the constant care and vigilance of every seeker and aspirant to Bliss.

—**Bhagavan's Discourse: Prasanthi Nilayam**

The Dream That Awakens

—*Dr. M. S. Ramakrishna Rao, M. S.*

On March 11, 1970, Baba gave a spiritual discourse, to a small group of foreign seekers in the 'Interview Room', of the Prasanthi Nilayam. It lasted for nearly an hour and half. All the time, Baba spoke in English. Among the three ladies who were also called in, my wife was one. She told me that, by means of this Discourse, Baba dispelled all the doubts, raised by the devotees. It was a misfortune that I missed being called in. For, I had to leave the Nilayam earlier and return to my place of duty. When my wife told me that Baba enquired about me, and remarked, when she replied that I had left, 'So, he has gone!' my remorse was endless.

Bhagavan advocates eradication of the desire for worldly pleasures. He says that if one aspires for spiritual uplift, and moves towards worldly pleasures, he is only moving farther and farther away from his goal. If one wants to proceed along the correct path he has necessarily to move away from sensuous pleasure. If one aspires for both, progress will be zero".

This sounds well, and is good advice. But, how exactly do these pleasures come in the way of spiritual progress? That query haunted me; I could not get an answer. Some of these pleasures are, I knew, quite innocuous. Even among those who sought the more extreme ones, I saw many highly, placed persons discussing about God and praising His Glory after a cocktail party, for example! So, is it absolutely necessary to leave off all worldly pleasures? This doubt was pestering me: I longed to ask Baba about it; it would have been clarified by Him, were I present at the meeting mentioned above. But, that chance had gone; the past was past.

A few days later, Baba gave me His Darshan in a dream. My wife had told me that, at the Meeting, during His Discourse, Baba had said, "Whenever I appear in a dream, it is to communicate something to the individual; it is not a mere dream, as is generally known. It is real appearance". Strictly speaking, my dream was no dream at all. The whole setting was clear; the objects were real. I could reproduce the entire experience in a vivid way. Baba was there, beside me, showing with his outstretched hand, an island, a little farther way from the strip whereon we were standing. On the island, as well as in the waters in between, there were scores of crocodiles. The monsters were motionless; the waters stayed calm. Baba said, "That island is the goal of life; the worldly pleasures are the crocodiles. Do you think you can ever, reach the island, stepping over the backs of these crocodiles?"

Meanwhile, I saw, on the island; a group of strong and muscular human beings holding down the vicious crocodiles and struggling in utter despair to overcome them, by severing their jaws

apart! Baba exhorted, "Have you the strength to struggle like those unfortunates there? No. You cannot even put up a fight with them." It was an awful scene... Those human beings were holding the monsters in ugly fashion; they were mortally afraid of the creatures; but, they could not, evidently, flee from them, leaving off the struggle. They were caught, in an ambush, it seemed.

Baba continued, "Seeing the crocodiles quiet, like rocks under your feet, you think that your desires too are like them. Misled into believing that they are firm, you try to tread on them. Then, you discover that you are wrong; you lose your precarious balance, and fall down, a prey to these vicious amphibians. Even if your foot is firm; and you think you can ride the crocodile, if it suddenly dives into the depth; you will be drowned! Your desires will lead you into greater and greater depths, from which you can never rise. So, this is not the way to reach the goal; you cannot reach the other shore, on the back of a crocodile!"

So saying, Baba slowly moved away, presenting me His Abhaya Hastha, indicating His assurance that I had no reason to fear, since He was guiding me. I opened my physical eyes. Thus, Bhagavan cleared my doubt, and consoled me, after the disappointment I had about the discourse at the Prasanthi Nilayam.

On 29-5-70, I had the fortune of hearing Bhagavan, for nearly two hours, discourse on various spiritual matters, at Whitefield. During the discussions, it occurred to me that one has to give up old associations, in order to lead a new life, surcharged with discipline but, certainly, one needs the help of some one for something or other, as long as there is life. How to reconcile these two needs, was my problem. The next day, Baba called me into the bungalow and before anything else; he told me, "Last night, came to your room! Do you remember? But, your mind is in a fully confused condition".

I tried to recollect very rapidly the rather confused dream. Amidst the jumbled picture of experiences, one thing was clear enough. In the dream I had, some friends who had received several favours from me pleaded their inability to come to my help, though I knew that it was not difficult for them to come to my rescue. They behaved in utter selfishness. Then, an indistinct figure of Baba appeared, by my side and told me, "Look! Instead of seeking help from these humans! Why don't you place your faith in God, who will take good care of all of your problems?"

When I woke from the dream, I thought it must be a projection of my mind; I did not pay any attention to it. But Baba referred to that dream! He exhorted. "Don't think that those incidents are mere stretches of your imagination! I am answering all your doubts!"

Realising the way in which He is showing His kindness on even creatures like me, my eyes became wet. Baba took His handkerchief and began wiping my tears, with the love of a thousand mothers! I lost all awareness of the surroundings. It was the experience of unfathomable pleasure. When I recovered, He was in an adjoining room, talking with another devotee!

Baba says often to his devotees, "I shall be in your sense-perceptions; I shall be trailing along with you; I shall be inseparable with you". How true it is! May He bless us all with His constant presence.

The Positive and the Negative

I am glad that this village of Kalkunte is so deeply aware of the benefits of education that, out of the meagre earnings of their hard toil, people here are venturing to construct a spacious building for the School in which their children are studying. They are today asking me to lay the foundation for this Temple for Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning and Liberation. The hearts of children are pure and unsullied. They walk in the straight path and are honest and just. It is the teachers who spoil their immaculate nature, by their conduct and example. If only the children are allowed to grow in proper spiritual atmosphere, with no hypocrisy or humbug, with spiritual discipline and guidance, they can become assets to the nation, instead of being the handicaps they are now! This is the reason why I have entered the field of education and established colleges for boys and girls, in different states.

The Education Minister spoke now of God being the current that illumines all the different bulbs of varying candle powers. But, the switch that operates the current is in the heart of each one; one can turn it on or off. One can welcome God into the heart and benefit by Him; another can deny Him and plunge into the darkness which breeds distress and disease. Again, you have to consider the positive and negative poles of the current. God's Grace, sharing His Might Majesty and Compassion, basking under His Glory—this is the Positive; the Negative is the cleansing of the heart, the removal of lust, greed, anger, hate and conceit from the consciousness, the purifying strengthening process by which man becomes fit for receiving and benefiting from the Grace of God.

Our villages are torn by faction and disunity. Individual likes and dislikes are exaggerated into poisonous fumes of hatred which destroy patience and love and so, the task of providing health, education and happiness to the villagers is thereby handicapped. The head, hand, stomach and feet are all parts of the body. They have no separate existence, apart from the body. The entire body is designated by one name. When we speak of Pullayya or Mallayya, we include in him all the limbs and parts of the body. If any limb is injured Pullayya or Mallayya suffers. If any limb is set right, the entire body benefits. So too Kalkunte is one body and its limbs are the many households that comprise it. Each house may have a different name—'Srinivas', 'Lakshmi Vilas' or simply, 'the house of Padmanabha'—but, all are included in the one name, Kalkunte. When it is a question of the health or progress of Kalkunte, all households must act as one. This is the secret of happy life for all. One limb should not fight against another.

I am glad that this village has an ancient temple, which is kept very clean, with all the rituals of worship scrupulously followed, even to this day. A temple, in a village, where God is adored is as the heart to the individual. Elders say even now that you should not sleep the night in a village where there is no temple! For, the temple helps soften people's hearts and instills the virtues of sympathy compassion and fellow feeling. If there is no temple, the villagers miss this influence and are therefore apt to have unsocial qualities of greed and cruelty. I exhort you to transmute your hearts into residences for God; make yourselves into moving temples, becoming aware of the God installed in you, the God who prompts you and provides for you, protects you and prevents you from falling a prey to pernicious propensities.

The one is known by many names; the One is pictured in many forms. There is only One Truth, but, people discern only one facet at one time and they aver that it has only that particular facet! All experience the same Peace and the same Bliss—the Peace and Bliss that are but waves of the Infinite Ocean of Peace and Bliss that is God. Why then hate, compete and suffer conflict? Better for to love, cooperate and be happy in harmony.

—Baba Discourse at Kalkunte
30-5-70

The Return of the Gods **Another Lesson Overseas**

—Charles Penn

Each day devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba become more and more amazed at His Omnipresence. As my Divine Teacher, this devotee, time and time again, especially after entering into the deep Silence during Dhyana, discovers this to be so.

A wonderful (pronounced ONE-der-FULL by Swami) example of this occurred at seven o'clock this morning, September 22, 1969.

Last evening when reading the chapter on "The Supreme Physician" from Volume Five of Sathya Sai Speaks, another devotee said that the statement about "gods aspiring to possess a body" was not well understood. To refresh the memory, Swami says in Volume Five—

"The Body is a vehicle that even gods aspire to possess; you know that gods seek to come into human form, so that they could utilise the intelligence, discrimination, detachment etc. that the human body alone is capable of exercising, to realise the Ultimate Reality, which when known makes everything else known."

Before I go on a journey, even a small one like driving the car to the office, I try to take a few minutes to meditate on the Lord—to give thanks for the `working-day ahead'—to give thanks for this body in which I dwell. It was this morning, within moments of going into the Silence, I discovered the Inner-voice explaining the above passage. Swami's presence was quickly felt. His words of wisdom came to me thusly:-

"Gods having returned to the Supreme Soul—the Atman—sometimes realise that they have not become fully purified. Only within the body can such an enlightened one seek higher enlightenment. A god may have become highly purified before vacating the body, only to find that, under certain conditions and tests, some desires or attachments were still unquenched, still lingering. Such gods may want to take the chance to earn greater perfection through another sojourn in a body.

"The chance taken by such a god includes even the possibility of becoming more attached to the known desires than unattached. This happens when the re-entered Spirit fails to become Master of the Soul and remains a Slave of the Senses, often throughout an entire lifetime.

"Some gods have to literally fight their Senses to overcome them. Such gods are fortunate for they are more able to overcome desire and to achieve their objective. They can successfully cross the Ocean of Desires to Me".

On asking Swami as to who was a god and who was not one, He explained that all Spirit living in the Human Body was God, that all beings were gods of greater or lesser degree according to the depth of consciousness achieved over the period of thousands of births and deaths.

He further said that when a developed god wants to return to the body it is his one wish to become more highly purified. When a god `developed' to a lesser degree is able to return, he dies so, not to merge with the Divine forces and therefore can waste lifetime after lifetime, caught up in whirl-pool of desires. Such ones, unfortunately, make up most of the world of today.

"That is why I have come. These Souls are unaware that their purpose for becoming earth-born is to merge with Me. Instead they remain in the lower stratum where desires willfully drown them from age to age".

Such were the words Swami used to complete this Lesson for the enlightenment of all of us.

Americananda Vahini

—Charles Penn

From the Divine Form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His sweet Vahini (river) of blessed teaching, guiding and uplifting, flows unceasingly from India's shores across the seven seas to all lands. He opens the hearts of all devotees, many in America, and enters, to remain forever. He enters the hearts of even seekers who have never heard His name.

So many devotees know Sai Baba through meditating only, on the Formless. Baba responds just as quickly to those, as He does to others who have travelled far, to have His darshan. First contact with Baba is usually through a book, a film, a photograph, or a friend.

Perhaps our Indian brothers and sisters would like to hear about some of the 'visits' Baba has already made to Sadhakas in the United States and even in Mexico.

"When in Puttaparthi, a year or more ago, I would climb to the crest of the Hill with its especial Tree and from that high position I would stretch my arms towards the Mandir and pray to Him. I began to feel His presence grow stronger each time. Then my eyes began to see Him standing in the light facing me. Now I am back in this little town in Mexico. From the balcony I greet the dawn with arms outstretched towards the rich red ribbons of light. And there in the sunbeams I see Him. He has even approached within twenty feet of me. I see Him very plainly. The work, planning to care for orphaned children, progresses day by day, for was not the work blessed by Baba before I left Puttaparthi?" So writes a devotee, of His Grace.

"I had been very ill and was just recuperating. I should not have been driving my car on a long trip through a desert area to a lodge. My heart was filled with Baba. I looked at a miniature oval picture of Him swinging from the car rear-vision mirror. I could imagine Him sitting on the car hood protecting all. Shortly a sandstorm began to rage. The road disappeared and the edge line was barely visible. Then I noticed that, while no other car could be seen and my speed never slackened, the swirling sand everywhere else was not falling on the car. I was driving in an area freed from dust, sand and debris. His protection led me through the storm", says another devotee.

His Omnipresence enfolds the Earth. It reaches to all the Planets, ever pouring forth words and acts of purification to cleanse the minds of men, enshrouded in ignorance which only creates putrefaction of thought. With His Love blessing everyone, whether he is aware of it or not, there is hope for the peoples of Earth.

And now we are happy that Mother Ganga, River Sai, has reached the shores of America. Americananda Vahini flows on and on, full, fertilising, free.

For All Mankind

—Dr. S. G. Ugraonkar

Bhagavan has repeatedly impressed on us the lesson, that the Sankalpa or Grace of the Lord can be won through Sadhana or spiritual discipline, with Grace, we can achieve victory over the forces of Prarabdha (the accumulated consequence of acts in previous lives). Tapas (penance, discipline) can surely overcome the evil effect of Karma and save a person from the Fate he has woven for himself. In support of this; Baba quotes the incident of Markandeya whose date with death was annulled by his Tapas. The Lord's Will, His Grace, is omnipotent, it can effectively over-ride the dictates of Karma.

Otherwise, how could He create a 'pedha' by a simple movement of the hand to cure an ailing child, a child who had undergone two surgical operations for a congenital defect? How else, could a cancerous growth, diagnosed as such by latest techniques disappear, by a mere negation from, His lips? However, there is a greater miracle that Baba bestows; namely, spiritual transformation. His material miracles are only to demonstrate that there is a higher spiritual force which guides the destinies of man and to create faith in the minds of those who waver and those who deny. Rightly has Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." When people capable and eager to dive deeper come to Him, He reveals to them more and more of Himself, until they surrender to Him and save themselves. While in His previous Body at Shirdi as Sai Baba, Baba said. "I give My devotees what they want, so that they will begin to want what I want to give them".

The path set by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is simple, and adapted to those caught in the troublous atmosphere of modern times, with no facility or freedom for ritualistic observances. He is the most potent spiritual force; moulding and transmuting the lives of aspirants He upholds the validity of all spiritual experiences. Amongst those whom He guides and moulds are Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhist and Parsis. He never advises change from one faith to another. He has incarnated to foster the spiritual evolution of all mankind.

Guru—God

Gurupurnima is sacred for many reasons: this day, the seeker who suffers from identification with the false objective world is initiated into the reality of the 'unseen motivator' within him; this day, those who have no urge to tread the spiritual path are inspired to seek the bliss which that path will confer; this day, aspirants are helped to achieve the consciousness of the One, which is known by many Names and through many Forms, in various languages and lands. With the rise of the sun, the world is bathed in light and heat. So too, with the oncoming of Gurupurnima the human heart is bathed in peace and security. Gurupurnima is not just one day in the year, marked out in the Calendar. It is all days when the Mind of Man (whose presiding Deity is the Moon) becomes full of pleasant coolness, fully illumined with the light from the Sun, (Intelligence, Discrimination).

The contemplation of death is the very foundation of Spiritual discipline. Without it, man is certain to fall into falsehood, pursuing the objects of sense-pleasure, and trying to accumulate material, worldly riches. Death is no ominous calamity; it is a step into the auspicious brightness beyond. It is inescapable; it cannot be bribed away, adjourned by certificates of good conduct, or testimonials from the great. Once born, death is the inevitable end. But, it is possible to escape birth and thereby, escape death. For, birth is the consequence of karma. Do karma which breeds no consequence, no after effects which have to be lived through—and you need not be born again. Engage an activity, as duty; or engage in activity, as ‘offering of worship to God’—then, such activity will breed no after-effects.

This problem of escaping death, achieving immortality, Amritattwam, is the very core of inquiry. When Yagnavalkya proposed to go into the forest for asceticism, and divide his riches between his two wives, Maitreyi, wanted to know from him, before accepting her share, whether riches will help her to realise the Truth and get release from Death. Nachiketas asked the same boon from the God of Death. Prahlada taught the same point of view to his playmates. Buddha was prompted by the sight of a corpse to solve the mystery of Death. The true Guru is the one who makes one aware of the seriousness and urgency of this problem.

When acts are done as offering to God, one will not be elated at success or disheartened by failure, for, He prompts, He helps, He grants joy or grief as He wills, as He cares. The doer will have no attachment to the fruit of the deed; so, he will not be bound to its consequence; it will leave no trace on his personality which will shape him beyond death. But, there are people who assert that there is no God at all. Now, the very currency of the word God, is proof enough for those who can think, that there must be God. A word originates to represent an object that exists, or an idea that arises. Tree, cow, bird, forest—these exist and so, those words are current. Every word indicates the existence of something. A non-existent thing will not have a word to denote. It may be said that words like skyflower, harehorn, barren-mother denote nonexistent things; but, they are not words; they are compounds—we have the sky and we have the flower. It is the compound, the double word, the combination of sky and flower that does not exist. So too the rest.

A word expresses experience; experience is the result of craving; craving comes out of desire; desire arises as a result of the impact of nature on the senses; nature is the illusion that covers the One and displays it as the Many; illusion or Maya is God's artfulness, His Leela, ‘Mama Maya’ (‘My Maya’, He says, in the Gita!). This truth is expounded by the true Guru to the disciple who is earnest and efficient. This is a gem of wisdom that has to be treasured in the heart, and carefully guarded, against the viles of the six inner thieves, lust anger greed passion pride and hate.

There are two types of jungle where the beast, man, can roam; he has to make the choice. There is the Vedic jungle, where calm and quiet prevail, where leonine majesty in the form of realised souls resides, where in the silence that filters into the heart, the mysteries of birth, death and liberation become clarified. There is the other non-Vedic jungle, where wildness is rampant and each lives on the other. There you have teachers who are even more engrossed in worldly tangles and whose eye is more on your purse than your mind or heart, your fortune more than your fate.

“Gu means darkness and ru means light. Guru scatters darkness through light; he imparts wisdom which roots out ignorance. Render unto him as much homage as he deserves, but, not more. You repeat the sloka

*Guru brahma gurur vishnu,
Guru devo maheswarah
Gurussaakshaath Parabrahma
Tasmai sri gurave namah*

which is usually interpreted as indicating that the Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara and that he is the visible Parabrahma. But, it is capable of a nobler interpretation: Brahma is the Guru, Vishnu is the Guru, Maheswara is the Guru; really Parabrahma is the Guru" Do not seek human Gurus, however great their reputation. They are not gu (gunatheetha—beyond the Gunas, they are bound by the qualities they have developed) and ru (beyond Form, they are still in need of Form, so that they may conceive of Reality). Themselves limited, how can they communicate to you the Unlimited? Pray to the God within you, the Maheswara, the Vishnu, the Brahma, or Parabrahma Principle to reveal Itself. Accept that, as the Guru and you will be illumined.

It is sheer waste of money to burden the pictures and idols in your shrines and altars with plenty of garlands and to use costly utensils and offerings in order to show off devotion. This is mere deception, and it demeans Divinity, which requires only a pure heart, for showering Grace. Do not posit distance between you and Me by these attitudes of Guru—Disciple or God—Devotee. Fundamentally, I am neither Guru nor God. I am you; you are I. That is the Truth, There is no difference or distinction; that which appears so is delusion. You are waves; I am the Ocean. The Name and the Form are separate; but, the taste is the same, the Jivatma sans the Upadhi is Paramatma, Itself. If you achieve inner content, I am content; for, I am you.

