

# Christmas

The lives of great Personalities are lived out, in order to establish the welfare of puma. pity, the prosperity and peace of the world, and individual liberation from bondage to sensual desires and passions. This is illustrated by the strange phenomena that occur at the time of their Advent. It is believed that when Christ was born there were such manifestations. The ruler of the realm had ordered a census, and each had to be counted in his own village. Mary and her husband moved along the road that led to his native village. Mary was with child; the pains started midway; they knew no one in the hamlet through which they were passing: so, they took refuge in a cowshed. Joseph made ready the space between two cows, and went out at midnight, into the road to seek some woman who could help. But, soon, he heard the Baby's Cry!

## The Aura

And the story says, there was a star in the sky, which fell with a new Light, and this led a few Tibetans and others to the place where the Saviour was born. This story is read and taken on trust by many, though Stars do not fall or even slide down so suddenly. What the story signifies is this. There was a huge aura of splendour illumining the sky over the village when Christ was born. This meant that he, who was to overcome the darkness of Evil and Ignorance had taken birth, that he will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and the Councils of Humanity. Appearance of splendour, or, of other Signs of the Era that has dawned, are natural when Incarnations happen on Earth.

The Aura of Light was a sign that the Darkness will be destroyed. A Master arrives in answer to man's prayer: "Thamaso man jyothirgamaya" (Lead us from darkness unto Light!)

## Use and Misuse

If each one does his duty, in the spirit of dedication, the Light can illumine all; but, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can darkness disappear? You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring Peace and Joy into you. The Incarnation comes to warn, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey, with hope and faith. There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarreled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a `will of the wisp'. Wisdom retorted that, without it, man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it and use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but, only when they are properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny; wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprints. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous. It is like the knife; in the hands of a maniac, it becomes an instrument for murder; in the hands of a surgeon, it becomes an instrument which saves life! Are you doing good with wealth? Are you benefiting others by means of wisdom, that is the test. This day, Christmas, when you celebrate the birth of Christ, resolve to lead lives of Loving Service of the weak, the helpless, the distressed, and the disconsolate. Cultivate tolerance and forbearance, charity and magnanimity. Hold dear the ideals he laid down and practise them in your daily lives.

## **Drink and Dance**

The ways in which Christmas is celebrated show how far men have moved away from those ideals, how much ignominy they are heaping on his name! The midnight hour is revered; illumination is arranged; the Christmas Tree is set up; and then, the night is spent in drinking and dance. It is a day of Holy Ananda, but, the Ananda is reduced to the level of the poisoning excitement of intoxication! Drink is so pernicious an evil habit, that when man puts the bottle in, he gets himself into the bottle and cannot escape. First, man drinks wine; then, the wine drinks more wine; and finally, the wine drinks man himself. He is sunk and drowned in drink. Liquor destroys the humanity in man! How then can it develop the Divinity in him? One must dance in Divine Bliss; instead, sensual dance is indulged in, as a deleterious substitute! Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way for celebrating the Birth of Christ.

## **The Lamb**

There is one point that I cannot but bring to your special notice today. At the time when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity, he communicated some news to his followers, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and these who relish the piling of writings on writings and meaning upon meaning, until it all swells up into a huge mess. The Statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum. The Statement is simple:

"He who sent me among you will come again! " and he pointed to a Lamb. The Lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the Voice Ba - Ba; the announcement was of the Advent of Baba. "His name will be Truth," Christ declared. Sathya means Truth. He wears a robe of red, a blood-red robe. (Here Baba pointed to the Robe He was wearing!) He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The Lamb is the sign and symbol of Love. Christ did not declare that He will come again; he said, "He who sent me will come again." That Ba - ba is this Baba.

And, Sai, the short, curly-hair-crowned red-robed Baba, is come. Not only in this Form, but, He is in every one of you, as the Dweller in the Heart. He is there short, with a robe of the colour of the blood that fills it.

## **In All**

The great axioms of Bharatiya culture found in the Vedas—Iswarassarvabhuthanam Isaavaasyamidam sarvam, Vasudevassarva midam—God is the inner motivator of all beings, All this is enveloped in God, All this is Vasudeva, the Divine are to be interpreted in this way, that the blood - red - robed Baba or Lamb is in every one. This is the inner mystery of Incarnation: God incarnating in all, All are One; the One is All.

There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. There is only one religion, the Religion of Love; there is only one caste, the Caste of Humanity; there is only one language, the Language of the Heart.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse 25/12/72*

**I LOVE**



*I am as Love, to thy search for Me  
I am Thyself, Thou art me.*

—A. B.