When the Guru is himself struggling in the dark, how can he lead others on? When he is himself a beggar, in search of moneyed men, how can he be free and strict as a teacher? When moha predominates, moksha is a will o' the wisp. You may eat a tiny grain of sugar like an ant and be contented with the gain; but, you must grow into an elephant that will eat with relish a whole bundle of sugar-cane! The Gayatri mantra is a prayer for the, progressive upsurge of intelligence so that Truth may be grasped by the seeker. Subordinate the mind to the pure Intelligence, which is but a reflection of the God within. Then, you have the Guru of Gurus, as Guide.

—Baba (18-7-70)

O! Lord

—(M. P. gain)

What should I ask of Thee, O Lord!
All I get will be Thine.

I have no entity of my own
Or any thing I may call mine.

What should I pray for; O Lord!
Thy Grace has been on me all along.
I am in Thy refuge.
It is Thy outlook.
Make me a ray of Thy Effulgent Light.

Forgive me for what I am, O Lord!
And make me what I should be!
Only this boon from Thee I aspire for—
The next step I take, be as Thy Will.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7

Kausalya wondered: "What is this I see? Do my eyes deceive me? Is this true? Can it be true? How did this baby which was sleeping soundly in the cradle come to the shrine? Who brought it hither?"

She ran towards the cradle, and peeped into it, only to find Rama fast asleep therein! She assured herself that hers was but delusion; she went into the shrine to remove from there the vessel of payasam she had placed before the idols. She found the vessel empty! How could this be, she wondered! Seeing the child in the shrine might well be a trick of the eye; but, what about the vessel being empty? How could this be an optical illusion?

Thus she was torn between amazement and disbelief. She took hold of the vessel with the remnants of the offering and hastening to the cradle, stood watching the two babes. She could see Rama rolling something on his tongue and evidently enjoying its taste; she was amusingly watching his face, when lo, she saw the entire Universe revolving thereon. She lost all consciousness of herself and her surroundings; she stood transfixed, staring with dazed eyes, on the unique panorama that revealed itself in the child. The maids were astounded at her sudden behaviour; they cried out in their anxiety, but, she did not hear them. One maid held her feet and shook her until she awakened to her surroundings. She came to, in a trice, with a quick shiver: She saw the maids around her and overpowered by wonder, she sat on a bedstead. Turning to the maids, she asked, "Did you notice the child?" They replied, "Yes; we are here since long. ...We have not taken our eyes away from him". "Did you notice any change in him?" Kausalya enquired in eager haste. "We did not notice any change; the child is fast asleep as you can see" was their reply.

Kausalya had her problem, again. Was her vision a delusion? Or fact? If true, why did not these maids notice it? She thought about it for long and, finally, consoled herself with the argument that, since the children were born as products of Divine Payasam, Divine manifestation was to be expected of them. She nursed there and nourished them with great maternal solicitude. They grew day after day, with greater and greater, splendour, as the moon does in the bright half of the month. She derived immeasurable joy, fondling them, feeding them, and fitting clothes for them.

The childhood of Rama was a simple but sublime stage in His life. Very often, Kausalya forgetting that He was her child, fell at His feet, and folded her palms before Him, knowing that He was Divine. Immediately, she became afraid of what people would say, if they saw her bowing before her own child and touching its feet in adoration. To cover up her confusion, she looked up towards the sky and prayed aloud, "O Lord! Keep my child away from harm and injury" She closed her eyes to contemplate the Divine Child and begged that she might not waver in her faith, through the vagaries of His Maya,

She was struck by the halo of light that illumined His face. She was afraid that others might question her sanity, if she told them her experiences. Nor could she keep them to herself. Often, she was so upset that she behaved in a peculiar manner, as if carried away by the thrill of the Divine Sport of her child. Sometimes, she was eager to open her heart to Sumitra or Kaika when they were near her; but, she controlled herself, lest they doubt the authenticity of the experience and attribute exaggeration to her, believing that she desired to extol her own son, over those of the other queens.

At last, one day, she made bold to relate to Emperor Dasaratha the entire story of wonder, thrill and strangeness. He listened intently and said, "Lady! All this is just the creation of your fancy; you are over fond of the child; you imagine he is Divine and watch his every movement and action in that light and so, he appears strange and wonderful. That is all". This reply gave her no satisfaction; so, the Emperor consoled her with some specious arguments and sent her to her apartments.

In spite of what Dasaratha argued, the Queen who had witnessed the miraculous incidents with her own eyes remained unconvinced. She could not place faith in his words. There, fore, she approached the Preceptor Vasishtha and consulted him on the genuineness of her experiences. He heard her account and said, "O Queen! What you have seen is unalloyed Truth. They are not creations of your imagination. Your son is no ordinary human child! He is Divine, You got him as your son, as the fruit of many meritorious lives. That the Saviour of Humanity should be born as the son of Kausalya is the unique good fortune of the citizens of Ayodhya". He blessed the queen profusely and departed.

Kausalya realised the truth of Vasishtha's statement! She knew that her son was Divinity Itself; she derived great joy watching the child: Months rolled by. The children, Rama Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shatrughna learnt to crawl on all fours, sit on the, floor, and move about. Special arrangements were, made, to watch them at all times, lest they fall and hurt themselves. Many varieties, of toys were procured and placed before them. The mothers with the children, the children with the mothers and the nursemaids with them—spent the days with no

sense of the passage of time, with no sleep or rest, in one continuous round of joy. The children could raise themselves up and stand, holding fast the fingers of mother or maid. They could hold on to the wall, and get up. They could toddle forward a few steps on their feet. Their efforts and achievements gave much merriment and joy to their mothers. They lisped in sweet parrot voice a few indistinct words and made them burst into laughter, when they attempted to speak! They taught them to say, Mamma and Pappa and were happy when they pronounced the words correctly.

Every day at dawn they rubbed medicated fragrant oil all over their bodies; applied detergent powder and bathed them in the holy waters of the Sarayu. Then, they dried their curls in perfumed smoke, applied collyrium to their eyes, placed dots on their cheeks to ward off the evil eye, and painted ritual marks on their foreheads. They dressed them in attractive soft silk and helped them to recline in swings, where they slept soundly to the tune of melodious lullabies. Engaged in this pleasant task, the mothers felt that heaven was here, around them and not far off in space and time.

And what of the jewels, for them! Oh! Newer and more brilliant sets, each new day! Anklets, tinkling waist strings of gold and precious stones, necklaces of nine gems! For fear that these might hurt by their hardness the tender body, they were set on soft velvet tapes.

The plays and pastimes of the little boys defy description. When the boys were able to walk, boys of the same age were invited from the city and together they partook in many games. The city children were given tasty dishes to eat, and toys to play with. They were also loaded with gift articles. The maids who brought them to the Palace were also fed sumptuously.

Kausalya, Kaika and Sumitra had no care for their own health and comfort while bringing up their children; so happy were they with them.

After this period of nourishment by the mothers in the interior of the Palace, when they reached the age of three, the children were taken by their governesses to the playground, where they ran and rollicked to their hearts' content. When they returned, the mothers welcomed them and fostered them with great love, and vigilance.

One day, Dasaratha while conversing with his queens, mentioned that the children will not learn much that is worth while if they moved about with the maids; their intelligence and skill; cannot be developed that way. So, an auspicious hour was fixed, to initiate them into letters; preceptors were called in, to inaugurate the studies. From that day, the charming little kids took residence in their teacher's home; they gave up the costly royal accoutrements and wore a simple cloth wound round their waists, and another thrown over their shoulders. Since education cannot progress well if children are at home, in the atmosphere of parental love, and care learnt by service of the teacher, by observing him, children had to live with the teacher, imbibing lessons all through the day and night; more is learnt by service of the teacher, by observing him and following his example. They had to live on whatever was given to them as food, by the teacher. They shone like embodiments of the Brahmachari ideal (the ideal seeker of Truth). When the mothers felt the anguish of separation and desired to see them, they went to the home of the teacher and made themselves happy, noting the progress of the children.

The teacher was also quite happy, when he observed the steadfastness, and enthusiasm of his wards; he was surprised at their powers of memory, and he was filled with wonder and joy. Among all the four, he noticed that Rama had an outstanding interest in studies. He grasped things so quickly that he could repeat any lesson correctly, as soon as he had heard it once. The teacher was amazed at the sharp intelligence of Rama; he resolved that his advance should not be slowed down by the need to bring the others to his level. So he grouped the other three separately, and paid individual attention to Rama, who learnt the Vedas and Sastras very fast in traditional style.

Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shatrughna too learnt their lessons admirably well, but, they pined for the company and comradeship of Rama so much that, as soon as Rama was out of sight, they lost interest in study and in their duty towards their teacher. As a result, they could not catch up with Rama; they were following him a class or two behind. Lakshmana dared tell the teacher once or twice that they had no need for any lessons or learning; they will be happy, if they could but get the company of Rama! Rama was the very life of Lakshmana. The teacher observed this strange relationship between the two and drew much exultation contemplating on it. He reminded himself of the statement of the sage Vasishtha, that they were no other than Nara and Narayana.

(To be continued)

Sweetness is Krishna

—Sri Nagamani Purnayya

In the year 1948, Baba was at Madras, in the home of a devotee on the occasion of Sri Krishna Jayanti. Puja for Krishna and Bhajan were filled with ardour and adoration, since Sai Krishna Himself was present. The Bhajan Session in the evening was very thrilling. Most of the people left about 9 o' clock; but, Baba was conversing with the others until about eleven.

Then, Baba appeared to be in reverie. He asked, "What day is today?" Surprised, we replied, "Krishna Jayanti". "Is that so?" He raised His arms; He announced, "It has come! It has come!" We looked at Him and were pleasantly amazed to find a big glass bowl, held by Him with both hands! The bowl had figures of birds on each side. It was full of Sweets, which Baba distributed to every one.

The fragrance and the taste of those sweets were wonderfully strange and sublime. Some guessed that the sweets came from Dwaraka, some that they originated from Vaikunta Itself! All were thrilled by the Compassion and Majesty of Baba.

The Ganga and the Sea

All around is to be seen living beings who drag out their existence in misery, in spite of age-long effort to earn Ananda, through many a life lived in the past. They have not so far succeeded in winning Ananda, because it is only the knowledge of the Atma as their inner core that can confer lasting Bliss. When sensual desire tarnishes the mind, it cannot have untarnished Bliss. Through virtuous and truthful life, the mind has to be purified, so that the knowledge of the immanence of Atma in all is evident for it. It is only when you see your self in all and all selves in you that Bliss is possible.

The Grace of God cannot be earned by mere recitation of the glories of God. The Name has to be uttered with its halo of meaning clear in the mind's eye. There must be bhava, raga and thala (feeling, melody and correct timing) while singing the Name of God. These Americans who sang bhajans now, paid attention to melody and time, and their kirtan came from the heart. So, they are true Bharatha children, for bha, ra and tha signalise bhava raga and thala! The culture of Bharatha emphasises the rathi towards Bhagavan.

God does not inquire whether you lived in caves or ate roots and fruits only; He seeks purity of heart, achieved by service and surrender service to man and surrender to His Will. You derive exaltation by worshipping the sculptor carved stone idol in the man-made temple; how much more blissful you should be, worshipping the very God, resident in the temple of the human bodies around you! Adore the God that is resident in all beings, motivating them and prompting their every activity. Ekanatha, the Maharashtra saint, had that vision. He was going on pilgrimage to Rameswaram, in the extreme south of India, from Varanasi, in the North, carrying the sacred Ganga in a pot, to be poured ceremonially on the Ramalingeswara Idol at that place. His disciples were with him. On the way, he saw a donkey dying of thirst, in great agony. Ekanatha felt that the Ramalingeswara in the donkey was calling out for the holy Ganga that he was carrying on his shoulder; in spite of the protests of his followers, he poured the precious Ganga down the throat of the dying animal and saved it. His joy knew no bounds.

God is the seed of all this manifested Universe. 'Beejam Maam Sarvabhoothaanaam' says Krishna in the Gita; 'I am the seed of all elements and all beings'. The root, the trunk, the branch, the leaf, the flower, the bark, the fruit, have each a different texture, taste, smell, colour, use and function; but, they have all arisen out of one single tiny seed! So too all this Universe has but One Primal Cause, God. Man must seek to know the Cause, not the Effect, which is but a facet of the Cause.

Then, man will know his reality, too. This can be known only after a long course of discipline which curbs and controls the senses as well as the passions and impulses which operate them. This discipline will establish you in Love, Universal Love, Love that needs no requital. It is said, that aspirants are avidly searching for God; this may or may not be true; but, this at least is true: God is avidly searching for a sincere aspirant—and He has not yet found one! Devotees are all play-actors; their devotion breaks down at the first touch of disappointment or distress. Or, they are only part-time devotees! A few minutes or hours for God and the rest for themselves and the free play of their sensual likes and dislikes! Speak what you feel, act what you speak—then, thought word and deed will confirm and complement each other and contribute to your spiritual success.

I was telling the permanent residents of Prasanthi Nilayam five points of discipline, which they have to keep in mind. I shall tell you about them, so that your homes too may be turned into Prasanthi Nilayam, and through the subtle influence exercised by them, the villages and towns be converted into abodes of peace. This will be a good step in establishing Prasanthi in the nations and finally in the world as a whole.

The five points are: 1) Silence: The practice of silence is the very first step in Sadhana; it makes the other steps easy and worthwhile. In the silence, you will hear His Footsteps. 2) Cleanliness: Cleanliness is next to Godliness; outer and inner cleanliness are needed to welcome God into your hearts 3) Service: Service to others in distress gives you mental peace and saves you from the agony experienced; for, the other is no less than you yourself. You are equally affected by the grief or joy of another, for, the same Atma is in all. The taste of seawater everywhere is the same, whether you sample it from this wave or some other. All waves are of the sea, from the sea, the Sea! 4) Love: flowing from you, (without calculating the response and the reward, the reaction or the result) towards all beings, for this too, the realisation of the basic non-difference is essential. 5) Hate-lessness: Adweshta sarva bhoothanam: No being is to be looked down upon as inferior, or secondary or unimportant. In the scheme of the Almighty, each has its destined role. Do not slight any being; if you do, it is as sacrilegious as slighting God Himself!

Strive your best to practise these; they will ensure Chitta-shuddhi, that is, purity of the inner consciousness—mind, intelligence, ego etc. They will transmute your inner nature. People answer the question: Where is God to be found? in different ways. They say, in Tirupati, Badri Kedar, Amarnath, Bhadrachalam, Puttaparthi. But, that is not the answer you should accept or give. Tell them that God dwells where His devotees gather and sing His Glory. That is the reason why I am advising you so insistently to do Namasmaran and Nagarasankirtan.

Do not cultivate too much attachment to the things of the world; for, a moment will certainly come, when you will have to give up everything so garnered. Persons who live in the Nilayam as well as those who visit it have with them many bags and boxes and bundles, sometimes as much as a lorry load! But, look at these American Sadhakas! They have come across the continents, thousands of miles, but, their luggage is light—a bag, a rug, two sets of clothes that is all. You now spend most of your time and attention worrying about the goods you carry with you and store all around you. You have no time for more profitable things like Japa or Dhyana.

The very moment you step on to the Sadhana path, Grace will be upon you. The Ganga rises in the Himalayan ranges, and reaches the sea after a long journey of more than a thousand miles. True, but, do not imagine, that it is only at the point where the waters merge into the sea that the sea is in touch with it! When there is contact in one place, there is contact all along the flow, all along the line, throughout the thousand miles, from the sea to the summit. The tingle and the thrill will be felt from the pool where it originates to the estuary where it meets the sea.

[Prasanthi Nilayam: Discourse by Baba 19-7-70]

Vibhuti in the Wound

Sergeant D. S. Kadam, aged 34, was in the Ordnance Section of the Indian Army. On the 18th October, 1968, he sustained a gunshot injury at very close range, on his left leg, just below the knee-cap. The tibia and fibula bones were fractured—the leg was badly crushed. Two thirds of the tibia about 6 inches splintered and was thrown out. He was admitted to the Military Hospital at Ambala Cantonment and was operated upon eight times, by skilled specialists. Mr Kadam writes, "The surgeons took out 300 pellets and pieces of broken bones from the wound. Despite the best medical care, the formation of pus continued for about a year.

One morning, while another inpatient in the same ward was being taken to the operation theatre, he placed with me a photograph of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and a copy of the book, "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram", for safe custody! I kept them on the little table near my bed.

While I was preparing to take my lunch, my eyes fell on the photograph of Baba, and I saw a few large dots of Vibhuti (Ash) on it. I did not believe my eyes. I had no faith in Mahatmas and Sadhus; I rubbed the Vibhuti off, thinking that it was ash that had somehow fallen on it, from somewhere. I turned towards the thal, for my lunch, when I found that the Vibhuti had reappeared, in greater quantity than before I felt that Baba must be a remarkable Person to create Vibhuti on His portrait, like that. So, after lunch, I started reading the Book about Him.

The impression this book left on my mind and heart was that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not a Mahatma or Sadhu; He is a Super human Power, GOD come in human Form: Meanwhile, the photo and the book were given back to the owner, when he came back from the operation theatre. And, I started meditating and praying to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai, from my bed in the Hospital.

The surgeon told me that he was unable to control the formation of pus in the wound; there was no remedy, other than amputation, to save the infection from spreading throughout the leg and body. I could not sleep that night. I lost all hope of recovery.

The very next morning, a gentleman came to me with another Sai devotee. He gave me two packets of holy Vibhuti, which were given him a year ago, by Bhagavan Himself. He advised me to apply the Vibhuti over the bandage. One packet I used on the bandage. But, I felt an urge, in the night, to pour the Vibhuti from the other packet into the wound itself, without caring for the consequences. I knew I will have to suffer at the hands of the military surgeons. In the morning, when the bandage was removed, there was NO trace of pus, or blood or bad odour from the wound! The Surgeon was surprised to see the highly improved condition of, the wound an improvement which was beyond imagination! Since then, I applied only Vibhuti in the wound. The Vibhuti was given by that friend.

The surgeon told me that he was confident the wound will be healed dry, very soon. But, he said, the leg will not be able to hold the weight of the body. After a week, I started walking, with the help of crutches! Another week—I could walk with the help of a walking stick!

On the auspicious day of Guru Purnima, I came to have Darshan of Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam. I was blessed. I touched His Lotus Feet. I can now dispense with the stick, too!

I cannot explain in words my wonder, gratitude and faith, about Bhagavan's Grace."

—(Ed)

i was scheduled to give a lecture on Yoga at the University of Southern Illinois in Carbondale. This was a few days after the killing of the 4 students at the University of Kent, in Ohio and the campus had many military lorries and armed soldiers. Department was worried about my safety, but, all went off well, I even stayed an extra day to talk to the students about Bhagavan, and sing bhajans, with meditation at the conclusion. As a result i was asked whether i could come again in the fall! And so it goes on, in all the schools, churches and universities (seven of them this year). Bhagavan's devotees grow by leaps and bounds.

—*Indra Devi*

For Your Attention

It is well known that many thousand devotees gather at Prasanthi Nilayam during the Dasara, Birthday, Mahasivarathri and other Festivals. If sick persons, mental defectives and insane persons are brought at such times, they will not be able to get the facilities they need. They will therefore have to meet various hardships, and others who have come are also put to hardship on account of them. So, such persons are liable to be sent back, as soon as they arrive, if they come during these Festival Seasons. Readers are requested to warn intending visitors of this category well in time!

2

Some persons claiming to be 'disciples' of Bhagavan, or specially favoured by Him, or deputed by Him, or being in special contact with Him directly or indirectly, are cheating people by their tactics, and collecting donations, and ignorant admirers. They reel off tales to establish that Baba has specially blessed them and indulge in confidence tricks. People should be warned of such crooks and cheats by members of all Units of the Organisations. Members should also discourage the chain letters that are circulating under the name of Baba and inform people that such should be scotched wherever found.

In Human Form

—R. S. Junnerker

I believed Shirdi Sai Baba still existed and helped the needy and those who prayed sincerely. He had a human heart and godly divinity! But his closest devotees never realized that he himself was the Lord in human form! They merely described him as a Yogi with superhuman powers! They considered him a great saint, a spiritual guide—a Sadguru! What ignorance!

He came and went without bothering to establish His Identity. But he had promised to re-incarnate, to come amongst us once again eight years after his, mahasamadhi. And so he did! And this time he came to declare openly that he himself is the Lord-Avatar-God in human form!

To prove his divinity he did miracles since his childhood nay, since before his birth at Puttaparthi! He still does them. They are beyond human imagination! According to him they are his visiting cards. They are meant to bring home to us the truth that he is God himself. Mere telling us what he did in Krishnavatar, that he is the Lord himself, is not easily accepted in this age of science.

In his every act, in his every glance, in every word he speaks, Sathya Sai Baba—as he is known in his present body—is full of compassion - love for humanity. Being omniscient he knows every one of our sins. He reads all our bad thoughts. He sees all our deeds! And yet he does not despise us. In the personal interviews that we are fortunate to get with him he clearly

indicates that he knows us out and out! But this is only to create confidence in us - not to humiliate us.

In my first interview with him I simply wept! Those were the tears expressing the joy of fulfillment of a dream! The dream of coming across face to face with God! It was an ecstasy on being so close to Him and I almost embraced Him! And believe me; He did not mind! How great! Because I knew I did not deserve that Touch! How human!

And since then I have intently watched Him not for His miracles—but for His humanity! Imagine the strain of giving darshan to one and all of those thousands of devotees who gathered at Gwalior Palace in Bombay, at Vallabhai, Stadium, at Mody's bungalow, at Bhavan's College ground at Andheri, and now at Dharmakshetra, which he visits periodically, for those thousands of eager faces many of whom are unable to go to Prasanthi Nilayam! I have seen saints for whose darshan, visitors have to wait in queue move forward one by one, while they sit at one place. But this God in human form goes to His devotees Himself—wherever they sit—in whatever number they flock! And usually His devotees come in thousands! I remember when He came to Mody's bungalow at Andheri in Bombay, the crowd was so huge that a large number was sitting and waiting outside the compound limits and had lined up a long distance, even on the Express Highway—in the scorching heat of the summer sun! But Baba went to them all; He was actually moved to see their plight for His darshan! He told them to go away or stand in shade. He was more concerned about their being in the sun even though He Himself was walking amongst them in that terrible heat! How human! How kind! When He sees devotees standing in sun or otherwise, He wants them to sit in shade and not exert!

He likes devotees to be disciplined so that he can move amongst them freely and one and all get His darshan. I know once some persons from the gathering at Dharmakshetra prevented Him from going ahead, blocking His way, in highly devoted disorder! No doubt He was disturbed but He was not angry. He went back, to the disappointment of thousands who eagerly awaited behind the disorder for His arrival amongst them. But Baba went to the height of the small hill on which the Padmadeep Platform stood and standing at a vantage point gave darshan to the joy of all! Hundreds of such instances prove that He is God with human heart!

The Vibhuti that He materialises for the disabled and diseased, the lockets He produces for the deserving and downtrodden, idols and Shiva lingams created on spot and presented to earnest devotees, the presents he awards to artistes and others, the miraculous cures of incurable diseases such as cancer etcetera with which many patients come to Him giving up all hope of survival, are not merely instances of His miracles—but are examples of His kind and compassionate heart with which He loves this human race!

Oh, if we could only realize that He is an Advent—God in human form—and with a human heart too!

Madhusudana

The objective world, subject to the effects of Time and conditioned by Space, is but a projection of the Divine Mind. If God is offered material gifts, He receives only things composed by His own mental projection. What must be offered to God is something genuinely yours, feelings without form, unadulterated unmixed emotions, like Love. Pray to Krishna with open palms, which grasps nothing material. Be in His Hands, the hollow Flute. Have no restriction or constriction obstructing the melody of His Breath which is animating you.

Madhusudana is one of the Names of Krishna. Pundits define the Name to mean, 'He who killed the demon, Madhu'. But, the Name has a deeper significance. Madhu means honey, sweetness. And, which is the sweetest and most desired object for every one? Himself, the Ego, isn't it? Krishna destroys egoism, He is the Sudana of Madhu, the conceit in oneself. Unless that is killed. He will not be your Charioteer, and you will not be blessed by your Bhagavad-Gita

—**BABA**

From Discourse on Janmashtami, 70

One With Us

Marc Schles

O Lovely Bhagavan!
Dweller in the lotus lake
of every heart
Perfumed and lustrous!
Wonder and Supporter
of the three worlds
Satchithananda Swaroop
Serene, fragrant and full of Bliss!
Great Mother of the World,
suckling all souls!
Make us One with Thee,
as Thou art
ever One with us!

New York, 22-8-1970

Ram Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The brothers lived in the preceptor's house and served him with devotion. They renounced the comforts and luxuries of the palace and gladly underwent the hardship that met them. They carried out the wishes of the master and observed humility and loyalty. They finished their studies in a very short period and mastered the subjects they were taught. One day, Emperor Dasaratha proceeded with his Minister to the home of their teacher and, was beside himself with joy, when he saw them reciting the Vedic hymns and heard the sacred formulae rolling out of their tongues, clear and clean, like a cascade of bright pearls. He was happy that his sons had progressed so fast and learnt so much.

Meanwhile, Rama rose from his seat and fell at the feet of his father. Seeing this, the three brothers too came forward and prostrated themselves before him. The teacher invited the Emperor and the Minister to seat themselves on raised seats covered with deerskins. Dasaratha began conversing with the teacher, in order to find out how far the children had advanced in studies Rama signed to his brothers that they should not overhear their talk; he left the room with the permission of the guru, carrying his books with him and calling on the others to follow him into another room. The brothers took the cue from Rama in all matters and so, they silently obeyed his merest gesture. Vasishta and Dasaratha noted this incident; they appreciated the upright conduct of Rama, his understanding of the trend of the teacher's conversation and his immediate reaction of humility and the way in which he was an example and ideal for the three brothers. They were glad that they had learnt so much discipline. Vasishta could not contain himself. He said, "Maharaja! Your sons have mastered all the arts. Rama has mastered all the Sastras. He is no ordinary mortal. As soon as I began teaching him to recite the Vedas, he used to repeat them as if he knew them already. Only He who has inspired the hymns can repeat them so, not any other! The Vedas are not books which he could have perused while at leisure! They have come down from guru and disciple, through recitation and listening only; they have not been reduced in writing! They are not available anywhere, except from the preceptor! That is the reason why it is referred to as Sruti (that which is heard.) It is the Divine breath of God that has shaped itself into these mantras. I have not seen so far any one who has mastered them as Rama has done in a few months. Why should I say, seen? I have not even heard in history of any one who has accomplished this remarkable feat! I can tell you of many more superhuman achievements of your son. Maharaja! When I think of my good fortune in securing these boys as my pupils, I feel it is the reward for the asceticism I practised so long. They need learn nothing further. They have to be trained in bowmanship and archery, and similar skills appropriate for royal princes, that is all. They have completed their studies under me and become efficient in all that I can teach. The day too is very auspicious. Well! You have come; it is good; take the sons back with you to the Palace".

At this, Dasaratha, who was afflicted since months with the pain of separation, began shedding tears of joy. He could not bear the thrill of fondling his sons again. He turned towards the Minister Sumantha by his side, and directed him to convey the good news to the Queens and ask them to come over to the hermitage with the offerings that the pupils have to present to the preceptor, while leaving his custody. Sumantha proceeded very fast to the Palace, and, communicated the news. He got ready the gifts and returned quicker than anticipated. Meanwhile the boys had their belongings packed, at the suggestion of Vasishta, and the articles were loaded in the chariot. As directed by their father, the children worshipped the Guru according to the

prescribed ceremonial, gave him the offerings of gifts, and fell at his feet, asking his permission to leave for home.

Vasishta drew the boys to his side, pressed their hands, and patted them on their heads. He blessed them and allowed them to leave, most unwillingly, with tears rolling down, on account of the pang of separation. He walked up to the chariot with his pupils. The boys ascended the vehicle, and it moved away. They turned back towards the Guru and looked in his direction with folded palms, for a long distance. The preceptor, too, stood at that place, his cheeks wet with tears. Dasaratha noticed this bond between the teacher and the pupils; he was delightfully pleased. They reached home; the guru entered the hermitage with a heavy heart. Wherever his eyes were turned, he noticed darkness and no light. He feared that the attachment he had developed might confirm itself as a shackle; he decided to sit for Dhyana in order to suppress the rising tides of memory. Soon, he overcame the outer illusion and merged himself in inner Ananda. He realised that the boys were embodiments of Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, the Four Goals of Human Life (Righteousness, Welfare, Endeavour and Liberation), and that They had taken human form in order to reestablish on earth these grand ideals of gracious living. This gave him unruffled peace.

Dasaratha resolved to supplement the education the boys had received by training them in the use of arms; so, he called in expert archers and others and made arrangements to teach them the science of attack and defence. But who can claim to be the teachers of these boys who were already past masters in every field of study? They were only acting the roles of humans and therefore pretending to learn. Or else, for Him who holds the strings of this puppet show, who can teach to pull the string? Men who could not recognise their reality underneath the camouflage of Maya sought to train them and teach them the objective skills useful for external living. When they have come to save the world from disaster, they have to be in the world and of the world, respecting the conventions of the world, so far as it subserves their main purpose.

Men will not be able to understand their acts, for, they are beyond human intellect or imagination. They will be helpless if asked to follow them. People must be made to witness deeds that men can put into practice. Then, the task of fostering Dharma will be quite easy. So, Rama was presenting himself as a cinder covered with ash, or a lake with a thick float of lichen or moss, or the moon hidden by a dark curtain of cloud. The brothers were following the footsteps of Rama; that was all.

Rama and Lakshmana were revealing expert knowledge of stratagems and skills which even expert instructors did not know about. This stunned the teachers; they were wonderstruck, and were even a little fear-stricken. But, the four Princes were never known to have shot an arrow at an animal or bird! They never broke the vow taken solemnly by them, that they will use arms only on occasions of great urgency, not for the pleasure of killing or wounding. They stuck to it with great steadfastness. The trainers took them often to the forest for hikes and game shooting; but, when they spotted animals or birds and invited them to soot, they remonstrated and said, "These arrows are not to be used against innocent targets; they are to be used for the protection of the good, the welfare of the world, and the service of the people. That is the grand purpose for which they are with us; we shall not defame them, using them for these silly pastimes", they averred, and desisted. The teachers had to accept their argument and keep quiet. Every word,

every deed of Rama demonstrated his compassion. Sometimes, when Lakshmana aimed his arrow at a bird or animal, Rama came between and protested, "Lakshmana! What harm has it done to you or to the world? Why have you resolved to shoot it? It is quite against the code of morals prescribed for kings when innocent beings are punished, don't you know?"

The Emperor called his ministers together and often sat among them with the princes near him, and discussed with those around him the principles of political administration, judicial trials and the application of religious principles in the governance of the state. He related to them stories of their grandparents and others of the royal line, how, they-earned the love and loyalty of their subjects, how they fought wars with demons, and even gods and how they won the Grace and support of God in their endeavours. Both the teller and the listeners were exhilarated when these tales were told. Many a day, the ministers will take a turn in this pleasant task. From childhood, the princes were brought up in strict discipline and in methods of efficient administration of the State.

As they grew up quick with the passage of the years, the ministers became confident that they could be entrusted with some fields of governmental activity. The people dreamt that when they came of age and took hold of the reins of government, the earth would be transmuted into heaven. When people saw the princes they felt a bond of affectionate attachment springing between them. The conversation that ensued was marked by sweet concord. The city of Ayodhya contained no one who did not love those simple, humble, virtuous, selfless Princes, who did not evince a desire to watch them. They were as dear to the children of Ayodhya as their own bodies, as precious to the city as its heart.

They were in their eleventh or twelfth year of age. One day, Dasaratha called to his presence the minister Sumantha, who was the repository of virtue, and commissioned him to arrange for teaching the princes the spiritual science of liberation (the Paravidya). He said that however proficient a person may be in secular sciences (Apara-vidya), Para-vidya alone can give him the strength to carry out his Dharma (Rightful duties). The highest moral culture must be imparted to them at this tender age itself. Success or failure in later life is built upon the impressions and experiences gained in the early stages of life. The early years are the foundations for the mansion of later years. Therefore, take the princes around the kingdom and let them learn not only the conditions of the people but also the holiness of sacred places. Describe to them the sanctity of holy places, the history of temples and of saints and sages who have consecrated them, and let them drink deep the springs of divinity that are hallowing those spots. I feel it will be to their good if they do so. As they grow, they are prone to develop sensual desires and urges. Therefore, ere they fall a prey to such tendencies, it is best to implant in them reverence and awe, and devotion to the Divine that is immanent in the Universe. That is the only means to save their human-ness from demeaning itself. And, for rulers of kingdoms, it is essential.

Consult the Guru and the preceptors arrange the tours I have now indicated as important, said Dasaratha; elated at the prospect of the princes getting this great opportunity Sumantha had all preparations executed to the best satisfaction; he got ready himself to accompany them.

(To be continued)

Temple Gopuram

Baba has described the temple gopuram as a lighthouse amidst the rocky waves, as a beckoning hand to the tired pilgrim in the dark valley of life. At Somnath, He recently opened the Digvijaya Dwar, a magnificent Gopuram for the famous temple. On the 29th August, He laid the Foundation for another Dwar, another magnificent Gopuram, at Kengal Village, on the Bangalore Mysore Road for, the famous Anjaneya Temple there. When He reached the place at 11:30 a.m. a vast sea of exultant faces offered grateful homage to Him. They had come from villages and towns from miles around, for the Darshan and for listening to His Divine Discourse. Sri. V. Venkatappa, Former Minister of Education laid the adoration of the region at His Feet. Hon'ble Sri. Kengal Hanumanthaiya, Law Minister, Government of India, exhorted the people to follow the Divine Counsel of the Avatar of the Age, and to realise the goal of peace and prosperity, for themselves and the world. Bhagavan declared that each person is a temple, with God (Anjaneya, the embodiment of Bhakthi, Karma Jnana and yoga-margas) installed in his heart. Through Dhyana and Japa each one must cognise the Reality and thus get wise, humble and strong, He said. Since a nation's strength lies in the strength of each individual, He said, this is the highest patriotism as well as the highest service to one-self. Bhagavan sang a few Namavalis, which fifty thousand hearts received gladly and repeated with great joy.

The Dasara Festival

The Dasara Festival, 1970 will be celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from 1st October till 10th October, (both days inclusive).

The Dasara celebration include the Vedapurushasapthaha Jnana Yajna from the 4th Oct, and the Special Sessions of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha. The Day's Programme starts with Pranava and includes Vedaparayana, Manthranushtan, Homa, Ekadasarudrabhisheka, Bhajan and the Reading of the Ramayana, the Bhagavatha and the Devibhagavatha.

Every evening between 4 and 7, spiritual discourses will be given by the Pundits of Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, as well as learned scholars. Bhagavan will bless the gathering with His Divine Discourses. From 8 a.m. instructional and inspiring programmes like Harikatha, music recitals, dramas and buraakathas will be arranged. Details of each day's programmes will be announced at the Prasanthi Nilayam.

This is a unique chance to imbibe the spiritual discipline in the holy atmosphere of Prasanthi Nilayam, to share in the thrill that the Vedic rites can impart, to benefit by the speeches of the learned scholars and the Divine Discourses of Bhagavan Himself, and by these means to deepen faith and earnestness in spiritual practice, and, earn Peace and joy as well as Blessedness and Liberation.

The World Around Us

—K. R. R. C. Nair

The world around us is suffering from lack of moral values. We have forgotten the spark of divinity in every one of us. The Atma which is dictating for us the path of Dharma is totally neglected. It is high time for each of us to indulge in some introspection. The basic unit of the world is the individual. So, the correction of the individual means the correction of human society. Baba often says that this correction has to come from within, and not from without. The latent power in every one of us has to be augmented. The spark of Divinity is veiled by the mist of material and sensual pleasures, and so, we are kept off from His Lotus Feet. But, the very thought and inquiry, "Who am I" will lead us on the path towards Him. He will then melt the mist by the rays of His Grace.

To establish this holy communion with the Almighty, a disciplined life is essential—a life toned up by good thoughts, good deeds, good company and Sadhana (Japa, Dhyana, Namasmarana). These act as a protective shield against the corruptive influence of society. "Improve your character and conduct; when your feelings are cleansed and your impulses purified, then you can see My Form in its Reality", Baba says. Baba often reminds us that we ourselves must decide to remove our faults; the first step is to surrender the ego. When we turn our attention to the elimination of our faults, the ego will naturally surrender. For, what is helping the ego to grow is the false notion that all we do and say are right!

While processing ourselves in this way, we will certainly need the Grace of the Lord. Of course, when we desire the good, Grace invariably will be available. That is the very principle of Godhead. The constant utterance of the Lord's Name--Rama, Krishna, Allah or Christ--will elevate the self to its original Divinity. Baba says that this will help the good life, by giving us prompting from the God within. The inspiration can be got by constantly reciting the Name of God and calling on the inner spring of Divinity.

An individual's effort to cleanse himself will have proportionate effect on others around him. Take the case of the young ones, whose upbringing is the sole responsibility of the parents. They look upon the elders as ideal persons: For them the father is the greatest man on earth; the mother is the greatest woman. Consequently, their words and deeds will have the greatest influence on them during the formative period. So, we should provide them an environment conducive to a discipline, which can ensure harmonious development of body, mind and heart. This is what Baba, wants in every home.

Most of us are scared of the very word, discipline! By discipline Baba does not mean asceticism. He means by that word, self-control, which seasons us to lead a truthful, peaceful and contented life. Self-control means complete mastery of the vagaries of the mind. This can be won only by a sincere and earnest desire for correction and improvement and an attitude of detachment. The former is always there with every thinking man; but, the latter is absent for want of proper guidance and discrimination.

Detachment can come only out of unflinching faith in God. The omnipotence and omnipresence of God instill in man great moral courage and held him back from malign influences. Faith alone can recover man from his unwanted attachments. By faith the mind can be withdrawn from its wanderings into sensual pursuits. When the Teacher of Teachers, Baba Himself, is with us, in us, to guide us, educate us and re-form us, why should we not obey His promptings, with faith?

Baba is the great Physician, come to heal individual and society. His Divine Touch can heal all wounds. It is the balm that cures and cheers all grief-stricken peoples. His Voice can calm all agitated minds. His Form can transform all into the Divine. His look can transfuse compassion and love into the hardest hearts. Meeting Him is the consummation of life, the meeting of the Jivatma with the Paramatma.

This Illusion and That Reality

—A S R

My rapport with Baba has only just begun. Indeed, my study of him is prompted by an intense religious fervour, that is, assuming that I can trust myself, based on intellectual curiosity rather than on blind faith.

Whatever Baba may mean to others, to me, he is the picture of graciousness, and learning, a combination of Buddha and Sankara.

Unschooling, if not unlettered, and free from the tyranny of treatises, he is a truly emancipated spirit, even on the intellectual plane.

The range and depth of his scholarship are as unique, as his compassion and humaneness are intense. His discourses, embellished with illustrations, quotations and interpretations of an astounding nature, bear eloquent testimony to the clarity and profundity of his thought and to the fluency and chastity of his expression.

This, of course, does not mean that Baba is to be regarded as a dialectician to whom the making of a point is more exciting than the discovery of Truth.

His spiritual vision is as great as his intellectual insight.

He has a magnetic presence, which at once induces in his devotees a feeling of fulfillment and security.

He is sometimes misunderstood because of the various miracles one usually associates with him. These are, by the way, in the best traditions of saint-hood the world over.

It is, however, imperative that we judge Baba, not by the rewards or results one seeks from him, but, by the new dimensions, spiritual and intellectual, he reveals to every one he meets. By his mere presence, he makes us immediately aware of the thin line dividing illusion and reality.

Whom to Serve?