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### **Sita Amused**

When Rama was instructing Sita on her duties, she could not contain her laughter! She also felt a sense of shame at the turn the arguments took. She could not remain silent for long. "Rama, she interrupted, "Rama! you are the son of Dasaratha, the Maharaja. I have not heard at any time words unworthy of that lineage fall from your lips. Mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter-in-law—every one has to experience happiness and misery, in proportion to the good and bad done by each. But, the wife has a special source of fortune, good or bad. That is to say, she has a share in the good and bad, for which her husband is responsible. She is endowed with a part of his joy or grief. So, if the Emperor Dasaratha has ordered you go to into the forest, he has given me too, the order to go. A woman may be fed and fostered by her mother and father; she may be revered by her son; she may be served by her maids. But, they can never be her shield and support. The tricks and tassels with which you try to convince me serve only to arouse amusement in me.

During the years preceding my wedding, father taught me all the duties that shall guide and bind me. I am neither an ignoramus nor a seeker of self-aggrandizement. And, more than these, let me tell you, I do not cling fanatically to any opinion because it is mine. There is no need for you to point out my special duty to me, for, I know them all. It is only when I decide to remain here, isn't it, that you have to tell me how and in what ways I have to serve the parents-in-law, the sisters-in-law, and the Ruler of the land? But, when I am with you, what chance is there, what need is there, for me to take on the service of others' I am coming with full joy!

### **Her unfulfilled Desire**

Since a long time, I have an unfulfilled desire to spend some years in the forest. It is my good fortune that I have now the chance to satisfy that desire in the company of my Lord! I will not give ear, if you insist that I should not express my point of view is this great matter. Don't be angry with me that I disobey you. It is not just and proper for you to throw me aside here, as one throws the water in the cup after quaffing a mouthful. Believe my word! I shall not continue in Ayodhya even for a moment; take me with you"

With these words, Sita fell at Rama's feet and held them tight. "I have not the slightest sorrow that you were not crowned, I hold *you* dear, crowned or uncrowned. Wherever you are, that is the Empire for me. That is my Treasure. That is my Glory," she pleaded and prayed. Rama told her that forest life is fraught with fears and dangers. It is infested with wild animals and wilder men, demonic depredators and dacoits. One has to cross rivers, wade through thick thorny under growth. He said that she was not used to traverse places on foot and therefore, she will have to

undergo great exhaustion. He described various-other forms of fear and anxiety she will be encountering.

But, Sita was unmoved. She replied, "Lord! However wild the animals may be, however thick and terror-striking the forest may be, what harm can they cause, what injury can they inflict on me, when you are by my side? I know how to walk through the forests; it will be no trouble for me. I will be happier if you ask me to walk first, preparing the path for you to follow smoothly on. I shall pick and castaway stones, pebbles and thorns from the path, lessen your pain, making your journey easy

### **Her chance to Serve**

Allow me to follow you, so that I may render this service, and be happy. Here, in the palace of Ayodhya, and in the zenana, I could not get the chance to serve you. I felt so worried and miserable that all services for you were undertaken by attendants and aides. There will be no attendant, no aide, in the forest! So, I can be happy, doing all the ser. vices myself. That is my great good fortune! Make my life worthwhile. O Lord, give me that glorious chance!"

Sita prayed in a variety of ways, pleading for mercy and justice. Rama was moved to compassion. He said, Sita! Living in the forest is not as happy a state of things as you describe now. Think over it well. You will have to suffer greatly in the coming days." Rama expatiated on the horrors of jungles and the sufferings that one has inevitably to meet there. But, Sita stood firm. "Rama, I shall not interpose any obstacle in the observance of your vows. From your words, I infer that you are hiding something from me, some objection which you do not like to raise before me. Why have any secret hidden from me? I shall observe along with you the vows of personal austerity incumbent on a person on the Brahmachari path; I too shall live on tubers and fruits. I too shall discard the use of scents, we shall only inhale the fragrance of forest flowers. You are a scion of the Ikshvaku line, which has saved millions from danger and disaster! Can you not guard me against them? Are you so weak of hand? I can never believe that you are so weak. I won't give you any trouble; through me, you will not have any worry,

### **She cannot but**

Lord! I cannot but follow you. I will sleep at your feet; that will give me the fullest bliss. Rama! I know none except you. I cannot exist alive for a moment apart from you. Well. If you hold fast to your resolution and proceed, leaving me at Ayodhya, Sita would have drawn her last breath, before you reach the forest. This is the real Truth." Sita's eyes shed streams of tears as she spoke these words:

Then, Rama tried to pacify her. He said, "O Sita, you are highly virtuous, the embodiment of chastity. You are a very righteous adherent of Dharma. It is best for you to stick to your righteous qualities maintaining them at this place. You cannot act as your will dictates; you have no freedom to behave as you desire. Your Dharma is to act in accordance with my words. Therefore, give up this idea of yours. I am saving this for your own good.