The Rotary Club, Anantapur, had the unique good fortune of listening to a Discourse from Bhagavan. Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at a Special Meeting of the members held in the Theatre of the Government Arts College. Thousands of citizens also took advantage of the loudspeakers to get inspiration from the Divine Voice. The President of the Club in his welcome address and report of activities stressed on the ideal of Service which the Rotarians had placed before themselves, and requested Dr. S. Bhagavantham, D. Sc., to speak a few words of introduction. Dr. S. Bhagavantham said that it is both superfluous and irrelevant to introduce Bhagavan, anywhere, and especially, at Anantapur. I can say only this about Him. I am happy that I am devoted to Him. I am inviting you to derive the same happiness, by going to Puttaparthi Meeting Him, observing Him and serving Him".

Bhagavan filled every one with delight, when He stood before them, His face lit with a charming smile and His Voice reminiscent of the Flute that enraptured the simple hearts of Brindavan. He said, "Time flows fast, the physical frame of man deteriorates every second until it disintegrates in death, the mind that operates in that frame flutters from one desire to another without rest; but, man does not know; nor does he care to know! He revels in untruth, injustice and unrest. Today, wherever we turn our attention, we find only fear, faction and fury. On one side, we find scientists circling in the sky like eagles, and moving under the sea like fish! On the other, we see the pitiful sight of man struggling upon the hard ground under his feet, not knowing how to live in Love thereon! He lives in dire distress, in hate and anxiety, daggers drawn, brother against brother, just for a morsel of food! Unaware of his duty, he pursues ruinous ideals.

Institutions devoted to the service of mankind like the Lions Club and the Rotary Club, are thriving in various countries. I have myself visited some of these in Kampala, Jamnagar, Bombay and other places and noted the enthusiasm of the members. When you grasp the significance of the word, Service, you will find that it is not so much the service of others, but, service for yourself! Once you feel the distinction that the other person is foreign, then, service becomes patronage; it loses its savour. It fosters the evil of egotism. The person served also feels hurt, is aware that he is inferior. Such service is quite against the Sadhana called Seva.

This feeling of superiority and inferiority based on possessions and material consideration has resulted in the unrest that has engulfed this land today. Man is today afraid of himself; he feels that the house in which he lives has no deep foundation and so, it may fall on him any moment. The spiritual is the only strong foundation for the house in which man has to spend his life. When man bases his life on the faith that all are endowed with the same Divine Spark, there will not be fear and hatred any more, in human relations. "Brothers and Sisters!" has become just a

conventional form of address when it man gets up to speak; it does not come from the heart. Sincerity has disappeared from human affairs.

Mention was made of the poverty and the deficit in food that prevails in this country. There is enough food for all, provided food is conserved by wise consumption by individuals, and by society. More can be produced when people are strengthened by faith in their own resources and capacity. Self-condemnation is not the proper tonic for national reconstruction. If only man becomes aware of his potentiality, there is nothing impossible for him. Grace, once gained, can ensure plenty and prosperity. But, it is difficult to arouse a person who is only pretending to sleep; if he is really asleep a touch is enough to awaken him. India is not immersed in sleep; it pretends to sleep!

The prime cause for the increasing hat, red between man and man, village and village region and region, is the avarice that has infected the individual. It has destroyed contentment, created factions, brought about splits and multiplied misery all round. Removing the head is not the remedy for headache. Removing religion from the curriculum of life is not the remedy for rivalry between religious communities. Discover the causes for the rivalry and remove them; that is enough. Religion will always bind, it will not divide. It unifies, does not disintegrate. The scientist investigates all that is perceptible to the senses. But, the saint travels beyond the realm of the senses, the intellect and even the imagination, into the regions touched by rarefied intuition. The Rotarians must try to understand both realms and appreciate the value of both disciplines.

I would advise you to carry out service programmes in the rural areas in preference to the urban. For, they are more in need of sympathy and more capable of appreciating it. Again, I would request you to emphasise self-control and education as more beneficial methods of family planning than the artificial methods now being propagated, for, these methods augur great harm to the moral and physical health of the people. Yoga is defined as chiththa vriththi nirodha; the control of the wavering mind. Propagate the yoga philosophy. That will have more lasting and more far reaching results on the family than these contrivances.

Faith in God has to be implanted in the minds of the children for it is an anchor for the ship of life, when it is tossed about in the stormy seas ahead. The epics of India have great examples of faith and fortitude which can attract children and youth. I am glad Bal Vihars are also part of the programme of work you have envisaged. Treat it as a valuable limb of your activities. The country will get vast benefit for the small outlay that Bal Vihars require. It is good national service, as well as service for the children.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse 16-8-70

Butter is in every drop of milk; the chicken is in every part of the egg. So too, God is in every part of The Universe; He is the strength, He is the substance; He is the sustenance.

—**BABA**

Festival Freedom

Navaratri is the Festival of Freedom from Bondage to the baser and lower instincts and impulses of man. It symbolises the victory of good over evil, of right over wrong, of the Divine Energy overcoming the Demonic Forces, of Mahasakthi destroying the Asuric tendencies in man.

At Prasanthi Nilayam where Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba presides, this Festival is ushered with the acclamation of thousands from all parts of the world, the joyous recitation of Vedic hymns glorifying the Victory, and the sincere prayers from all hearts that the forces of good might again prevail over the evil. On the first day of October, an hour after dawn, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam as well as on every aspiring heart, which sought His blessing to tread the God-ward path. In the evening, the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital celebrated its 14th Annual Day with Mrs. Nakul Sen, the wife of the Lt. Governor of Goa as President. She said that the hospital was an expression of the infinite compassion of Bhagavan, and congratulated all who were privileged to share in the mission of mercy. Bhagavan spoke on the mental traits and attitudes that cause imbalance and injury to the physical system and advised all to observe the Middle Path in food, recreation and habits. On the 2nd, over 6000 poor people were invited to a feast, where Baba Himself served them sweets. Saris and clothes were given to about a thousand women and men through Mrs. Sen, the Rajamata of Nawanagar, and Sri Nakul Sen the Lt. Governor.

Seva Dal

The first All India Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal was held at the Prayer Hall, on the 3rd October, in the Divine Presence of Baba, with Sri Nakul Sen, as the Chairman. Sri. N. Kasturi welcomed the 700 Seva dal Members, who attended. Sri Indulal. H. Shah spoke "out the Agenda of the Conference, and of Bhagavan's Plan to revive real Dharma, the organisation of Balavihars (for children up to the age of 15), the Seva Dal, (for young men and women of the age group 18-35), the Seva Samithi, Seva Sangh, Mahila Vibhag, Bhajan Mandali, Study Circle etc. He said that the Seva dal is having as its primary aim the realisation through one's Seva that Truth is God, Love is God and 'Duty is God. Then, representatives of certain regions reported to the Conference on the strength and activities of the Seva dals in their areas. Such reports were submitted for Madras (Sri Damodara Rao), Kerala (Sri Unni Nair), Bombay (Dr Mistry), Hyderabad (Sri Ramana Rao), Calcutta (Sri Dutt), Mangalore (Sri Prabhu), Uttar Pradesh (Sri Sukla), West Godavari (Sriramamurthi), East Godavari (Sri Krishnamurthi), Guntur (Sri Sitaramiah), Vijayawada (Sri Patel), Delhi (Sri Kapoor).

The Rhythm of Life

Sri Tal Brooke, an American Sadhaka, residing in the Nilayam, addressed the gathering, on the contrasting values of Indian and Western cultures and on the onslaught which the West is waging on the East on the basic validity of eastern attitudes towards the world and the realm of the spirit. Sri Nakul Sen, I.C.S then delivered his presidential address. He said, "This is a unique occasion, for, in this abode of infinite peace, under the benign eye of Bhagavan, youth has assembled to reinforce what they know of the Divine Message and to learn how they can put it into better practical use, making it a part of their daily life, as the very breath of their existence"

"There is a high wave of spiritual disintegration in India, a crisis of character, in the youth of the land. No country can be great, and achieve great adventures, unless it has character, strong self-reliant sturdy character, that motivates all activities. I was in Russia and America: they have the means of happy contented life, but, since the spiritual base is lacking, a small trouble easily disintegrates the individual. They have not grasped the rhythm of life and do not know how to live in harmony with it." Here, the home influence is negative; the schools and colleges give training only in cramming; the teachers who ought to command reverence are treated by society as not worthy of consideration. Therefore, youth is easily carried away by mass hysteria; they must be led along the path of peace, humility and self-realisation. The Seva Dal does it, under the supreme direction of the Avatar of the Age. Become dedicated workers imbued with the Sai spirit. Become practitioners of yoga-sastra, the union of the individual with the Divine.

Sub-committees

Four sub-committees were appointed by the Conference with two conveners each to prepare and submit reports of suggestions for 1. The Organisation of Seva Dals 2. Training Schemes. 3. The Activities of Seva Dals and 4. The Mahila Seva Dals.

In the evening sessions, the reports were presented and discussed.

Modes of Service

The reports were presented by Dr. Bhaskara Rao, Sri Damodara Rao, Sri A. K. Dutt and Srimathi Kamala Sarathi. Later, Sri Bruce Bradbury of the USA quoted a song in English about Baba and elaborated its meaning, through examples of Baba's Glory, which he has himself experienced. "Let us walk in His Footsteps; He is Love, Truth and Understanding personified," he said. Sri Nakul Sen spoke on the reports and their suggestions. Hr. said that the Dal should not forget or neglect the spiritual basis upon which the forms of service are erected. Carry the message of love, hope, faith and encouragement, to the distressed and the desperate, the diseased and the defective. Carry the Divine Message of Baba into the hearts of men through service, inspired by devotion to Him."

Purity of Character

Bhagavan in His Divine Discourse emphasised that the Sathya Sai Organisation is set up to promote the spread of Dharma, through persons who practise what they talk about and who speak from the rich fund of their own ennobling experience. The Seva Dal is an important limb in this Organisation but, what is required in the Dal, more than all else, is Purity and Strength of Character. Life is enriched and made meaningful, if only some ideals are kept before the eye and pursued with faith and devotion. The years 16 to 30 are very crucial inhuman life and untiring efforts are needed to use every moment of that period in constructive and socially useful channels; you should not develop a superiority complex, looking down on those whom you serve; the only basis on which one can claim superiority is: fortitude, steadiness of mind, which helps you to treat joy and grief, pain and pleasure with equanimity. Again, Seva should be taken as a Sadhana, the process of seeking and seeing the identity of all creation, in the Body of God. Treat every act of Seva, as an act of worship of the living God before you. Ishwara Sarva Bhoothanam; all beings are Divine. They have God installed in the altar of their hearts.

A good grounding in Dhyana and Japam is essential for the Seva Dal Member. Unless he has peace inside him, how can he confer it on others? Seva is Sadhana par excellence. Through

Dhyana and Introspection, it is possible to realise that Eesavaasyamidam Sarvam—all this, from the macrocosm to the microcosm, is effused with the Divine Principle, that nothing is low or vulgar or mean, all are to be revered and adored. Your activities must be inspired and directed by steady faith in your Atmic Reality, not by the trivial demands of the senses or even of the emotions and impulses arising from your wayward mind. That is what Krishna advised Arjuna on the battlefield. Give up the false identity with the body and its appurtenances. Be the indestructible Atma, that is your core as well as the core of the Universe. What a great treasure you have in you! And yet, you wail and waver like indigent boors!

The Real Benefit

The reports gave details of the type of service that Seva Dal members can undertake in the villages and towns at ordinary times as well as during natural calamities like fire, flood, and famine. Some said that one type of service is urgent, while another type can be taken up later or by some specified group only. You visit hospitals and are friendly with the patients who have no kinsmen to attend on them; you write letters for them; you give them fruits and bread, or what is even more sustaining—love and sympathy. Thus you spread Ananda where there was only pathos before. But, let me tell you, these are only secondary benefits, incidentally arising out of Seva. The main benefit is to illumine and extend your personality and make you aware of the God residing in all. If you are not led into this realisation, the Seva Dal has been established in vain.

The Seva Dal member must be vigilant always to take hold of all opportunities for service at all times, in all places. He must have the skill and the spirit necessary to be helpful to all types of sufferers—sufferers from fits, fainting, sunstroke, fear, vertigo, accidents, bleeding, snake-bite, scorpion stings, ignorance of the topography, etc. What is appreciated and welcomed is the motive and the method of service, rather than its magnitude and publicity value. Seva is the best means of sanctifying the moment we have at our disposal. As the American Sadhaka sang just now, 'No reason for Love! No season for Love!' Love must flow continuously in full measure towards all, at all times!

Krishna addresses Arjuna sometimes as Mahabaaho, to impress on him that physical strength is inferior to spiritual strength or the strength that accrues from Grace. You might have with you a highly sophisticated machine costing a million rupees, imported from America. But, unless, the electric current energises it, it is sheer inert stuff! So too, all the power you derive from muscle or money, brain or brawn, is ineffective unless you have confidence in your immortality and faith in your Divinity.

The mind always, in its genuine pure state, seeks things that are rare and therefore desirable. A lump of clay or a lump of gold? The mind runs after the lump of gold! Yes! It seeks things of real rarity. That is why the mind is said to be the instrument for both liberation and bondage! Use it, not for binding your self with the shackles of worldly desire and sensual pursuits. Use all activity for acquiring the rarest and the most valuable wealth, Peace and Universal Love.

When Dhritarashtra asked Krishna why He preferred the Pandavas, while he was the cousin of the Pandavas, and therefore an equal claimant for His Grace, Krishna replied, "My dear

Dhritarashtra! Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas is as the Head for Me; Arjuna is as the strong broad shoulder; Bhima is the stomach and the two other brothers, Nakula, Sahadeva are the legs! And, I am the Heart of this composite Body.” Make your head full of Dharma, your shoulders strong for the service of the Divine; make your stomach subserve the needs of the Divine spirit and let your leg subserve the purpose of the Divine Mission. Then, Krishna will be your charioteer, guiding and guarding.

I insist on Seva Dal Members following sincerely and consistently the basic teachings of Sanathana Dharma—Matr devo bhava; pitr devo bhava, acharya devo bhava; athithi devo bhava. Revere your parents, elders, teachers and guests. Then only do you deserve the membership of a Dal dedicated to the spread of the Message.

There is the story of Gautama and Sathyakama, which you must all take to heart. Gautama was a great sage in the Upanishadic era. He had a large number of earnest students. One day he came with a sad face to the lawn where tire students assembled for the class. This affected the boys much and they inquired how they could be of use to him to remove the ct use of that sadness. (Present day students will be happy that the teacher is not bright enough to make a class; they will exult at the likelihood of getting a holiday!) The teacher said that he was worried over the 400 head of cattle that he had; for, the pastures had gone dry and the tanks round about had little water. They were starving and raving with thirst; I want some one to take them on a long trek to some region unaffected by drought and graze them in thick pastures.” (At the present time, students will hide themselves behind the backs of others so that they may not catch the eye of the teacher. They will be afraid, ashamed to serve the teacher and look after the cows!) Sathyakama jumped up and sought the chance to serve the preceptor. The teacher asked Sathyakama to leave immediately and the boy stepped out. Though one or two others offered to keep him company, he politely refused. (Students of today are afraid of being alone with silence. They carry at least a transistor with them!) Sathyakama said that the Guru would not have commissioned him to go, if he was too weak for the task! He was asked to return, when the herd had swelled to a 1000! (Students of today would have borrowed or put in a few cows and somehow filled up the number, in order to return home quick; that is the effect of elderly behaviour).

Sathyakama journeyed long and discovered grassy downs where the cows became sleek and sturdy. He used his time for Japam and Dhyanam, and never cared to count the herd. One day, God Indra appeared before him and said the herd had increased to a thousand, and directed him to speed back. The God had kept him company all those days in the secluded pasturage.

Indra accompanied him on his way back; four nights they halted in four separate villages; each night, Indra taught him one Veda fully so that w h e n he reached the presence of the Guru, he was so resplendent with wisdom that the Guru was overjoyed. He who reveres the Guru and walks on the path indicated by him is guarded by God.

(To be continued)

God-Man

—Dr. V. K. Gokak, M. A., D. Litt

One thinks, of the Christ, the Buddha, Sankara and Vivekananda when one thinks of Baba. There is the same compassion for fellow me and the same urge for relieving human suffering. One can find here, also the healing touch of the Christ and the heart-easing speech of the Buddha.

What overawes one is the catholicity of Baba. It does not matter, for him what master a disciple comes from. All are one. He becomes to each disciple the master he has accepted. The uniqueness of Baba lies in the fact that he did not have to practise any penance or achieve any *siddhi* or realization, in this life, He was born with them.

The sun cannot help being resplendent and the miraculous man, miraculous. What is a miracle or an oracle to us is, to the god-man, the most natural thing in the world to happen, the simplest thing to say.

Even more miraculous, if there can be grades, in miraculousness is his subtle entry into the innermost thoughts of people, anywhere and everywhere!

Most miraculous of all are the countless cures he effects directly, even thousands of miles away. They are breath-taking cures, inexplicable to medical science.

What can one make of all this? It means that here is a manifestation, not only of Truth or Love, but Power.

Further, this power manifests itself through one who is human like the rest of us!

There is another aspect of Baba's miracles that needs to be touched upon. He says that their function is to draw people back to life of spirit. He gives them what they want so that they may begin to want what he would like them to want.

With all this miraculousness, Baba has the heart of a child. He can sport and prattle away; like an innocent child and, at the same time be a more shrewd judge of men and events than any statesman or diplomat. He can rise to the heights of humour as well as sublimity.

Baba's philosophy is meant for the common man, even the villager who is illiterate but is an heir to great traditions. The charming bhajans and the simple but moving parables which flow unendingly from his lips—sometimes reminiscent of the Buddha, the Indian saints and the Christ, but very often his own—go home to common men's businesses and bosoms. At the same time, the insights that they bring are challengingly profound to the scholar and the philosopher.

The four key words of his teachings are Sathya (truth), Dharma (loyalty to the laws), Shanti (peace), Prema (love). The seeker has to speak, love and live the Truth at all costs and in any circumstances. *Dharma* consists of right action.

Peace is the foundation of the spiritual life. Not only is peace a negation of the chaos or disorder within oneself; it is also a positive experience building up towards spiritual delight. When the bedrock of Peace has been achieved, intuition, the psyche within, opens up. The river of Love begins to flow endlessly on the bed-rock of Peace. It is this flowering of the human personality that Baba aims at. The symbol of Prasanthi Nilayam is the symbol of the unfolding and the uprising flame.

Baba's programme of action is designed for the individual as well as the collectivity: It is a programme meant for individual and national regeneration. It is a clarion call for the regeneration of humanity. His impassioned eloquence keeps lakhs of people moved and spell-bound. His whirlwind tours, his discourses to the elite, the students and the masses, kindle in us the fire of hope and renewal, at a time when the national scene almost makes us feel that all is lost. The confidence he inspires and the assurance he gives infuse into us a new enthusiasm. They proceed from a centre of power which convinces us of its certainty and invincibility.

The injunction that he lays on the wealthy that come to him is to feed the poor. Whenever there is a plan to feed the poor, he himself moves about the kitchen and the eating maidan; serving them with his own hands. In a poor country like India, this is the first offering and consecration. He asks the thousands of *Sai Samithis* that function in the country and abroad to meet every week to chant *bhajans* and meditate. The chanting of God's name is the easiest way to God in this ungodly age. He calls on them to have '*Nagarasankirtan*', itinerary singing in the locality in which they live, at least once a month. This is how they can bring God into the lives of men. He asks the *Samithis* and *Sai Seva Dals* organised in cities, towns and villages, to help fellow-men in distress, comfort the sick in hospitals with their visits and *bhajans* and take charge of public functions and assemblies in a spirit of disinterested service. He permits *Sai Mahila Mandalis* to organise themselves for similar purposes and bring about a spiritual transformation among Indian womanhood. Women are going to be mothers of the nation and it is they who will bring up the heroes of tomorrow. He prevails upon all to form *Sai Balamandirs* where children can be introduced to the beauty of the spiritual life through *bhajans*, songs, and parables drawn from the great epics and his own teachings and simple lessons in good living. He encourages the formation of *Sai Study Circles* where spiritual classics can be read by groups of aspirants. In the *Vidwanmahasabhas* or learned assemblies which he loves to have organised, he gets the more gifted to share their knowledge and experience with their brethren. He helps to publish the writings of scholars and men of letters. He starts and finances *Vedapathashalas*, hospitals and schools and colleges. His idea is to start a Sathya Sai College in every State in India, for the young must be taught to cultivate their personality in the right manner if India is to regain her lost soul. Dharmakshetra in Bombay is a spiritual centre aiming at the all round shaping of the human personality. The millionaires in Bombay spent lakhs of rupees on building it.