Guarding you will be a burden, certainly. Streams rolling down from high mountain peaks, wild beasts that dwell in the caves, lions, tigers etc roaming without let or hindrance amidst the hills

and valleys—these have to be oven, come. Flooded rivers will have to be forded. We may have to leap down from huge boulders and rocks.

Considering all these difficulties, I had to tell you these words, in such emphatic terms. You have to wear matted hair and wear clothes made out of the bark of trees. We men have to go to some river or lake for the evening rites of worship; at that time, who will watch over you against any calamity that might happen? Whatever may be the crisis, we cannot give up those rites; so, you may have to be alone for some time daily. You know how strict that rule is. We cannot say what will happen when. "

### **She has no Fear**

Rama tried to picture before Sita the fearful scenes of forest life, but, Sita was not affected in the least. She said, "Rama! Why tell me these things, as if I am a simpleton of some backward village, or unaware of the teachings of the Sastras, or an ignorant stupid woman. I am well aware of your skill and prowess. Nothing is impossible for you on earth, nay, on all the fourteen worlds! And, when you, this you, are with me, what fear can disturb me? Well, if a wild beast attacks me and I fall prey to it, I will be happy that I am able to die in your presence, rather than anywhere else! I shall die happily there. I shall never accept to live, if I have to spend it without you.

### **She insists on Rights**

You said that I have no freedom to do as I wish. Did you say so, with the full consciousness of its meaning? Or, was it just a remark to test me? I am not able to reason out. I am half of you; it is my right to name myself as your half. You too have the same right. And, that is the truth. You are not fully free, nor am I. I have as much right over you, as you have over me. But, I do not now argue for my right or claims. I am yearning for being near you, being ever in your presence. My words arise from that craving."

Listening to these pleadings of Sita embodying her hard determination, Rama continued, "Sita! You are entangling yourself in the complexities of rights and claims! When I proceed to the forest, the aged parents will be wailing and weeping for me. At that time, you can realise their agony and console and comfort them, with gentle assurances. That is your duty. You must conduct yourself according to the needs of each occasion. Be with them; serve them; that is the way to please me, and give me Ananda." Rama spoke as if his decision was final, and in a tone of command.

### **Advice to Kausalya Quoted**

But, Sita responded only with a smile. "When the son born of these very parents plunges them in deep grief and goes away, clinging with a bear's grasp to his adamant determination, and, when the very son whom they love so much gives everything up and goes into the forest, what responsibility has the daughter-in-law, who has entered this household from her own, a stranger in the family, what responsibility has she to console and comfort those deserted by the son? Ponder over this for a while!" she said.

"You yourself insisted on your mother remaining here itself, serving her husband, though she wept out her eyes in bitter tear; and prayed that she be allowed to follow you to the forest! You

told her that her duty of serving her husband is pre-dominant. You declared that it will bring untold disgrace to the Ikshvaku dynasty if she abandons the lord she is wedded to, out of affection for the sake she has borne and brought forth onto the woman. Such moral rules of inestimable value, you dilated upon, before her. But, as soon as you come near me, you have reversed that advice and started telling me that my predominant duty is—service to the parents-in-law, and not service to the husband! Think it over which is your correct advice?

For the wife, the husband is the God—this was not laid down for Kausalya alone; it is the guide and goal for womankind, all over the world, without exception. You have evidently, forgotten this truth, for it suits your present wish. You are unable to explain how the moral rule you quoted before Kausalya do not apply to me.

However long you argue, whatever you may assert, I shall not leave off treading along the steps your feet take. You may kill me, for transgressing your order, but, I assert I can never be without you.

### **A childhood Incident**

Rama Chandra! No sooner did you speak of the exile in the forest you are entering upon, I had such an upsurge of joy, remembering an incident that took place in my childhood. You cannot understand the extent of that joy! My mother, with me seated in her lap, was immersed in anxiety about the husband, destiny had in store for me whether he will be morally upright, endowed with excellent attributes etc. (She is eminently chaste and virtuous). She was stroking my hair, and lost in her thoughts. The maid put in her appearance just then and announced that a certain woman ascetic desired audience with her. She lifted me and gently placed me on the floor, and went forward to meet her.

I too walked with her. Mother fell at her feet and directed me to do likewise. I bore that order on my head and did as she directed. The woman eyed me closely from head to foot, and said, "Mother! Your child will spend years with her husband in the forest." At this, my mother replied, with a laugh. "No marriage yet! And, you talk of her spending life in the forest!" She did not keep quiet, however. She explained, "After marriage! She will have to live in the forest with her husband, for some time!" And, then, she went her way! Ever since that day, I am excitedly looking forward to the time, when I can go and live in the forest with my Lord! Make me happy, take me with you."

### **A few Complications**

Sita fell at his feet and sobbed out her prayer. Rama was moved to pity. He raised her gently and said, "Sita! To whom else am I to confide the secret spring of my decision? Listen! You are young; in the forest there are many hermitages full of ascetics, hermits and sages. I will have to go to them in order to be of service to them and to offer my reverence to them. Kings and princes too may be present there (since they come to hunt) and honour them and be blessed by them. Their eye may fall on you; and, consequential complications and conflicts may arise. And, since I will be wearing the apparel of an ascetic, it may not be proper to enter into bellicose confrontation with them. At least for this reason you will have to remain at Ayodhya.

Sita had her own reasons to deny this request. She said, "Rama! It is not just that you should deceive me, spinning such fictions, as if you are of common stock! When you are by my side, can even the Ruler of the Gods cast his eye on me? If he does, will he not be reduced to ashes that very moment? No. For this reason, you cannot leave me here, you cannot escape your duty and responsibility on this score! Let me also tell you something: if you are not with me, what will be my fate? I will have to be alone, at Ayodhya; and perhaps incidents of the nature you just now dilated upon can happen here! Or else, I may, suffer inner agony, not being able to bear the conjugal happiness of others! So, do not leave me alone, take me with you, and let your renown and mine, spread for all time over the entire world.

### **Moon and Moonlight**

Let me add: You are Rama Chandra, Rama the Moon! I am Sita, which also means, cool, the cool Moonlight! How can the moon be in the forest and its cool moonlight stay away at Ayodhya? Where the moon is, there its cool light must be! Hence, this separation can never be. The two shall ever be together, never apart! If the two happen to part, it is but the evidence of the approach of some unnatural catastrophe, a world-shaking tragedy. Or, it may come about, for the sake of an epoch-making endeavour to destroy the wicked and save the good from extinction! Since no such crisis is evident now, our separation is impossible. It cannot happen."

Sita, the Mother, spoke these words in a resolute voice, as if she will brook no objection.

**(To be continued)**

## **Taste the Sweetness of the Song**

This letter is prompted by Bhagavan's Will; it relates His Glory. I am a House Surgeon, working in the Pediatrics Section of the Hospital. A child was brought to the Section, 8 days ago, with Diphtheria associated with Myocarditis. It had severe respiratory distress, and so, an emergency opening of a hole in the trachea had to be done.

This evening, the child relapsed into severe distress. The mucus had to be immediately sucked off, since it was obstructing the system, Unfortunately, the sucker in the Section was out of order. So, I and my friend in the ENT Section, took the child to the Operation Theatre, where a Sucker was available.

Everything went on well, for some time. But, quite suddenly, the child stopped respiring! There was arrest of the heart also.

We rushed for the life-saving adrenaline. Most unfortunate of all, the syringe could not be spotted at once! Not that it was not there, but, search as we might, we could not lay hands on it! And, unluckily, the Sucker went out of action!

The child was completely flaccid, showing no sign of life.

In dismay, thinking of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai, I took a little Vibhuti, which I always carry with me, and started to apply it on the chest of the baby. The moment I applied the Vibhuti, something happened, that brought life into ME! Yes. The child took a big gasp! My friend was most pleasantly and gratefully surprised. Soon, the heart was active. The child opened its eyes. I could not but gasp in wonder. Tears flowed from our eyes, for, Bhagavan, the Mother of all, had saved the child and given consolation and joy to the parents.

I must mention here certain events that happened, earlier, when I was preparing to go to the Hospital. I had put on the shirt that I wore in the morning sessions. I was already late for my work and so, I was in a hurry. But, just when I crossed the threshold, I felt I should take that shirt off (!) and put on another that was on the hanger! The desire was overpowering. I didn't know why. "Funny" I thought within myself, and put it on, and rushed to the Hospital.

Trivial things can shift the balance in favour of life, when death calls aloud. The shirt on the hanger which I was compelled to put on had the Vibhuti from Bhagavan in it! I realise now that every incident in one's life, however insignificant or 'accidental' has deep meaning.

Lord Hari has said in the "Sandeha Nivarini " "Can even a leaf move without My Will?"

Next time, I sing Paramam Pavithram Baba Vibhutim, (the Song which describes the soul-liberating, wonder-working, miraculously produced Vibhuti), Paramartha Ishtartha Moksha Pradatham, it will not be mere song, mere repeating of the lines. I will dwell delightedly, on the Pavitram, Vichitram, until I taste again the Glory of this Miracle I witnessed in the Operation Theatre today.

—M. Jagesh Kamath, M. B. B. S., Mangalore 11-12-72

## These for the Cat

The 108 devotees from Assam, who had come to Prasanthi Nilayam for the Birthday Festival, were asked by Bhagavan to assemble in the Prayer Hall, at 8 P. M. on the 24th, so that He might meet them all together. He spoke to them for over an hour on Sadhana and spiritual progress. He gave them His Blessings for a happy return journey, and spoke affectionately of the hardships they underwent on their way by train, linguistic disturbances in Assam and Bengal whose brunt they bore, the Cyclone in Orissa, Bandhs and Strikes in Andhra, downpour of rain due to the Depression in the Bay near Madras etc.