In the midst of ceaseless talk all around about the amelioration of the masses and the generation of our people, Baba works night and day, modestly and silently, to achieve these aims. No one can work in a more self-effacing manner. An American writer had been to Baba some time ago. It was his desire to write Baba's biography so that the world might know him. Baba listened to him with humility and said gently to him: "Wait for ten years before you write it. Please find out first whether I am really acceptable to you. What is the good of writing a

biography which, after five years, you yourself may feel like rejecting? Please verify for yourself what you wish to write about. If, after ten years, you still feel like writing my biography, you may do so.”

—Bhavan's journal

He is Ours

“Is he -real?” I wondered.
“Or is he a farce?”
“Is he another—trying to
usurp the place of Jesus
In men's hearts?”

"Shall I go, God?
Shall I go?"
I prayed.
“I hope he's for real
but, I'm afraid!"

The years passed—
and, then, one day, it came.
“Go”.
Even then, I really did not know!

The day I was to see him—
No sense of delight.
I went
But, wasn't prepared
for his sight,

A, flood inside broke
and tears gushed—
"He Is the CHRIST!"
To Him my heart rushed.

He is ours—and, we are His.
Thank God—that is who SAI
BABA IS!

—*June Schuyler*

O Mother who can know Your ways
O Mother just let us spend the days

In loving service by Your side
Behind Your dress we love to hide
And look in Your eyes—peek a boo
Then merge in Your ocean, the color of blue

Jasmine Temple

Each time, we see Baba, it is, as if eternity opens up and a new awareness comes through. Since Baba is not limited by time and space, we know that He is on call, at any minute for His sincere devotees. When we are with Him, He always asks you, "What do you want?" Although He knows, He wants you to ask Him by voice. His greatest miracle is how He makes us all over; this, we are not aware of, always; but, the change shows up, in a new and beautiful outlook.

The grace of our Lord is so great that it is unnecessary to make plans of our own! We say to ourselves, 'It will be interesting to see how the Lord works things out'. It is amazing how the Lord takes care of His own flock.

Miracles take place daily, in our lives. It is inconceivable that so great a Lord is taking on this Glorious Merging Path. The healing vibrations in the jasmine Temple here (the altar in the Sai Baba Book Center is called the jasmine Temple, for the Lord blesses it with the fragrance of jasmine, to show that He is with us) are so intense that many who come sick, often, walkout well.

The Lord guides many to the Sai Baba Book Center, Tustin, where we sit in wonderment at the Power and Glory of His mysterious majestic ways. All feel His presence here and many *see* Him! In Pacific Palisades, the Raymers have a meditation center, since several years. In Santa Monica, the Penns inspire many, by discourses and Bhajans. In Tecate, Mexico, there is a Sai Baba center, where Indra Devi tells about Baba and her experiences. In Santa Monica, a new Center has been opened by Helen Veeham, a sincere worker in God's vineyard. In Cordovaca, Nancy Ann Stray is developing an Orphan Home. In Hollywood, the Bocks have a Center with meetings several times a week. It is a center for those who need to get away and rest in silence and meditation. There is a Sai Center in New York, where Hilda Charlton is the leader.

Baba's Radiance is truly covering the world! His truth is the Oasis for the thirsty!

Sai Baba News Letter, Tustin, California.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The queens came to know of the pilgrimage that the Princes were undertaking. They were delighted that they have set out on such a holy venture and they made many things ready to render it as happy and useful as possible. They arranged a few nurses, and some comrades of their own age to accompany them. The Princes too, were beside themselves with joy at the prospect of visiting the sacred places of the land. They enthused their companions and sought from the King equipments and clothes for them too.

The next day, when the auspicious hour specially selected for the journey was on, the Princes bowed down before their parents, touching their feet with their foreheads; they fell at the feet of the Preceptor; the mothers placed dots on their foreheads and cheeks, to ward off the evil eye and to guard them against evil forces; they discarded royal robes and put on the habiliments of pilgrims, that is to say, silk dhotis round the waist and silk shawls wrapped round the shoulder; and, taking leave of all, they ascended the chariot, the place resounding to the joyous shouts of victory rising from the throats of thousands of citizens who had gathered to see them off. The chariot moved on, with guards before and behind.

Days, weeks, even months rolled by! They went to every temple and sacred spot; they imbibed the holiness of the place, they worshipped at the shrine with faith and devotion, learnt after deep enquiry the history of the place and the antecedents of the shrines; they ignored every other thought or activity, during all that long period. Sumantha was describing to them the sanctity of each place so graphically and intimately that their hearts were thrilled. The princes plied him with questions demanding farther and deeper elaboration of the narrative! Sumantha was overjoyed at the insatiable yearning of the boys; and he gave even more information and inspiration.

Thus they journeyed from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, and from the eastern sea to the western, spending more than three or four months most pleasantly. They had their eyes open to the sufferings of the people and the discomforts of the pilgrims in every region of the empire, and whenever they observed these, they pleaded with Sumantha, the Minister, to set things right and to provide the needed amenities. They were thus responsible for the repair and improvement of many temples, the provision of drinking water wells, the planting of avenue trees, the opening of centres for the distribution of water to thirsty wayfarers, the building of caravanserais, and the establishment of health centres. Whenever Rama expressed a desire that such amenities had better be provided, Sumantha never hesitated to agree; he saw to it that they were immediately provided to his full satisfaction, The Princes derived great satisfaction that the empire had such a loyal and efficient Minister as Sumantha; they said to each other that, when they had such ministers, people's welfare and progress are assured.

News of the pilgrimage of the Princes were conveyed to Ayodhya by secret informants, who, in the absence of telephones in those days, ran in relays forward and backward with the news they collected. In spite of this there were often long delays before news arrived. At such times, the Queens were weighed down by anxiety about their welfare and health; they prayed to the Preceptor Vasishta to give them correct information regarding them. Vasishta had the yogic attainment to discover what was happening to them; so, he used to tell them the reassuring news that they were happy, healthy and hearty, and that they will soon be returning to the capital. The

mothers earned courage and confidence thereby; the Preceptor blessed them and took leave of the palace, for his hermitage.

Meanwhile, the news-gatherers brought good tidings. They said that the Princes are nearing Ayodhya; they must be reaching the City within two days! Arrangements were therefore made at the main Gateway of the City to welcome back into the Imperial Capital the four Princes, who had successfully gone through their long and arduous pilgrimage and earned meritorious renown, by their devotion and compassion during their triumphal tour. Rosewater was sprinkled on the roads, to make them dust-free. Arches and festoons were put up. On both sides of the road, women stood with plates on which they had placed lamps, with bright flames, which they desired to wave before them as they passed along.

As every one expected, the Princes arrived at the Gate, as announced; lamps were waved before them; they moved along the main highway, which was strewn with the petals of fragrant flowers; parties of musicians and minstrels singing welcome songs proceeded slowly in advance. Brahmins recited hymns invoking the Blessings of God upon the distinguished scions of the imperial family. Sumantha came alongside the Princes, who were shining with a strange Divine charm on their faces. At last, they reached the Palace.

There, at the very entrance, many rites were gone through to ward off the effects of the evil eye; they were then led into the inner apartments. The mothers whose eyes were longing to look upon them were awaiting them there; the boys ran towards them and fell at their feet! They were raised up and held fast in close embrace for five or six minutes, during which they lost themselves in the thrill of joy, which enveloped both mother and son in the bliss of Divine Mergence! The tears that rolled down from the eyes of the mothers out of the surgence of love fell on the heads of the boys. They took hold of their sari ends and wiped the heads dry with them. They stroked the hair, they fondled the head, they seated them on their laps, and fed them with sweet rice and curd-mixed rice, with their own hands! Ah! The excitement and thrill of these mothers were indescribable. The pang of separation which they suffered for three long months could be assuaged a little, only by the mothers having the children in their care and custody, day and night, for a few days. They asked then to relate to them the story of their pilgrimage, and the boys narrated in sweet simple sincere style the sacredness of each holy place, as explained to them by Sumantha. They listened to these narratives with such ardour and faith that they too seemed to experience the exhilaration each shrine provides for the earnest pilgrim!

Dasaratha celebrated the return of the young Princes from their holy journey by ceremoniously offering oblations to the Gods, and arranging a magnificent banquet for Brahmins who had successfully completed the pilgrimage to Kasi and Prayaga. He gave the latter monetary gifts too.

Thus, since the day when the princes were born, it was one-continuous round of festival and feast in the capital city and in the kingdom. The city of Ayodhya shone with uninterrupted rejoicing. Feasting and festive entertainment knit the populace into a family bound by love and gratitude. Every month the days on which the children were born (the ninth, tenth and eleventh days of the bright half) were filled with gorgeous ceremony, to mark the happy event. Even when the boys were away on pilgrimage, these days were celebrated as grandly as if they were in the

City; except for the functions where their physical presence was needed, all else—the feasts, the gifts, the games, the plays—were all gone through with enthusiasm.

But, the parents noticed a change in the boys, as a result of the pilgrimage. The transformation was very surprising and they hoped that the new way of life they had assumed might weaken with the passage of days. They watched their behaviour and attitudes with great attention. But, they continued, steadily without any diminution!

Rama gave up moving out; he stayed mostly indoors. He did not bathe at fixed hours as he was doing so far. He had a dislike to wear royal dress; he desisted from delicacies; he never sat the golden throne; he appeared as if he was immersed in the contemplation of the Absolute, of something beyond the senses and the mind. Since the brother appeared so morose and was ostensibly sulking, the three younger brothers always kept near him. They never left his presence for games or for any other reason.

The four gathered in a room and bolted themselves in. The mothers had to tap the doors at intervals and bring in their food! However hard the mothers tried to discover why they behaved so, they never revealed the reason! Rama alone deigned to answer their queries, thus: "This is my nature; why seek to know the reason for my being so?" That is all he said in reply.

The mothers soon felt that this state of things can no longer be kept away from gaze; they informed Dasaratha; he sent word that the boys be brought to his apartments. But, finding that the sons, who until now would have rushed in, took along time *to* come, he was filled with wonder and worry. He made ready to proceed to their room himself. Just then, the attendant announced that the princes were approaching! The father was overwhelmed with bliss; he embraced them and held them tight to his breast; he sat with the sons on both sides; he enquired from them all kinds of things, light and serious. Formerly; if he asked just one, the boys used to reply ten; but, that day, when he asked ten, they scarce replied one!

Dasaratha drew Rama on to his lap, and pleaded fondly with him, "Son! Why this refusal to talk! Why this silence! What is it that you desire! What else have I, than you in the world? Tell me what you need? I shall fulfill it immediately, without fail. Since you, do riot mix with the brothers and play with them as formerly, they too are unhappy." Though the King lovingly stroked the chin and looked at the face of Rama, Rama did not say anything more than that he was quite content and needed nothing! Watching this strange behaviour, Dasaratha grew anxious and agitated; tears welled up in his eyes. The boys remained, unaffected by his grief. The father spoke some soft words to them about how sons should conduct themselves and sent them to their part of the Palace.

He called Sumantha so that he might confer with him; he asked him, whether anything had happened during the pilgrimage to put the boys out of gear or whether he had brought them back too soon when they were themselves eager to visit a few more places of interest to them. Dasaratha plied him with so many questions that Sumantha was; filled, with surprise; he got real fear. His voice quivered as he replied: "Nothing happened during the journey to displease the Princes, no difficulty was encountered. Every wish of theirs was honoured and carried through. I gave away in charity as much as they wanted; I got built, wherever they suggested, houses for

pilgrims; there was no hesitation or delay. They never told me about any happening which they did not like. Nor did I notice any such." Sumantha went on explaining, that the pilgrimage was one long journey of joy and adoration.

Dasaratha knew his minister well. He said at last, "Sumantha You are a great good man. I know full well that you are incapable of neglect or mistake. But, for some inexplicable reason, I find the boys have undergone a transformation after the pilgrimage I planned; they have developed distaste for food and fun."

(To be continued)

All Wondered

She came, a foreigner full of hope
Although doctors said there was no scope
To cure legs benumbed, bereft of pain.
Husband stood behind her chair in rant,
Yearned that thro Sai's Grace she still be cured.
And, well she *did* become; all wondered
Sai came, and held her hand; she shuddered!
And standing, she walked; all were surprised
In one voice, they acclaimed, "SAI BE
PRAISED"!

—S. Benjamin,
I. A. S. (Retd.)

Baba Told Me Thus

—Hilda Charlton

Children of Humanity! Remember that *you* are created in my image and likeness, PERFECT!
Live up to this image, in every way, in all planes. Live like Masters
Walk this earth, with your heads held high!...
Your spirits soaring, your hearts open to Love
and believe in Yourself and God within you.
Then, all will go well,

Earth is but a Manifestation of My BEING, made out of My LIFE.
Wherever you look, I am there. Wherever you walk, I am there. Whomsoever you contact, I am
in that person. I am in each, in all My splendour.

See Me everywhere,...talk to Me and Love Me who am in each.
Then, from each, I will respond and bring you into the Glory,
You cannot see Me in one place and not in another, for, I fill all space.
You cannot escape ME or do anything in secret, for there are no secrets with ME.
Live...Live...Live...in perfect accordance with My laws; and, wonders will ensue!

Think now ...Does error clog the free flowing essence of My Being through you? Ask Me this
moment, to reveal to you your errors, in the silence of your meditation.

Let old memories well up in you, from My sub-consciousness in you...old patterns.... old
forgotten feelings and thoughts.

Now, plunge them into the ocean of Light; burn them from the Consciousness, so that *you* may be true emblems of My Being.

Right now, visualise My burning Flame rising higher and higher, as it burns through you. It is a Flame that is cooling, cleansing and healing—that soothes the hidden sorrows... and leaves you calm and quiet...!

Rest in My Love ...Let all that you have been through, in your many lives up to this day, melt away in My Redeeming Light,

Children of My Being! Dissolve your sorrows and fears in Me. Let Me efface all your karma. Come back into My Consciousness, which is your own true consciousness. Let your petty human self fade away, right now ...as you come to Me, who am your Inner Self.

You are now My Radiant Glorious Self ...no longer separate from Me!

Melt with Me; ...Merge with Me. BECOME ME!

Feast of Grace

The Vedas, which are the most ancient scriptures of man, have laid down that man has to utilise the special gifts that God has endowed him with, (namely, an intelligence that can look into the future and decide on a long-term basis what is profitable in the ultimate analysis, and a capacity to discard and keep away from satisfactions of a temporary nature so that one can pursue undisturbed the lasting satisfaction of eternal Bliss.) That is the reason why this Yajna Saptaha (Weeklong Ritual) is called Veda-Purusha Saptaha Yajna; the Vedapurusha is to be propitiated by the adoration of Vedic Gods, especially the Sun and Fire, through ceremonial Namaskar (for the Sun) and oblations of ritually sanctified Ghee (for the God of Fire), Rudra is adored by the worship of the Thousand Lingas every day and the Mother aspect of God, (which is most revered during the Navarathri) is adored by means of the Puja which you see performed with scrupulous correctness. The Vedas are recited with authentic syllabific exactitude, just as it was recited centuries and millennia ago on the banks of the Saraswati or Yamuna rivers, by the simple sages of Aryavarta. By this means, the reciters, the worshippers, the performers and the participants, listeners and those who are vibrating to the holiness of the place, wherever they may be, are filled with bliss and peace.

Yajna

Yajna means sacrifice; the mantras emphasise this, the ritual symbolises this, the namaskar is but the physical act which highlights this; indeed, all life is a sacrifice of a portion of one's span of life every day to the sun, of a portion of one's time and strength and attention to some one or thing every moment. There can be no progress without sacrifice or yajna. Yajna maintains the order of the Universe. Sacrifice pleases the Gods; the gods send rain; the rain feeds the crops;

the crops yield harvest: the harvest strengthens the limbs and widens the outlook, it broadens the heart, clarifies the vision, until man reaches the goal, where there is no more struggle or death.

The highest and the most fruitful sacrifice is that of the Ego. Crucify it and be free. Dedicate it to God and be rich beyond all dreams. Prepare yourself for this supreme status, by engaging in holy Karma, that is to say, Karma cleansed in the crucible of Dharma, and attain Brahman or the One Indivisible Absolute, which appears as all this multifarious Universe.

The Mahabharata is also eligible to the reverence due to the Vedas; it is revered as the Fifth Veda, by those that know. There, we find the eldest of the Pandava (Pure) Brothers called Dharmaraja (Dharma-born). But, all his success was due to the fact that he had, on his right hand Bhima (the embodiment of strength) and on his left hand, Arjuna (unsullied virtue.) The strength that comes from the mastery of the senses and the fortitude and equanimity won through the conquest over impulses emotions and passions are both valuable reinforcements for Dharma to scale the bastions of Brahman.

The Vedas have prescribed five steps, to enable the individual to cultivate the spirit of Yajna: Devayajna (adoring God in the domestic altar) Pitryajna (keeping in mind the debt one owes to the parents who endowed this body and fed the lamp of life) Manushya yajna (feeding guests and those who come seeking shelter and food) Brahma yajna (the study of the sacred scriptures and the initiation into the spiritual path) and Bhuta yajna (the feeding and fostering of pet animals, of cattle, of horse and sheep and dog which are the help. mates and comrades of man). The Vedas insist on every householder to attend to these five rites, every day and thus, he is encouraged along the path of dedicated living to reach the goal of total surrender to God.

The cow grants man milk, butter, curds, ghee—all valuable nutrients; they consume only grass and drink that which is undrinkable by man; and they bestow on man, in return for the care and kindness he evinces, life-giving and strength-sustaining food! Gratefulness demands that man should not neglect or injure them. So too, man should not allow plants and trees that he has grown to suffer from hunger and thirst and go dry and wither. You must have seen people placing sugar or flour at the mouths of ant-hills. It is a flash on the universal compassion which must mark out the heart of man. It is as much Bhutayajna as the care of cows, though it does not reward the giver.

Ekoham

Ignore the temporary and trivial Name and Form of the embodiment of the Divine spirit; then, all distinctions of worm and wolf, of atom and avatar, disappear and the basic Truth is One. Creation or manifestation or the outburst of blossoming expansion started, as the Upanishads say, when the One willed, 'Ekoham bahusyam' (I am One; let me become Many). So, it is the One that is all this. It is the integer (I) that fills the zeroes after it with value and validity! The realisation of the function of the I and the ignoring of all the zeroes that come after it, is the end and aim of human endeavour. When the mind is unruffled and the intelligence is sharpened, this, realisation will take place, without further effort.

Through the Sadhana of Seva, Baba said, it is possible to cognise the One of which the Many are appearances. He who serves a master with his eye on the pay packet cannot be called a

Sevak. He is the servant of the pay packet. That type of service will only bind him to the profit or loss that it entails, and bring about disappointment or elation. Service has to be rendered either from a supreme sense of Duty or as a humble dedicatory offering to the Highest, or in a spirit of total surrender to the Will of God leaving all thought of the consequence to His Grace. Done with these pure motives, the act of service will develop detachment, but, will not encourage sloppishness.

The Mould

Siva is praised as Thryambakam, that is, three-eyed; the eyes are held to be eyes that see into the past and the future, as well as the present; but, they represent also the three urges namely, Desire, Activity and Knowledge—thirsts that move men and decide his fate. These three urges make all beings kin in the Divine bond; those who serve beings with love and reverence can contact this core of being and save themselves. They will see in all, the unmistakable reflections and images of the God whom they have enshrined in their hearts.