Then, He moved along the lines of men and women, sitting face to face, distributing the precious Vibhuti Prasad to each one.

He gave a handful of packets to one woman and passed on. A few steps later, he halted; and returned, to where that woman sat. Picking a couple of packets from the basket He had in His left hand, He gave them again to her saying, "Ye billy ke liye"! She looked up, puzzled! Bhagavan repeated, "Ye billy ke liye" "These, for the cat"!

She was thrilled; she remembered her pet cat, at her home, in far off Gauhati.

O, How Baba loved it! Yes! Eight months ago, Baba had given proof of that. That night, she had some friends for dinner; her sister, the matron of the Government Hospital was there too. The cat was in the corner of the kitchen eyeing what was going on; suddenly, it snatched a piece of fish and ran. She was enraged; she took a stick and gave it a nice good beating.

But, even while she was doing it, all the pictures of Baba on the walls of her home, in the shrine, and on the table began, swaying, swinging and even falling! Two fell on the table from the wall but were luckily unhurt! Her sister and the friends ran out of the house suspecting an earthquake! The woman was plunged in fear.

Recovering gradually, she suspected that it must be Baba's way of teaching her the Lesson of Love. She took the crouching, shivering, cat in her lap; while stroking its back, she found that its fur was full of fragrant Vibhuti which Baba had already showered to alleviate its pain! Tears of repentance filled her eyes; thinking of Baba's presence in the House filled her with joy.

That was the Cat for which Baba gave her the two packets, at Prasanthi Nilayam, eight months later.

O! The Infinite Compassion of Baba, O The Universal Presence that is He!

—Gogoi

## **To the Pundits**

### Manifestations of the Atma, Blessings

The wise are those who know the Atma. They distinguish between That and This, Thath and Thwam, the Absolute and the Relative, the Universal and the Particular that is falsely conceived as separate from the Universal. When he experiences the Truth that he is the Absolute Atma, man is endowed with supreme Bliss. It is sheer waste if one has no such experience but has pored over mountains of spiritual texts or earned fame as a deep scholar.

Man alone has the ability to understand the phenomenal world around him. He can grasp the ways and waywardness of the world; he can delve into its evolution and involution, its contraction and expansion. Therefore, he has to give it only a relative value, and follow as his only goal, the search for the Atma and the attainment of the Atma. And, the search has to be through continuous, consistent Sadhana.

Boundless spiritual potential is encased in every being. In man it expresses itself as Jnana, Supreme Wisdom.

Man is neither a bit of clod, nor a bundle of flesh! He has in him the inexhaustible spring of Divine Bliss, Ananda. A person is not just the body, with its limbs and other mechanisms. The Atma is the Person. The soul is the Personality. And, the Person realises Ananda only when

the Atma is cognised. This achievement cannot be won through riches; or authority of office, or scholarship or status, fame or force. Discarding this perennial Ananda, man imagines the sensual pleasures to be Ananda, and he sends his life in fruitless pursuits. He wanders about in the thorny jungles and desert sands. He humiliates himself and crawls and cringes for favours from all and sundry. This is the consequence of the ignorance that blinds.

Man is equipped with a return ticket, when he takes birth! Holding it in his grasp, he earns and spends, rises and falls, sings dances, weeps and wails, forgetting the end of the journey. But, though he forgets, the wagon of life moves towards the cemetery, which is its terminus. It brings no glory to man if he is tied helplessly to the wheel of birth and death. His glory and greatness consist in disentangling himself from that revolving wheel.

Before Death nips life and thrusts him on to another birth, he must by means of Sadhana learn the mystery of the Atma. When Death comes, one must be glad to meet it, since He comes for the last time, and there will be no more birth for one. Man weeps when he is born; he should not weep when he dies. He must die triumphant over death. Otherwise, he lives only to consume tons of food, as a burden upon the earth, You seek to escape pain and grief; but, they are inescapable.

Life is as a dream. In the dream, you experience joy and grief; but, when you realise that both joy and grief are unreal, when you awake into the consciousness of the Atma, you will no more have the thrill of joy or the despondency of pain. You will not have any longer fear or anxiety, fear of death or anxiety about the future.

The mind is the architect of your progress or decline. For the fool, the Mind is a formidable dinosaur! For the intelligent, the mind is an angelic ally. The tainted mind is torn by fear; the pure elevated mind is placid and unruffled, like that of the homeless sage. The Vedas teach how to purify the mind and render it a useful tool.

Nothing is uncaused in the Universe. Every being, object, incident has been caused by the primal Cause, and its direction or guidance. The Sastras yearn for the discovery of that unseen Principle. Through sheer ignorance, and perversity, the Sastras have been ignored and set aside, and man is misleading himself into the belief that his fancies are true, just and beneficial. Man has thrown his "humanness " into the crater of cruelty, forgetting his best interests under the influence of hatred envy, conceit and power. He has cast aside the expanse of his culture. As a result, peace has flown from the heart of man, from the fold of society and the boundaries of nations.

The Pundits and Scholars who have gathered today, under the auspices of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha must promote and set themselves up as pioneers and examples for the task of making people aware of, the greatness of Sanathana Dharma, and of the Vedas and Sastras in which it is enshrined.

They must teach the people the Principle of the Atma, and themselves shine as inspirers through their own practice of what they teach. Immersed in Sath-Chith-Ananda themselves, they

must communicate that joy and that wisdom to others. Plant in every heart the seed of Truth; I bless that you succeed in leading men into that Bliss of Fullness and Fulfillment.

—**Bhagavan's Divine Message, Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Siddapur 3/12/72**

## **Bhajan as Sadhana**

The Scriptures lay down Bhajan, Namasmaran and Sankirtan as the Sadhanas of this Age, Bhajan is the process of singing your prayers to God, praising His Glory and Compassion, and pleading that He may fill you with His Grace. Dr. Thomas Hislop has as a result of many years of research declared that prayer has a highly curative effect on the body and mind of man. That is the result of constant Bhajan and Recital of the Name. Every Unit of the Organisation is enjoined to arrange for Nagarasankirtan in the early hours of the day, Bhajan every evening and morning, for this very reason.

But, Bhajan should not be gone through, as a painful necessity; it has to be a thrilling experience, which must leave the participants full of pure energy and elevated enthusiasm. But, this does not happen now. Either it is too mechanical or it is a medium for some people to exhibit their talents. The Bhajans are sung to parade one's compositions and these are sung during the group sittings, as if they are rehearsed there. The others are not able to follow; so they allow their minds to wander. Sing familiar Bhajans, so that all can share in the Ananda. Also, pay attention to the tune, the meaning, the variety, the voice, the raga, the taal and other fine points of the Bhajans. If your voice is not pleasant or sweet, keep quiet; that is the best service you can do. Do not cause discontent discord and disharmony, insisting on singing, because you are an office-bearer, or something! The Bhajans must be sweet to the ear, arousing pictures of the glory and grandeur of Godhead, in the mind of the singers and listeners; they must refer to various Names and Forms of God, so that the Bhajan Sessions might fill every one with ecstasy. Bhajan is a Sadhana for all who share it; that is why it is prescribed, for every Unit.

Youth is often found fault with by elders today, that they have lost reverence, humility, and piety that they ridicule temples, religious services and all signs of adoration or devotion directed towards God. They do not learn the art of meditation or sense-control.

But cater to the most trivial whims, without regard to their harmful effects. All this is due to the hypocrisy of the elders. Those who teach them or preach to them about the rules of morality and religion are patently breaking those very rules. They lead such atrociously wrong lives; but, they admonish, advise, and harangue, without the slightest twinge of conscience. This is easily discovered by the sharp-eyed young men and women. How then can they revere the parent or teacher, the elder or leader, the writer or the speaker, who sets about the task of 'educating' the rising generation? Let advice come out of personal experience; otherwise, keep mum! The very fact that you are happy and contented, while having faith in God, will induce others to develop faith; that is best method of preaching.

**—Baba discourse (15-1-72)**

*Sathyam is the Feet, Sivam the Trunk, Sundaram is the Head; On Truth, we stand; the Right, we act; the Beautiful, we think. For, in Truth are we born, for the Right we live; in the Beautiful, we melt, and merge.*

## Independence Day Concert

In Ghana, West Africa, the people and their Government celebrate Independence from the British, each year on March 6th. Last March, my Company decided to do a Cinerama Film of that celebration; and in addition, to stage a Marathon Dusk-to-Dawn Concert, in their mammoth Black Star Square; in Accra.

We flew by chartered Jet, with over 100 of the top American Gospel-and-Soul Artistes to present the formidable Musical Concert, in front of 100,000 appreciative Africans. The whole event was to be filmed by 8 First Rate American, British and African Cameramen.

The reason we picked this date was because all the best advice said, that it never rained in March, in that area.

Artistes, cameramen, soundmen equipment men, and production staff reached Accra, a week in advance of the Celebration. An enormous stage, 50 feet broad and 80 feet long was constructed in front of the 20-storey-high Arch in Black Star Square.