When you desire to transform a silver idol of Ganesha into an idol Krishna, you cannot succeed by simply covering the Ganesha with a cloth and uncovering it, after a few seconds! You have to break it into pieces and melt the bits and pour the silver into the Krishna Mould! So too, when you yearn to transform the human into, the Divine, you must pull down the pieces through Detachment melt them in the fire of jnana, and pour the mind stuff into the mould of Bhakthi. Then, the entire consciousness takes on the Divine Name, Form and Substance. Then, whatever is spoken or done or thought assumes the splendour and purity of the Divine.

Faith in God

I have often told you that My Life is My Message. Avatars proclaim so and demonstrate their Divinity that way. They are children among children, men among men, women among women, so, that they may respond to their joy and sorrow and console them and infuse confidence and courage into their drooping hearts. The Avatars appear among humans since birds beasts trees and the like have not slid into the un-natural and the strange. It is only man, who pursuing the will o' the wisp of worldly happiness and sensual pleasure, has forgotten the task for which he has come to earth. Since God assumes human form in order to restore Dharma and lead man back into the path of virtue and wisdom, nothing can please God more than rigorous adherence to Dharma. One can stick to the path of Dharma if one is conscious of the Divine in every thing that he sees or hears or touches or tastes or touches. That will fill every moment of his life with the thrill of self-realisation.

Have faith in God; He sees everything; He is everywhere; He is all-powerful. When Queen Draupadi was dragged into the open court by the wicked cousins of her consorts, and they threatened to insult and dishonour her, she did not call on her human lords—Dharmaja, the great master and practitioner of Dharma, Bhima the redoubtable warrior, Arjuna the unexcelled bowman, Sahadeva the knower of everyone's future, Nakula, the embodiment of bravery—she sought succour and prayed to Krishna, the Lord and Protector of Righteousness, God who listens to the agony of the heart.

(An interesting thing happened on this occasion: Draupadi asked Krishna when He appeared before her; in answer to her desperate call, why He delayed to bring her help. The Lord said,

"You called out, Govinda Damodara Madhusudana Gopala and many other names of mine and your most appealing call was for Dwardkavasa, that is to say, Me who reside in Dwaraka." So, I had to go to Dwaraka and come from there to justify that name. Otherwise, you would not have accepted Me. I had to become Dwarakavasa for your sake. Thus journey, away from your heart where I really am, to Dwaraka and back, caused this unavoidable delay! If only you had recognised in tune that I was Hrudayavasi, (resident in the heart) you could have got Me within the twinkling of an eye!"

He is in every heart. He is all this. You know He has said in the Gita,

Manmanaa bhava, madbhaktho
Mad yaaji maam namaskuru
Mamevaishyasi yukthaivam
Athmaanam mathparaayanah

Have your mind fixed on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; prostrate before Me; have Me alone as the Goal; when you are fixed in faith in Me, you can attain Me. Here, I and Me refer to the I and Me that is in every being namely, the Atma, which is the real I of the atom and the avatar. Even the person who is contemplating suicide declares, 'I must die' so that I can be happy, rid of all these worries! The I which will be relieved when the body falls off is the Atma.

The individual I believes it is limited; but, that is an illusion. It is the same Universal Spirit, imagining itself to be limited. This awareness can come to man either through a flash of intellectual analysis or a flash of Universal Love. The awareness is an act of identification which involves and insists on Love.

Love is God; Love is the means and end. That is why there are no atheists, for, there in no being without love of some kind or other And, love of any kind; of any measure, is but a spark of divinity. Love knows no fear, it promotes truth, it finds peace, it builds faith, it promotes concord.

(To be continued)

God's Wayward Children

—Tal Brooke

The over-view:

Dear brothers, it is an immense privilege for me to speak with you in the presence of Sai Baba. And before Baba, I think that it becomes a little more obvious, why I use, the term "brothers." As you know, we all have the common bond of being his children and hence we really are brothers; for Sai Baba is the father and mother of us all. So, I speak before you, as your western brother and His son—one of Baba's many millions of western sons.

However, I sense today, after just hearing so many local reports from the Seva Dal representatives, that we suddenly need an 'overview'!

Let us then leave things of lesser importance, such as how many pints of blood each group-donated or how many visits you have made to homes for the aged and the like. We should not allow our perspective to be dimmed or clouded by details and trivia. After all, when you are faced with the COSMIC... almost any activity becomes paled ...especially when you are in the August presence of GOD, God in human form.

The global avatar:

I believe the Hindu tradition uses the word Narayana to express God in the form of man; an even more powerful word used is Avatar or Divine Incarnation, and that is exactly what Sai Baba is ...for he has let it be known that his mission is that of Avatar. So please don't lose perspective for a second; rather dwell on the implications of your involvement, right now.

If you really believe that Baba is Avatar, as you say you do, then your efforts should be no less than superhuman.

And as you see me standing here, you certainly cannot think in such illusory terms as international differences, boundaries, ethnic and racial differences, for, I believe you realize that the world has been doing that for far too long. I believe that history has well illustrated the fact that divisive thinking has created nothing but trouble.

We must adopt a view-point that is unifying, rather than divisive or differentiating.

I think that we must constantly be aware of the fact that what is to happen will take place on a Global Scale and not on a petty or local one.

The unfolding drama:

Right now, I feel very impelled to share with you my feelings about the drama that will take place in our lifetimes-the drama that is unfolding, now that Baba is unleashing his Dharmic teachings on an increasingly larger scale.

As I do this, I often think of the powerful statement made by Sri Krishna, when he says that he incarnates from age to age to restore Dharma, aid the righteous and overcome the wicked; all scriptures seem to point to this timeless pact made by God...that God comes down to remind humanity, especially during those times when standards sink.

Such has undoubtedly become the case of our present world, and with a little thought, this fact becomes only too apparent.

When I was standing in the Kennedy Airport, about to leave America ...all this became vitally real to me ...as I looked at that unforgettable skyline, I thought of the Agni Purana and its prophetic warning, that was written well over four thousand years ago... the skyline of New York City, Newark and New Jersey could not possibly be a more perfect resemblance of what was described in the Agni Purana as the KALI YUGA, the age of machinery, iron, wickedness, and, as the Hindus might say, the age when the Thamasic quality is predominant.

When doubt and skepticism plague man, kind and when man has become estranged from his very source, God, his intuition and higher thoughts shrink and he doesn't dare believe anything unless he is clutching it right in his hands. So what all this suggests is the profound responsibility we all have, especially those of us who have been blessed with such nearness to Baba.

The super-human effort:

Our efforts cannot be lukewarm, for that would be blasphemy; they must be super. Human—there can be no compromise where God is concerned. In contemporary and ancient terms, all must contribute their full resources in an all-out effort to bring the mass consciousness of humanity up, at any sacrifice, especially that of the ego.

This applies to you in a very real sense, and perhaps what is needed on your part is this rather profound effort. You are in the minority; so you are in the public spotlight. You are known as God-directed people; so you must be exemplary models. In fact, you must become such ideal models, by living such perfect Dharmic existence that others will gravitate towards you and want to emulate you, by the poetry of your existence. You will be sharing the fruit and quintessence of your awareness with others. You will be under public pressure as well as a kind of prominence, because the reality to which you subscribe and lay claim to, most people have either rejected or not considered.

The divine helping hand:

That reality, of course, is God, since in the final analysis God is the only reality and the total anchor of our existence.

If you become anchored and others do not, they will begin to notice it one way or another. If you have found inner beauty and strength and others see it, they will soon begin to wonder what you have that they lack; naturally, the repercussions of this will ultimately influence their own approach to existence in the most basic manner.

A perfect example of this can be seen in the atmosphere that is being created here at Prasanthi Nilayam during this Festival; perhaps we might use the word Vibrations. Due to a spectrum of spiritual exercises, there is a very positive vibration accumulating here, that will doubtless affect each pilgrim one way or another and who can say to what extent it will alter the course of his existence itself?

Similarly, your own lives can create positive fields that can influence the people around you, wherever you live.

At the same time, it would probably be better not to try to calculate the effect; rather, act in faith. I am sure we all know: no man short of a realized soul has even a glimmer of the effect and range of his actions.

What effort you make will gain positive momentum—and Baba will vastly increase and speed up that momentum, by his invisible divine helping hand.

It seems that it is only tree that set limitations on what we can do, like the lion bound to the tree by a string, all its life, still believing that the string is sufficient to hold it.

Heritage of courage:

Courage is immensely important-and your heritage has given you uncountable models of men of perfect courage, from the Yogis of the past to such recent embodiments of might as Vivekananda. When we see men such as Vivekananda, it brings to mind a certain American slogan: "When the going gets tough, the tough, get going".

There is little doubt that the challenges and pressures that we, must inevitably face can truly be the catalyst in bringing out the deep-seated divine force that is in every one of us; and I am sure that this must often occur at a rate that we could never possibly anticipate from the human angle. I suppose that such challenges often serve as our greatest boon, though we are usually the last to suspect it at the time.

This present age now offers us with this kind of unknowable range of possibilities for making spiritual 'advancement' and sometimes even leaps.

The ominous skyline:

Let me digress again to the State of the World. I might add that it is not so easily seen from Puttaparthi, which is protected from the rest of the world. You have been spared the painful vision. Even those of you from the big cities have been partially spared that vision.

Let me briefly return to my impressions as I was leaving America from just outside of New York city ...as I said, I was left with a stirring impression of what is to come, namely, the Volcano of Civilization, the Technological Time Bomb, that is waiting to explode and reveal its true colors—this sprawling mass of civilization that is not offering man what he needs and what his soul is yearning for.

I cannot possibly communicate to those of you who have never seen such a thing, the size and horror of some of our Super-Cities, because you have no models in your minds with which to construct such pictures. Some of our office buildings are as tall as that mountain over there and have bases as wide as the entire Prasanthi Nilayam itself.

So, as I was standing in the airport, and saw these monsters looming over the horizon, I was left with the foreboding feeling that these monsters will end up destroying themselves; and if the people are not careful, they too will be destroyed. When you see these immense cities, then there is little doubt that this is the Kali Yuga that the Agni Purana warned about, an impossibly difficult age.

As your Western brother, let me importune...let me plead to reason: Do not repeat the errors of the West. I say this because as I was travelling around India, while looking for a Spiritual Master, indeed before I had learned of Sai Baba, I had chance to talk to many Indians my physical age ...many of them were graduate students, the future backbone of India. What I saw in them was a great and deep preoccupation with the West. I saw in them the rather unfortunate desire to want to emulate the West in every possible mode; the more stylish of them that I saw in

Bombay and Delhi, (when I say stylish, please believe that I am being facetious) were wearing stovepipe trousers, had sideburns, and were trying desperately to entertain themselves. What I often told them, though, was that they were neither succeeding as Westerners nor as Indians—they were in a limbo swinging between two modes of culture and not succeeding as either ...As westerners they were far too amateurish and unimaginative and as Indians they were ridiculous.

This is a growing trend that you will have to deal with directly. It is only too reminiscent of the aphorism that the sons of the most pious Brahmin families are out, night-clubbing on Friday and Saturday nights.

Such people do not have the foresight, to be able to judge where this will lead them. They have not been able to see and live under the shortcomings of such a civilization, as I have; so it is hard for them to believe, that this is not what will make them happy.

What all this is referring to is a phenomenon that might be called, LIVING THE LIE, for lack of a better word.

Technological blundering:

Such a Technology without Religion will in no way give your Indian youth satisfaction. It will leave them barren and confused—all perspective will be destroyed. A society without an underlying philosophy that is grounded in God, is a Time Bomb.

The more aware children of the West have seen this poison and rejected it; there are growing trends among the American youth that the less materialistically endowed youth of other nations do not seem to understand. The poorer brothers of the Americans seem to find it hard to reconcile the fact that American youth are rejecting their heritage and culture; they have been brainwashed into believing that we have our futures paved with gold.

But what the Western youth have learned from being in the fulcrum and pinnacle of materialistic success is simply that this is not the answer to life and existence, that the entire materialistic philosophy is invalid and hence, fails completely.

Let me give you a concrete example that reflects the irony and absurdity of which I am talking about, namely, the dangers of technological power founded on philosophical ignorance. When America sent the Apollo Spacecraft, a very complicated technological wonder of micro-circuitry and advanced physics and chemistry, all the way to the moon, they had interfered with Nature so much in the process that they could not reap even the most petty benefit from their act.

What I am referring to is that the U. S. had spent hundreds of crores of rupees to perform this act, but the very night that the astronauts landed on the moon, summer before last, one could not even see the moon, for the sky had been so polluted by chemicals and intoxicants. Literally hundreds of miles of sky covering the entire Atlantic seaboard ranging from Boston to beyond Washington, D. C., had an unearthly green yellow color that night; it was so dense that it blotted out not only the stars, but also the moon.

Just think of the penalty we paid, after all this effort; we could not even see the moon! So the citizenry were forced to submerge into their technology and rely on a device known as a television set in order to see what was once one of their natural rights to see, namely the Moon ...the moon was made invisible to us due to our own scientific blundering and technological shortsightedness.

We have poisoned the very Nature that we held so dear; we have polluted and poisoned vast amounts of air and water; in fact parts of our once magnificent landscape are now beginning to resemble the surface of the moon-so, rather than go to the moon, we need only step out into our own backyards or go for a Sunday drive in Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, or Pittsburgh.

The stunted soul:

Remember, I am only using America as a focal point to reflect the state of the entire world.

Beyond the mere physical deformity of parts of the landscape, there is an even more tragic injury that we have created. I am referring to the immense psychological and spiritual injury of our society: the countless unhappy and lost souls who have had no way to know about the basis for existence.

If a botanist tries to grow a plant that is deprived of water, carbon dioxide, ultra-violet light, base minerals and the essential nitrogen compounds, the growth of the plant will be stunted and he will end up with a permanently stunted and injured product. Well, think of the implications of an entire society of people who grow up in an environment that is starved for love—where the people who grow up are never given an example of love, in the original Dharmic sense ...I am referring to selfless, creative, positive Divinely based Love.

This has an increasing cumulative effect, like a stone rolling down a mountain, that gains tremendous momentum—the levels of pain and injury multiply at an unchecked rate ...this is when the more hideous side of man is revealed. This then becomes, what I call, LIVING. THE LIE.

Anchor in cosmic truth:

If we were to look for a moment and try to define the essential factor involved in a society that is LIVING THE LIE, it would always go back to the point of its most fundamental grounding, i.e. whether or not its fundamental premise for existence—its modus operandi—is Cosmic Truth or untruth. Naturally, if it is LIVING THE LIE, it has lost its grounding in Truth.

There must be a million subtle variants in which Societies or Technocracies can and do stray, from being anchored in the Ground of Absolute Being, but the main criterion must boil down to this—when you forget even for a moment, that Brahman is the basis for all existence and creation, you are Living the Lie...You are A-dharmic.

Any technocracy that has forgotten this Cosmic Truth is living the lie.

When I look at the immensely complex web of subtle forces at work in the West, drummed up by those who have lived the Unexamined Life, I am forced to say, "What audacity we have! We are near to the point, in our smugness, of defying the supreme laws of the Cosmos, that we

have lost sight of. We have become so smug with our little bits of collected knowledge, that we have sealed off the natural channels through which true wisdom flows.

We have lost sight of the fact that if the Cosmic Sustainer were to forget us even for a mere fraction of a second ...that would be sufficient for our atoms to decompose and our energy to bleed off into the void. In. deed, we are like little metal robots on an artificially constructed tabloid, who negate, doubt, and make disparaging remarks about the electricity that is their very sustenance. Were the electricity cut off for a second, everything would stop in place and they would no longer have the freedom or privilege even to make any remarks. Such has been our blindness and audacity.

The concentric circles:

If we are to examine the Dilemma of Man, beyond whether or not his society is or is not grounded in Dharmic Truth, we go to the fact that surrounding each individual, are concentric circles of falsehoods of increasing subtlety.

As we conquer these rings of falsehood, going from the gross exterior to the most basic and innate ...we arrive at the last falsehood, namely, the falsehood of the Ego, Ahamkara.

This is the final band that separates us from God.

As appears in Judaeo-Christian mythology through symbol, it seems that the true original sin of Adam and Eve was, to fall from the domain of Cosmic Unity and see Diversity in its place.

Hence, the ego was born and flashed into existence as they perceived separate selves, in place of the ONE SELF.

As we work through the concentric circles...we begin to approach or approximate the Truth when we begin to suspect that ALL IS ONE. We become the THE TRUTH whet there is only THAT, the ONE.

NAMO NAMASTE

Talk: October 10, 1970 at the, First All India Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal at Prasanthi Nilayam

Hanuman

O Hanuman! Divine monkey sweet!
You are always found at Ram's Lotus Feet!
My prayer is to be just as you
Kneeling at the feet of my Guru!

Dear Hanuman! may I be blessed

To have your qualities in me impressed,
To see and serve Ram, in all,
To be pure enough to hear God's call.

—*Eddie Fleure*

MY DHYANA

Where naught else is seen,
Naught else is heard,
Where naught else is known,
That: there: is the Bhoomaa—
The vast, the vital, the vision.
The One, without a Second, ever in Itself,
Calm, courageous, cool
In the farthest and the nearest,
Now before us as Name and Human Form,
I picture in my Mind and dwell in Bliss—
O Sathya Sai ...Come, stay
and Bless this Dhyana.

—*Swami Abhedananda,*
Ramanasram 1968

Master-Teacher

Entering his fourteenth year and knowing well that he had been born with many wondrous gifts, he announced to his family the mission in life he felt compelled to fulfill. From then on, he would devote his life to the service of mankind. He became known as Sathya Sai Baba, which signifies Master-Teacher of Wisdom—Knowledge. Through the years, several millions of people have heard Sai Baba's inspiring words. He has covered vast distances in his native land, and everywhere he appears crowds are lost to the amazement of what they witness.

His accomplishments are multiple: spiritual mentor, teacher of philosophy, public speaker, composer of music and poetry, dramatist, healer, herbalist, physician, surgeon, and most spectacularly, a man possessing miraculous powers. Great crowds have witnessed his skill in employing Nature's hidden forces. With a graceful gesture of the hand, he materializes out of thin air tangible fluids and an endless variety of solids. Articles of food, clothing, flowers, and even precious gems are made to appear. All these are given away to the needy and to the devotees who swarm to his headquarters, "Prasanthi Nilayam", the Abode of Peace. Sai Baba clairvoyantly sees present events occurring at great distances. In such instances his mind functions as a communications and television receiver, sensitively aware of what is happening in various parts of the world. His profusion of talents has never been used for self-aggrandizement

but is employed only to further his chosen mission. As he says, "I give the people what they want, so that they will want what I have come to give!"

Sathya Sai Baba leaves no room for doubt as to who it is that has come. When he repeats the famous speech of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, "For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing righteousness on a firm footing, I incarnate from age to age," he intends his words to be taken in the first person, without quotation marks, as the statement of the avatar. His discourses contain frequent references to his previous incarnations, the most recent of which was as Shirdi Sai Baba, an Indian sage who died in 1918 after announcing that he would reincarnate eight years afterwards.

—*From American journal*

Miracles of Baba

(1944-45)

Sri Nagamani Purnaiya

1

1944 Dasara, One night, there was a grand procession of Baba seated in a floral palanquin. I was eager to take a photograph, but couldn't. So, I begged Baba to keep the palanquin intact and allow me to take the picture with Him seated in it, when day broke. He agreed, and I was happy. But, my husband wanted to leave for Bangalore and I had to start, before dawn. Seeing my plight, a photographer who had come to Puttaparthi (Baba was then residing at the 'Old' Mandir, adjacent to the village) assured me that he would take the snap and send my camera with the film, to me through my servant, whom I left behind.

When the servant came to Bangalore, he brought the camera empty! He said the man had taken the photo, but, refused to hand over the film. He will send it after developing it, from Madras!

I wrote two letters to him but, he replied that he had sent the camera, to me, with the Film!

In my despair, I asked Baba about it. He said, 'It is with him at Madras; the picture has come out well. I shall get it for you!'

1945! Dasara! At Puttaparthi, I took out my camera, as usual to take a picture of Baba, during one of the festival days. I was taking out; a roll of film from my box, when my friend told me that it was already loaded! I was surprised at this: we took it out and found it was a used one!

When it was developed at Bangalore, it was found to be the one which was with the photographer at Madras! How it came from his shelf into my camera is known only to Baba or those who know Baba.

2

1945: A devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba came to the village, Puttaparthi, on hearing that Baba has come again, as Avatar. He asked Baba, when He was sitting among the devotees engaged in some spiritual discussion, "Baba! Please give me some proof that you are Shirdi Sai Baba, the same Baba that I am worshipping since years"! Baba smiled and said, lifting up His Hands, 'Look at these Hands!'

Every one of us looked up to see what the proof was, which the Hands held. Lo and behold! One hand was hard, aged and with grey hairs—the Hand of Shirdi Sai! And the other was tender, smooth and fair, the Hand of the teenage Sathya Sai!

We all gasped in wonder. The man who demanded proof fell at Baba's Feet, and the Hand became the hand we knew. He said, "Pardon me, Baba. I have now no trace of doubt. Take me into the fold!" Baba replied, "You are in the fold, since 30 years, why seek to enter it now?"

3

One day when I was at the Old Mandir the parents of a sickly boy who was suffering from chronic insufferable pain in the stomach came with him into the Presence of Baba. They had gone the round of all the major hospitals; the highest experts had advised operation and they feared to take the risk. Baba said, as soon as they spoke about the boy, "Yes! I shall do what the doctors advised you to get done, I shall operate and now!" So saying, He took the boy into the small room where He used to spend the day.

When the door was closed behind Him, the parents waited outside and prayed aloud, "Swami! Swami! Save our boy!" It must have taken about fifteen minutes only. Baba opened the door and told the parents, "It is all over! Go in, and see." At this, the parents wailed aloud! For, they took Him to mean that the boy had lost his life; but Baba said, "Why do you weep? The boy is quite well. Go in and see!" They went in and saw the boy, happy and smiling; there were clear indications of an operation having been performed.

All of us went in and saw this marvellous boy blessed by His Grace.

He started moving about within a few hours; they went home, their hearts filled with gratefulness and faith in Baba being Bhagavan Himself.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10

"However much the people around persuaded him. Rama did not answer, nor did he indicate the reason for his strange behaviour. He was immersed in his own awareness of the falsity of things. I am surprised at all this. The queens, too, have taken this so much to heart that they are

being consumed by anxiety.” When Dasaratha spoke thus to Sumantha, the loyal minister replied, "If permitted, I shall meet the children and try to diagnose the ailment.” Dasaratha, said, "Quite right. Proceed at once. Once we find the cause, the remedy isn't difficult, the cure isn't far.”

Sumantha hurried to the children's apartment, heavy with a load of anxiety in his heart. He found the doors bolted from inside, the guards standing outside them. When Sumantha tapped, Lakshmana opened the door and let him in.

He closed the door behind him and conversed with the boys for long on various matters, in order to draw out from them the reason for their malady. But, he could not delve into the mystery! He noticed the inexplicable difference between the confiding spirit of camaraderie which he enjoyed with them during the months of pilgrimage, and the cold distance that had grown in recent months. He pleaded with Rama with tears in his eyes, for revealing to him the reason for his melancholy. Rama smiled and said, "Sumantha! What reason can be given for something which is my very nature? I have no wants; I have no desire. You need have no anxiety on that score.” Thus Rama tried to console the old man.

Unable to do anything else, Sumantha came to where Dasaratha was and sat beside him. I feel it will be good to invite the Guru tomorrow and consider which measures are proper, he said; and departed from the presence, after taking the King's permission to leave. The King was sad; he neglected everything else; he ignored the demands of empire and wove many theories in his mind to explain the behaviour of the children. They are entering the years of adolescence and so, such temperamental revolutions are natural, he surmised. He shared this opinion with the queens and set his mind at rest, for a little while.

The day dawned. When they learnt that the Preceptor Vasishtha was arriving at the Palace, the queens made the preparations necessary, and waited for him at the family altar just then, the Guru arrived; all fell at his feet; they showered eager questions on him about the peculiar malady of the boys and the change that had come upon them. They were all in tears. Noticing the agitation of the King and the queens, Vasishtha turned his attention inwards and sought the reason for the sorrow, through inner vision. The truth was quickly revealed to his penetrating purity. Within a second, he turned towards the queens and assured them, "There is nothing wrong with the boys. These are not just ordinary children. They are free from the least trace of worldly desire. Their minds are untarnished, clear and clean! Do not get anxious. Bring them to me; you can retire now to your apartments.”

The King and queens were happy at this assurance; they sent for the princes and, left. Lakshmana Bharatha and Satrugna quickly got ready to meet the Guru when the news that he wanted them reached their ears. But, Rama evinced no haste. He was immersed in himself, as usual. So, Lakshmana touched his feet and prayed, "it is best we go without delay; or else, our parents will grieve that we dared disobey the command of the Preceptor.” Lakshmana pleaded with Rama very insistently for a long time, advancing various arguments. Finally, Lakshmana Bharatha and Satrugna were able to proceed to the altar room, with their eldest brother.

There, they fell at the Feet of the Guru and reverentially stood before him. Seeing them, Vasishtha asked them with great affection to draw near and sit beside him. They all sat close to him, but, Vasishtha wanted Rama to come still nearer. He fondled Rama lovingly, playing with his hair and patting his back. He said, "Rama! Why have you thus become quiet and silent? Your mothers and father are suffering grief and fear, unable to explain this inscrutable change. You have to pay heed to their happiness too, isn't it? You have to demonstrate the validity of the precious axioms, Matru devo bhava (Treat the mother as God) Pitru devo bhava (Treat the father as God) by your own action, isn't it?" Vasishtha placed before Rama many such lessons and truths for his consideration.

Rama sat smiling, listening to the Guru. When he had finished, he spoke calmly, "Master! You speak of mother; but, who exactly is 'mother'? Who exactly is 'son'? Why, what exactly is 'body'? And, what is the 'jivi' (the individual)? Is this objective world real? Or is the Supreme Soul real? This body is but the reflected image of the Supreme Soul, isn't it? The five elements that comprise the substance called 'body' are also the substance of the entire Universe. This universe is but the concatenation of the five elements, isn't it? The elements persist, in spite of all permutations and combinations. They have also a deeper base. Without realising this, if this created Universe is itself assumed to be real, and if one yields to the fascination of this falsehood, if the truth be discarded for the sake of the lie, what are we to say of the colossal ignorance? What can the individual gain by ignoring the Eternal Absolute Real Reality, the Atma?"

When Vasishtha observed Rama, raising such profound philosophical problems he noticed also a halo of hot bright rays of spiritual splendour that emanated and surrounded his face! He knew that the Light was an indication of Divinity, attempting to surge outwards! So, he wanted Rama himself to provide the answers to the questions that Rama put forward. And, the replies and explanations Rama gave were verily the Voice of God. Vasishtha could see this fact clearly. He bowed his head before him, mentally, for fear of being noticed. He said, "Son! I shall see you again in the evening", and left the palace, without even meeting Dasaratha; he was so overcome by the illumination of the occasion. He fondled the children with a joyous sense of gratitude and love.

Dasaratha saw the princes after some time; he too saw the strange Glow of Divine Awareness shining in their countenances. He could not understand how it happened and he awaited the arrival of Vasishtha, in the evening. No sooner did he enter the shrine room than the children, the mothers and Dasaratha fell at his feet and sat in their places with palms folded in prayerful humility.

All of a sudden, Rama surprised every one by asking a series of questions: "The Jivi, the Deva, the Prakriti (Soul, God, Nature) what is the inter-relation between these? Are these three One? Or, are they distinct entities? If One, how did it become three, and for what purpose? What is the unifying principle underlying these? What benefit is gained by recognising them as different, giving up the cognition of the Unity?" The parents were aghast at the profundity of these questions and the tender age of Rama. They became fully merged in the stream of instruction and inquiry, that showered diamond axioms which shed light on the problems raised, as if Heaven answered the questions raised by Earth! They forgot that Rama was their own child;

the hours of the night rolled by, in the eager analysis and understanding of the great monistic wisdom.

Vasishtha saw that the words that flowed from the lips of Rama were indeed drops of the Nectar of Immortality, which can ensure Peace for mankind; he blessed the king and queens and returned to the hermitage. The Dialogues between Rama and the Preceptor form the text of 'Yogavasishtha', a name which is meaningful and significant. It is also referred as the Ramagita.

Rama spent his days, immersed in Vedanta, communing with himself, talking while alone to himself, silent in company, and often laughing at nothing in particular. Dasaratha grew concerned; He was worried what will happen to the brothers; he sought to keep the younger three apart; but, they never agreed to be isolated from Rama; so, they had to be left in his company always.

The King and the queens were very much depressed, for, all their dreams of joy and glory had come to naught; they became desperate, for they saw no sign of recovery or transformation in the sons. They counted hours and minutes, passing the time in anxiety and prayer. Rama had no interest even in food and so with irregular and indifferent meals, he appeared weak and wasted in health.

During these days, in the region east of Ayodhya the royal city, the sage Viswamitra was engaged in rigorous asceticism. He resolved upon a holy rite, known as Yaga. But, however often he inaugurated it, the demons desecrated the rite and caused it to lose all sanctity. They showered pieces of flesh in the sacred area and made it unfit for Vedic ceremonies. In many other ways, they cast obstacles and halted the holy mission, Viswamitra was at his wit's end; he straight reached the capital city of the empire, Ayodhya.

When reports arrived of the coming of the sage, the King sent his ministers to bring him with due honours into the Palace. They welcomed him at the City Gate and accompanied him right up to the palace door. At the Palace, Brahmins recited Vedic hymns, while Dasaratha washed his feet and, as laid down in the sacred texts and as is customary in royal receptions of sages, he sprinkled upon his own head drops of the water that flowed from the Saint's feet. Then, Viswamitra was led into the inner apartments and seated on a high chair with the members of the royal court standing reverentially all round him.

"This is indeed a great, day!" exclaimed Dasaratha. He expressed his exaltation at the unexpected arrival of the saintly personage into his home and the opportunity he gained to serve and honour him. Viswamitra directed the king and the ministers to sit and they obeyed.

Then the sage graciously enquired about the health and welfare of the king and the royal family, and about the peace and prosperity of the kingdom. He asked him whether his reign was marked by strength and security, whether his government was ensuring without any hindrance the continued progress of his subjects. Dasaratha replied that, as a result of the Grace of God and the blessings of saints and sages, his subjects were dutifully and gladly engaged in their several tasks, without any fear of failure and that the administration too had before it always the

promotion of the welfare of the people. He said that his government was serving the people in many ways, to promote and preserve their happiness and security.

Then, Dasaratha treated the sage with royal hospitality. He yearned to know the reason for the sage's arrival, He assured him that he was ever ready to fulfill his least desire. He declared with great devotion that he will discharge earnestly any duty that the sage may cast on him. He was only waiting to know what he could do for him. At this, Viswamitra nodded his head in approval and spoke in reply.

(To be continued)

The Bhajans They Chanted

(Here are two English Bhajans, which were sung by American, British, and other Overseas Sadhakas during the Dasara Festival.)

Sai Baba! Sai Baba!
So kind! So kind!
He's our Mother, Father, Sister
And Brother, All-in-One!
He's the Earth Air Water Moon and Sun!
Sai Baba! Sai Baba!
So kind! So kind!
He is all that we have ever been!
And, He is all that we will ever be!
And, we are here today and tomorrow
So that He can help us see!
Sai Baba! Sai Baba!
So kind! So kind!

Love is My Form
Truth is My Breath
Bliss is My Food—
My Life is My Message
Expansion is My Life

No reason for Love
No season for Love
No Birth, No Death
Prema ... Sathya ... Ananda
Dharma.... Santhi... Ananda....
Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai, Prema Sai, jai jai
Shirdi Baba, Sathya Baba, Prema Baba, Jai.

The Fettered Fire

Indra Devi, who is well known to our readers, has had the experience of a great big act of Grace from Baba, something which we love to call a Miracle.

"In person and through writings in most of the eleven languages Indra Devi speaks, she has tried to help lead the world 'from darkness to light', in such seeming diversity of places, as the Kremlin and the White House", says a Los Angeles Magazine. The writer of that article speaks of 'sitting in the shadows on the deep carpeting' of the Sathya Sai Hall, which is so vast 'that it becomes its own psychic experience'.

"This centre, the Yogic Nilayam is on Rancho El Cachuma which adjoins La Puetra" Recently, Indra Devi has added a hundred acre piece of land, adjacent to this Yoga Institute and named it Sai Nilayam

On September 26, the Bocks (Janet and Richard) wrote to us from Los Angeles "Bhagavan's Grace has blessed us with protection in the midst of disaster. We have just learned that a major fire has burned over 6000 acres of land in Tecate, which is, as you know, the location of Indra Devi's Yoga Foundation, and of the property called Sai Nilayam—a retreat for those who wish to practise Sadhana in an atmosphere devoted to Him. Indra Devi's property was untouched by the fire! Although most of the property, Sai Nilayam, was burned, the miraculous will of the Lord protected the house (!) and the ancient trees (!), as the fire burnt everything else, including tents and a truck! The people at the house in the Sai Nilayam were forced to seek shelter on top of Mount Cachuma, the only escape possible for them. When they came down later, they found the whole house blackened with soot, except for the SHRINE ROOM, which was UNTOUCHED!

Richard Bock writes, "We cannot explain the reason for His Grace; we only hope that with His help, we will some day be worthy of it,"

Writing about the incident, Indra Devi says in a letter, "While i was away in Chicago, big fires broke out in South California. The newspapers carried reports that they were turning 200 yards from our Center" (The Tecate Fire, worst in the country in more than a year was started by campers who abandoned a smoldering campfire, along the Border, four miles west of the village of Tecate. It was reported at 10.05 A. M. and it spread rapidly up the eastern slopes of the 3885 foot Tecate Mountain, and in a south-westerly direction to Mexico. A total of 2000 acres were afire in the United States and Mexican officials estimated their burned acreage at 4500). Indra Devi continues, "But, that didn't disturb me one bit, since i was confident that Bhagavan will protect the place dedicated to Him. And, if they were to be lost, there must be a GOOD REASON FOR IT. And, so it was.

On the Mexican side, only the hillside behind our vegetable garden was burned down. On the American side, Sai Nilayam had suffered the destruction of some trees and bushes, a truck and tents. BUT, THE HOUSE WAS UNTOUCHED.

When the devotees who fled to the mountain top from the devastating flames returned, they found that all rooms were thickly covered by black soot with the exception of Bhagavan's MEDITATION ROOM.

NOBODY COULD EXPLAIN IT OTHERWISE THAN, BY THE FACT: "BABA MUST HAVE BEEN HERE."

There is a consciousness
beyond this body
where love feels no bounds

There is a space
beyond this mind
free from narrow confines

There is a Truth
beyond this delusion
where myself is known

Divine Mother
I pray I may
Come home
Michele Malvin

The Treasure

The Grace of God has to be earned, through the spiritual struggles pursued in many lives. Unless man has the seed of divine yearning in his heart, the shower of Grace will not sprout into a tree yielding the fruit of victory. However huge the rain, however effective the fertiliser, if the seed is not underneath the soil, all that is sheer waste. No sapling will raise its head. So too, man must have deep in his heart the desire for liberation born out of sincere yearning, and discontent with the baubles of civilisation; Then, the drops of rain, namely, the encouraging company of the virtuous will bring it into the light; the fertiliser of Sadhana will strengthen the sapling; and the fruit of the Divine Presence will be won. The thought, word and deed of the Sadhaka must all three be in line, supplementing and fulfilling each other. That steadiness and steadfast attachment to truth is the fence around the growing tree. This is what is known as Discipline, ritualistic correctness, regulation in food and drink and other habits and attitudes.

—Baba

The Truth of the Truth

I am in you and for you: you are for Me and in Me. Yet, I have an urge to tell you a little about Me and guide you. I am not won by adulation or lost by disregard. I am won by Truth; Genuineness, Sincerity. For, I have come with this human physical apparel for upholding Truth, I am the Truth of the Truth, the Truth in all truths. This Form bears the Name: Truth (Sathya)! The vitality within this Form is Truth. That is the Power which overpowers all powers.

Why has Truth come down on earth in this Form? To place man on the road to Truth, to plant in their hearts the yearning for Truth, to help them reach the goal of Truth through instruction and illumination.

Therefore, I move with you in order to correct and console. I eat and talk, I laugh and teach, I speak and travel, in the manner you do, so that I can lead you on to the Truth from which you have strayed away. I make you laugh and weep, I appear before you here and there, to harden you and to ease your burden, so that you can reach Truth.

I do not stray, despite the fact that I am aware of all that is and was and will be, despite My knowledge of all that is enveloped in Time and Space. I desire you to note this well. For, whosoever finds himself in positions high or takes up the reins of leadership has to walk straight and steady, so that all who follow, may do likewise and win the goal.

I have come to re-establish the rhythm of righteousness in the world; hence, all the hours of day and night, every second I fill with Activity suffused with Love, Activity designed to further your progress in the pilgrimage to the Truth, that is Myself. For, Truth alone can confer on you lasting Bliss; and, the Bliss you gain is the Food on which I sustain Myself.

Baba: From Discourse on 10-10-70

Work—A Prescription

—By M. J. Taraporevala

When we think of Work, we think of Karma. To understand Karma at deeper levels of understanding, we of the Sai family need only to recall the following teachings of Baba. "Karma cleanses the mind, if it is done as a dedicatory act, the consequence being left to the will of the Lord." "Only through Karma can liberation be effected."

Work is a practical necessity for the evolution of our personality.

The dictionary defines Work as 'effort directed to an end'. Hence to get the best from our Work, our effort has to be good and the end to which our effort is directed must be realized.

The following basic principles should be followed, for gaining success. Our efforts must be sincere and dedicated. We must give concentrated attention to our efforts. Our efforts must be

packed with enthusiasm. Persistence is an essential factor. Our efforts must be urged by a keen desire to reach the goal.

It is good to put in good effort but it is better to realise in the first place the end to which efforts are directed. Not sometimes but always, the end to which efforts are directed should be 'SERVICE'. Therefore, we must work for the sake of Work and not for the sake of reward. We must work with heart and soul to serve the world because we love it and are a part of it. It is better to light the candle than to curse the darkness that surrounds the world today.

Work never killed anybody. It is worry that breaks people. In fact Work is an antidote for Worry. The devil finds it easier to enter an idle mind. So let us be thankful for our work, whatever its nature and do it gratefully.

Baba has made it very clear tip us that Work need not be materially rewarded. However, Work done with the right attitude is always spiritually rewarding. In fact in all instances the inner satisfaction that one gets for having done a good job outweighs any material reward that comes with it. To substantiate this statement, let me tell you a story:

Once upon a time an old man of 90 years, was sowing seeds, the fruits of which were not supposed to come up for the next twenty years. A passer-by asked him "Old man! Why are you sowing seeds, the fruits of which you will not reap?" The wise old man replied, "They sowed and we reaped, now let us sow so that others may reap." I trust this little story is good enough for any one of us to realize that the end of all efforts should be 'SERVICE'.

The old adage says: "Work as if you had to live for eternity, Worship as if you were to die today."

They say 'Work is Worship'. The above line truly gives us the relationship between work and worship. For when work is done with the same dedication as one performs one's worship on one's dying day Work loses its identity and becomes worship.

Let us, therefore, worship God through Work by keeping service as the end to which our work is directed. The office in which we work should be treated as a temple, for it gives us the opportunity to worship eight hours a day. An office or a home in which human beings work with this attitude, will always vibrate with love and harmony. Work is one of the best educators conferring character, which is so vital for wholesome living.