We worked, however, in an atmosphere of threat! For, Rain Clouds gathered overhead, all the six days, previous to the Event! Each day, the unfriendly sky became darker and even more foreboding! 'The best advice' we had got was from a source, that did not know of a new situation, that had complicated the climate of the area, namely, a huge reservoir that had come into existence 60 miles to the north of Accra, as a result of a huge dam, built by the Russians in recent years! Rain, we found, was almost a certainty, and our Concert stood in great danger of being spoilt.

March 5th the evening before the Concert! The sky was glowering dark and dismal. We were in the midst of testing the tons of equipment. We had brought from America 12 large loudspeakers, and mounted them on specially built towers. We had 15 large amplifiers and speakers, an Electric Organ, with twin speakers, and dozens of microphones.

All of a sudden, the wind changed direction, and a 100-mile per hour Typhoon hit the stage, scattering the equipment, pell-mell.

My wife (Janet) and I were atop the 26 storey Arch; we saw the wind blow one of the huge loud speakers off the top platform, and on to the lower platform! On the stage, the crew were heroically fighting the wind (and the rain which fell furiously) trying to secure the equipment, as sections of the bleachers were being blown out to sea.

Baba alone could save us, I knew. And, Janet felt the same. We began to chant the Name, and we prayed to Baba to save the crew from harm and to keep the equipment undamaged, so that the grand plan of ours may not come to ignominious grief.

An hour later, as abruptly as it had begun, the typhoon subsided and, we all went back to the Hotel, not knowing yet how badly the precious equipment had been damaged by the merciless onslaught of wind and water.

March 6th the morning air was sparkling and clear. The Sun shone in full splendour, for the first time, since we had come to Ghana. That was a good augury, we thought, and thanked Baba for it.

We poured the rain water out of the loudspeakers, and gathered together the many scattered pieces of equipment. And, we tested them, nervously, since the slightest injury would dampen our expectations.

Bhagavan's Grace! They worked perfectly! The concert was a big success! The Full Moon in the perfectly clear sky was visible to all the 100,000 happy music lovers; they were all delighted, as delighted as we wanted them to be, on the Anniversary of the Day their Motherland won Independence.

—Richard Bock, Los Angeles, California

## **Our Harvest Festival**

In past years, Swami has told us of the two aspects of this Day, of the Summer Equinox. It is the day when the harvest is in, when the family is enjoining the food stored in the granary, and the children suck the sweet sugar cane, and the farm animals are happy, with their well-earned rest. The second and more significant aspect of this Day is the change it should represent in our inner life.

As the Sun Himself turns Northward in His Nobler Path, from this Day onward for the next six months, man also should devote himself to his Higher Path, the God-ward Path. We should put aside our failures and shortcomings of the past' and re-dedicate ourselves to God, as the highest Reality, as the only Reality.

Swami says that those persons who are in His Presence this Day are particularly favoured. This must be so because, to us, Swami is the Sun and the Moon and the Stars. He is the fathomless depth of Space and He is the Infinity of our inner Sky.

He is God Almighty, ever present, all knowing, and all-powerful. He is the spiritual Pathway and He is the Goal. To be in such a Presence, is indeed to be favoured.

To have God as our Goal is the only permanent Reality in this transitory and impermanent world. Of course, one must earn a living and care for his family, and the institutions of society must go on. But, these are secondary tasks to which we can give attention only so long as they do not divert out attention from God.

It is to God that we must give our youth and our manhood, our energy and our intelligence, our fire and our genius.

Swami clearly tells us how we may achieve Him as our Pathway and merge with Him as our Goal ...First: God is Love, and it is only Love that can merge with Love. It is only in Love that we can merge with Him. We are so weak in our love to other human beings, and so prone to quarrel instead. But, at least our love can grow, and, be purified, through, Love of God. So, our first task in achieving our Goal, is to love God with all our heart. Love has no season; and, no reason. So, it need not wait.

Our second task is, not to fall victims to the illusion of duality, For the Truth is: There is nothing in our world, except God. Everything we see, is He only.

The `dwarf' on the shelf and the beautiful child in the cradle: each is He. The tree is He. The flower is He. The sky is He. This microphone is He and the wood in that door is He only He.

Therefore, we should ignore the troublesome personalities of our friends and enemies which are guilty of creating the `dual illusion'; for, those differences are only temporary, whereas the abiding Reality is Divinity. Each of these persons is He only.

Our third task in ending the separateness between ourselves and God is: to realise that the `separateness' is unreal, and apparent only.

If we enquire as to who we are, who is this separate `entity', who is `I', we find that the best we can say is "I am I" But, there is only One, and therefore, "I" is He.

Then, who is Swami? Swami is He and therefore, "I". He is our very Self, stepping forth from His seat in the Heart, into the apparent outer world, whereby we may have the joy of His Beauty and His Majesty, so that we may worship Him, hear His words of Wisdom, and love Him.

And now, our Harvest Festival has come! We can now thoroughly enjoy the Honey words of Swami, as He delivers His Divine Discourse.