For us human beings Work is a psychological need. Just as the blood flowing through our body nourishes it—Work nourishes our soul and stimulates it. In fact, Work is one of the greatest sources of happiness. Yet, how many of us are willing to tap this source?

We should view work as a twofold gift, Firstly as a gift from Baba to us so as to uplift our soul. In this connection let us recall Baba's words, "Without Karma Progress is difficult." Secondly as a gift from us to our fellow-men—our little bit, to make this world a happy place to live in. If we all work the way we ought to, this dark world of ours will get transformed into one sweet song?

Fellow Pilgrims, do you wish to have health of body, peace of mind, a progressive and a serene soul? In short the prescription for living is WORK, WORK AND WORK.

Divinely Supreme Miracle

Bhagavan reached Goa, via Dharwar at 10 P.M. on the 7th December, and was received at the Cabo Raj Nivas by the Lt Governor Sri Nakul Sen I. C. S. and family. That very night, He took over in His infinite compassion the attack of acute appendicitis which a devotee was about to suffer from; expert physicians opined that could not be cured without an immediate operation. On the 10th evening, however, when Bhagavan gave a long discourse during the Bhajan Session at Raj Nivas, He was perfectly normal, cheerful and in good health (as the P. T. I. correspondent reported). His recovery within a couple of days, without any surgical treatment was, as observed by the U. N. I. correspondent at Panaji (Goa) 'considered a miracle not only by laymen but also by the expert physicians who attended on Him'!

The speech that was delivered by the Lt. Governor on the 10th, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan (who had cast off the malignant and painful illness which He had taken on, will give the reader some idea of the Divine Mercy, Grand Power of Baba.

Sri. Nakul Sen said, "Bhagavan Shri Swami Sathya Sai Baba and Brothers, Sisters and Children of Goa, It is our supreme good fortune that we find Divinity present amidst us today. I need not say how this has come about. To tell you who Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba is will be like showing candlelight to the midday sun. The inhabitants of Goa are indeed fortunate that Bhagavan Himself has come here and blessed them with His Darshan. As we look back at the past history of Goa, we feel emboldened to lay a special claim for Bhagavan's Darshan and blessings. This will make you curious why I have said so. I do not have to remind you that Goa is an ancient land; Goa is a sacred land; Goa is a land of the Rishis. It is the land originally inhabited by Maharishi Parasuram and his devotees called Saraswat Brahmins. When they came to Goa, they found its beauty and landscape enchanting, but they could not locate any level ground where they could settle down with their cows whom they had brought with them from the North. Varuna, the Lord of the Oceans, welcomed Maharshi Parasuram and made the sea recede from that much of the area which was required by the Maharshi and his followers for the settlement and the cows for their pasture lands. As he sea receded the cows in utter ecstasy ran towards it and that is how this land came to be called Gomant, that is, the land's end to which the cows could go. All Goans are the descendants of Maharshi Parasuram and it is the result of their good deeds (Punya Karma) spread over many lives that Bhagavan Himself has come here to give Darshan to them.

"Goa is also the land of Lord Shiva who lived on the Sahyadri Mountains. He had infinite love for his divine consort, Bhagwati Parvati, and for her pleasure created through his Sankalpa two rivers—the present day Mandovi and the Zuari, which are the counterpart of the holy Ganges in the North. The ancient names of these two rivers are Mahadevi and Agnashini. They keep alive for, all time to come the sacred memory of Lord Shiva and Bhagwati Parvati. Ever reminding us of them, they flow down the Sahyadri ranges through the entire territory of Goa, rapidly moving over the falls and leisurely sauntering over the planes before finally merging into the Indian Ocean. Both these rivers are very happy today—they are in ecstasy! They are humming divine songs of infinite sweetness. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear can participate in their joy. Their happiness is boundless and is emerging from the consciousness that

their creator, Lord Shiva, has come to Goa today in the form of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba to meet and bless them. It is a widely known fact that in the present times Shiva Shakti is finding its expression through Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba, who is the Physical manifestation.

There is yet another reason why Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has blessed us with His visit. Those who have read the story of Lord Krishna know fully well that he and his elder brother, Shri Balaram, visited Goa in the early years of their life and stayed here for over two years. They were chased by Emperor Jarasandha of Magada, who was defeated by them in a spectacular hand-to-hand fight on the soil of Goa itself. Shri Balarama would have killed him; but Lord Krishna had already ordained his death at the hands of Bhima and, therefore, Shri Balarama could not be allowed to kill him. It is from Goa that while leaving this beautiful land Lord Krishna took the Garuda Dhwaja which was so dear to him and which remained with him all his life.

"Lord Krishna loved Gomant. No wonder he decided to visit this ancient and sacred land again in the form of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba.

"The sole object of my saying all what I have said is that both historically and spiritually the Goans are like children of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba and can therefore, rightly lay a claim on Him. He has loved Goa in His previous incarnations and Goa continues to be dear to Him even now. Bhagavan lives in the inner recesses of the hearts of His devotees and there is nothing which He would not do for them. Those who have read His life story or have had the good fortune of remaining in contact with Him over a period are aware of His breath-taking and unaccountable Leelas and Mahimas. He has simultaneously appeared in His present form at different places to help His Bhaktas in distress or impending calamity and saved them from it. He has assumed through His will, (Sankalpa) illness of His Bhaktas and suffered it for them, because, otherwise, they would have been just over-powered by it. We have been the witnesses of a similar Lila of His during His current visit to Goa—Lila which is breath-taking and which has greatly perplexed the medical experts of Goa. He came here on the evening of December 7th and during the very first night of His stay at Cabo Raj Nivas, He took upon Himself through His Sankalpa a most serious illness which suddenly assumed a very grave character. The eminent surgeons and physicians who were called to examine Him suggested immediate surgery as the only treatment. Their diagnosis was that Baba was suffering from an acute attack of appendicitis with an abscess which was assuming a malignant character. While the doctors came one after the other to see Him, He was cheerful and smilingly listening to what they said, after mutual consultations and agreed to the medication they could administer to Him at His residence. The crisis came on the second night, i.e. December 9, when the temperature and the pulse were rising fast and Bhagavan was not retaining any nourishment whatever. In utter despair, the doctors suggested drastic remedies at which Bhagavan just smiled. The wonder of wonders happened on the morning of December 10th when the temperature came down from 101.8°F to 98.4°F and the pulse from 112 to 86. When I saw Him in the morning He told me that the Kirtan scheduled to be held at Cabo Raj Nivas in the evening (December 10) should be held as originally fixed and that He would grace it with His presence. The doctors became panicky and I could feel that they were dead against what Bhagavan had said to me. My sixth sense somehow assured me that Bhagavan was showing one of His Leelas in Goa and that through His Sankalpa He would get rid of the trouble as quickly as He had assumed it nearly 40 hours earlier. In the afternoon, when

the doctors examined Him again they could not locate any abscess nor could they find any trace of the stony lump of flesh near it. The whole area of the appendix was soft and a normal as it could be. Lo and Behold! At 6 o'clock in the evening, Bhagawan walked from His bedroom to the dais in the main hall, a distance of about 200 feet without any aid and sat down erect on an office chair. As all of you can see that He is cheerful, smiling and looks to be in the best of His health. This Leela which He has enacted in Goa at Cabo Raj Niwas will be remembered with amazement and deep reverence for generations to come. It leaves no doubt in our minds that there is nothing on this earth which Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba cannot do through His will (Sankalpa). His Leela is Adbhut and Romanchkari! His Leela is Madhumayee and Manoharini! It imparts supreme joy, beatitude and infinite love. His Leela is Amar and Amritmayee! It is endless and Ananda par excellence.

My heart is far too full to say more about the divinity presiding over this function. We welcome Bhagavan from the innermost recesses of our hearts and offer our deep salutations to Him. It is our prayer to Him in all humility that we may receive His blessings and be always worthy of His grace."

During the Discourse, Bhagavan referred to the illness He had donned and the pain He had 'gone through'. "I have come with this Body in order to guard and guide these bodies of yours and so this body will never be affected by disease! Disease is caused by faulty food and recreation and, since this body is free from such diseases that flesh is heir to, it can never be ill. The care of those who have surrendered to me heartily and who have thrown all responsibility on Me is my burden. I have to rescue them from pain, even by taking on the pain, myself. Moreover, I decided to announce Divinity by taking on pain and casting it off, pain that is beyond ordinary mortals to bear. I am ever immune to pain. The pain I had assumed is now vanished. It would never return."

Baba spoke also about the need to strengthening the underlying unity of this land of Yoga and Thyaga; He emphasised the importance of character in individual and national progress, and declared that the body was an equipment given to man, not for running after sensual pleasures, but, to realise its essential Divinity. The news of the illness was widely published and so created deep anxiety and trepidation in the hearts of millions of devotees, though many of them were aware of similar occasions when He had taken on the illness that threatened His devotees. But, this miracle at Raj Nivas, Goa, was easily the most dramatic, and most significant, for medical science was flabbergasted by the suddenness and the completeness of the cure that Baba wrought on Himself. It also gained through His Sankalpa, more widespread publicity than the previous miracles.

The Sai Era of Spiritual Triumph has come into another and more fruitful stage, since this supreme miracle has drawn the attention and admiration of millions to the Avatar that is in our midst for our salvation.

The two pictures given with this article, one when he was entering the Raj Nivas on the 7th and the other, at the Bhajan Session a few hours after He had thrown off the dire illness will give readers an idea of the miraculous victor that puzzled medical experts.

Jai Sai Ram.

"In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My Reality either today, or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent enquiry even if all mankind joins in that effort. But, in short time, you will become cognisant of the Bliss showered by Divine Principle, which has taken upon itself the sacred Body and the sacred Name.

"Since I move about with you, eat like you, and talk with you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but an instance of common humanity. Be warned against this mistake. I am also deluding you by My singing with you, talking with you, and engaging Myself in activities with you. But, any moment, My Divinity may be revealed to you; you have to be ready, prepared for that moment. Since divinity is enveloped by human-ness you must endeavour to overcome the Maya (Delusion) that hides it from your eyes.

"This is a Human Form, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say 'all the Names and Forms ascribed by man to God' are manifest. (Sarvadaivatha swaroopalanu dharinchina maanavaakaarame ee akaram) Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only instal, in the altar of your heart, steady faith in My Divinity you can win a Vision of My Reality. Instead, if you swing like a pendulum of a clock, one moment devotion, another moment disbelief, you can never succeed in comprehending the Truth and win the Bliss. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the Bliss of the Vision of Sarvadaivatha Swaroopam (The form which is All Forms of all Gods), while in this life itself."

—BABA

(From the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan given in Bombay on I7-5-68)

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sathya Sai Baba

11

Viswamitra turned towards Dasaratha and said, "I need not declare before you that you are a very righteous ruler, that you revere guests and supplicants, and that you are the embodiment of faith and devotion; the fact that the world is happy under your rule is enough evidence of this. The welfare of the subjects depends on the character of the rulers they have. The people will have peace or anxiety, as the rulers are good or bad. Wherever I have enquired, I receive the impression that it is only in Ayodhya that we have a people full of love and loyalty to the sovereign and a sovereign full of affection and love to the people. In every nook and corner of your kingdom. I hear this heartening news!

"Therefore, I know that your words come straight from the heart. I have not the least doubt; you will not deviate from your promise. You will adhere to the word once given."

These words of the sage moved Dasaratha deeply. "Great men will engage themselves ever only in activities that help the world to progress. And, whatever they do, they will not stray from the injunctions of the scriptures. There must be some good reason for whatever they contemplate; they are prompted by the Divine Will in every act of theirs. So, I am always ready

and willing, with all the resources at my command, to serve you and to fulfill your slightest wish," he replied. Dasaratha vowed again and again that he would carry out the sage's command.

This made the sage very glad. "Yes! As you said, wise men will not emerge forth from their hermitages without sufficient reasons. I have come to you on a certain high purpose! Hearing your words and listening to your enthusiastic response, I am made doubly happy! I am filled with the joy that my errand has borne fruit!"

"You will stand by your promise, will you not," asked Viswamitra! Dasaratha replied without delay, "Master! You could, perhaps ask others such a question; but Dasaratha is not the person to break his pledged word! He will give up his life rather than bring dishonour on himself by denying his promise. What greater honour can a monarch have than morality and integrity? They alone stand by him, in his manifold responsibilities.

"If these two are lost, the kingdom becomes a mansion without lights, a wilderness beset with the confusion of apish vagaries, and factional fights. It will be torn by anarchy and terror. Finally, as a result of all this, the king himself will meet with disaster. I feel that such a crisis will never overtake this kingdom of mine. Why, I am certain that such a calamity can never overwhelm my dynasty, for ages to come.

"Therefore, without entertaining the shadow of doubt, tell me the purpose that brought you to Ayodhya, and accept the service that this devoted servant is ready to offer."

Viswamitra said, "No, no! I had no doubt in my mind. I simply uttered those words in order to hear this assertion of your steady adherence to truth! I know that the Ikshvaku rulers are intensely wedded to the duty of fulfilling their spoken word. Well! I require from you only one thing now. It is neither wealth nor vehicle, neither cow nor gold, nor regiments nor attendants. I require only your sons, Rama and Lakshmana. This is my desire. What do you say to this? the sage asked.

At this, Dasaratha lost his balance; he fell back and could not recover himself, soon. Becoming himself after some time, he gasped, for courage to utter a few words. He said, "Master! Of what use will those boys be for you? The mission on which you intend to take those boys can be better fulfilled by me, don't you think? Give me the chance. Let me make my life worth while. Tell me what it is; I shall derive joy there from."

The sage replied, "My firm belief is that the mighty task which these boys can fulfill can be undertaken by no one else. They can accomplish, they alone can accomplish this which neither, your millions of soldiers nor even you can carry out! Boys such as these have not been born before! Nor will such be born again! This is my conviction.

"Listen! I have resolved upon the performance of a celebrated Yajna (sacrificial rite). But, as soon as I enter upon its inauguration, evil spirits and demotes assemble from nowhere and cause sacrilegious obstruction to its performance. They cause abominable interruptions and obstacles I want these boys to ward off those demons and save the Yajna from abominations, so

that I can bring it to a successful conclusion. This is my purpose, my desire. What do you say now?" asked Viswamitra, in a serious stentorian voice.

The King replied, "Master! These tender little boys, how can they perform such a tremendous task? I am here most willing and most ready. I shall come with my chariotry, infantry, cavalry and elephantry and guard the area of the sacrifice and your hermitage; I shall see that the sacrifice is conducted with full success without the least interruption. I have experience in fighting against these demoniac forces, since as you know, I fought for the Gods against them and gave them the fruits its of victory. I can do it quite easily. I shall make arrangements to accompany you even now. Permit me to do so," he appealed.

Hearing these words, the sage said, "King! My mind is not satisfied in spite of all that you say. I assert—you cannot, accomplish this assignment. Can you not realise that it is beyond even me who is acclaimed as omnipotent and omniscient? How then can you take up this task and succeed? You consider these boys as just ordinary children; this is a mistake resulting, from the extreme affection you have as their father. I know full well that they are Divine Might in human Form Do not hesitate. Keep your word, so solemnly given and send them this very moment with me. Or else, accept that you are unable to be true to your word, and I shall depart. Do either of these two things, quick! This is no occasion for wavering and delay!" The king was agitated by the sharpness of the sage's voice. He was overwhelmed by fear at the dire calamity that awaited him.

In despair, Dasaratha wanted that his preceptor be invited to court. Soon Vasishta came in and on seeing Viswamitra, they exchanged smiles and words of mutual gratefulness. Vasishta heard from the King an account of all that had happened. Of course, Vasishta knew quite well the Divine Reality of the boys; so, he decided to advise the king not to have the least worry, but, gladly give the boys into the loving custody of the sage.

Dasaratha pleaded that the boys were not keeping good health since some months and that they did not have even the physical stamina to engage in the battle with the demons. We are all concerned since long about their health and now, this demand for them has come like a blow on a painful sore. My mind does not agree in the least to send them forth to encounter the demons. I shall guard my children even at the risk of my own life," lamented the King.

Viswamitra intervened and said, "King! Why should you foolishly lament in this manner at this? You should have desisted at the very beginning from making promises which you could not fulfil. It is an act of dire sin when a ruler makes a promise without considering the pros and cons and then, when he is asked to execute it, to retract and delay and even to go counter to the promise! This is most derogatory to kings like you. I spurn help that is offered with sorrow in the heart. Help rendered, however small, if it comes from the deeper urges welling in the heart is as good as the offer of life itself. Half-hearted and hesitating help, however great is really of poor sort. I have no desire to cause you pain and extract help from you in spite of unwillingness. Well be happy with yourself. I am leaving."

Viswamitra rose and attempted to move off. The King fell at his feet and prayed for more light to remove the pain in his heart, and the delusion in his eye. He asked that he may be taught

his duty, and the sage may fulfill his desire, after convincing him of the fairness of his demand. At this, Vasishtha called Dasaratha to his side and counseled him. He said, 'O King! You are coming in the way of a cosmic revelation, a mighty fulfillment. Since your heart is affected by parental affection the truth is veiled before your eye. Your sons will come to no harm. No, never. There is no height of heroism that is beyond them.

"These formidable, Forces have taken human form for the very purpose of destroying demons and demoniac powers. So, without further delay or grief, send for the boys. You should not calculate their physical strength or the measure of their intelligence. Calculate rather the Divine that is bubbling up from them every minute of their lives. There is no strength which can stand up to that remember!"

After long advice on these lines, Vasishtha sent for the Princes, Rama and Lakshmana. As soon as they heard that the sages Viswamitra and Vasishtha wanted them to come, both of them rushed forward and entering the hall, bowed in reverence. First, they fell at the feet of the father, then at the feet of Vasishtha, the Family Preceptor and next, at the feet of Viswamitra. With a smile playing on his lips he addressed the boys who rose up and stood reverentially on one side. He said, "Boys! Do you come with me?" The boys were elated at the prospect.

On hearing this, Dasaratha was further disheartened: his face lost all its glow. Rama saw his father sorrowing over his approval; he approached him softly and said, "Father! Why are you so sad, when I am going with the great Sage? I cannot understand why. Is there any better way of utilising this body than putting it at the service of others? This body has been given to us for that very purpose. And, to share in the holy tasks of ascetics and to be able to grant them some relief from harassment, is this not a higher form of its use? Is there any better way than that?"

"There is nothing impossible for us, is there? We will destroy the demons (the Rakshasas), however fierce they may be and give peace to the sage. If permitted, we are ready to start off with him this very minute." These words charged with courage served to reduce to some extent the anxiety of Dasaratha.

But, the king was thus plunged into a situation where he could not decide what to say. He drew Rama to himself and told him, "Son! The Rakshasas are no ordinary foes! Reports say that among them, the demons called Sunda, Upasunda, Maricha, Subahu, etc. are atrociously wicked and cruel. Their physical appearance is indescribably horrid; you have had no occasion yet to look upon such terrifying forms. I cannot contemplate the moment when you come face to face with them. How can you battle with those tricksters who are adepts at camouflage and physical transformation? You have not so far heard even the word battle! Nor have you seen actual combat on the field. Tender boys are now suddenly called to wage war with such formidable foes! How can you possibly engage in it? Alas! Destiny is displaying such cruelty! Alas! Have my sons to face in the very threshold of their lives such monstrous ordeals?"

With these thoughts revolving in his mind, Dasaratha started shedding tears, profusely, out of the anguish in his heart. Lakshmana noticed that his father was but demonstrating his mental weakness. He said, "Father! Why these tears from your eyes? We are not girls! The battlefield is our legitimate home, war is our rightful duty, the safe guarding of righteousness is our genuine

responsibility. The service of sages and the maintenance of moral codes are as our very breath. I am surprised you are sad that we have to go on such a glorious errand!

"The world will certainly laugh at you for this display of weakness. Send us with your love and blessings. I too will accompany my brother and return with the bride of Victory."

(To be continued)