—John Hislop, 15-1-1972

## **Publication Of Sri Sathya Sai Literature**

### **A. BOOKS**

1. Books, relating to Sri Sathya Literature will hereafter be published in all languages only for, by and on behalf of the Sri Sathya Sai Educational Foundation.

2. The copyright for all such books rests with the Foundation. Those who wish to translate the books, publish extracts from them, or, serialise them, in original or in translation, have to receive permission in every case, for all purposes from the Sri Sathya Sai Educational Foundation through the President of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation for the State concerned.

3. The President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in each State shall be assisted by an Advisory Body, selected by him, in this task. In Consultation with the Advisory Body, he will recommend to the Foundation, books which need to be published in the language of his State. He will also arrange for the printing; and the sale of books in the language of the State, through the District Presidents and the Seva, Samithis, in the State.

4. All correspondence, regarding publication and related matters shall be addressed to the 'Sri Sathya Sai Education Foundation (Publication) Brindavan; KADUGODI, P. O., Bangalore Dt, Mysore State.' Copies of all letters should be sent to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Founder President, Prasanthi Nilayam, Anantapur Dt, Andhra Pradesh.

## **B. JOURNALS**

1. The Telugu and English Versions of the "Sanathana Sarathi" will be published by the Sri Sathya Sai Trust.

2. The Sathya Sai Education Foundation will arrange for the publication of the "SANATHANA SARATHI," in other Indian languages, also.

3. Periodicals being published by Samithis and Individuals will cease publication, as soon as their current subscription year ends.

4. "Sanathana Sarathi" will be published, in all Indian languages, (except Telugu) by the Presidents of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in each State. The State President will take the help of an Advisory Body, selected by him, for choosing the Editor, and other matters. The "Sanathana Sarathi" in other Indian languages will consist of translations from the Sanathana Sarathi (English or Telugu). It may also contain news and notes on the activities of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis in the State, as well as original articles written in the language of the State.

### **'Bala Vikas' 'Seva Dal'**

These magazines will be published under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Trust, from Bombay; with English and Hindi articles. The Sanathana Sarathi in all languages will have some pages reserved for these two activities, of the Organisation.

### **Bulletins:**

Bulletins giving local news and notices of activities only, can be published by the District President of the Organisation for the City, or the Chairman of the Samithi, under the general guidance of the President for the State.

### **Pictures:**

Pictures and Photographs of Bhagavan kept for sale by the units of the Organisation should be approved by the State President, both for quality and price.

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### **The Brothers at Girivraja**

Moved by his attitude of respect towards his elders, Bharata made preparations to leave Ayodhya, with his wife; no objections were raised, or arguments presented against. Bharata was endowed with the highest intellect; besides, he was master of himself, his senses and desires. Bharata and Satrughna, with their wives, journeyed quite happily, and reached the city of Girivraja. The grandfather was longing to see him and fondle him. He rushed forward to caress him and Satrughna; he seated them near him, and inquired about the health and happiness of people in Ayodhya. He asserted that they looked exhausted by the long hours of travel and insisted that they should rest; he led them to the residences allotted for them. From that moment, he treated them more affectionately than his own children and paid close attention to their smallest needs.

Though the grandfather cared for their comfort and joy, the brothers appeared to suffer from some secret discontent; for, they could not bear the separation from their aged father and Rama, who was the very breath of their existence. They conversed among themselves constantly, only about Dasaratha and Rama. Off and on, anxiety about the health and welfare of the father tormented them, in spite of themselves, and deprived them of peace of mind.

While their feelings in Girivraja were such, in Ayodhya, not a single moment passed, without Dasaratha pining for them. He felt life avoid without them. Many times he asked himself the question, 'Why did I send them from here? O, it would have been good, if I had not agreed to send them.'

The four sons were as four arms, four Dasaratha. Now he had been deprived of two. One day, Rama saw his father plunged in thought, at the separation from Bharata and Shatrughna; he approached his father and sitting near him spoke soft and sweet words, making him fresh and happy.

### **Rama—Beloved of the People**

Rama was supremely gentle. However harshly others talked, he used to reply soft and sweet. Though others might do him harm, he never remembered it against them: he was seeking only chances to do them good, and be of some service to them. Whenever he found time he used to discuss with aged monks, revered Brahmins and learned scholars about codes of good conduct and rules of morality. He analysed the mysteries of Vedantic thought in simple words, and like an ordinary enquirer, he posed problems before pundits for their elucidation. The sages and scholars who had mastered the science of Vedanta and philosophical enquiry were elated at the elaboration by Rama of the knotty points he himself raised; they praised in thousand different ways, his intelligence and depth of scholarship.

Rama spoke to his subject, sooner than they spoke to him; so ardent was his love towards them. He lovingly inquired about their welfare and was full of sympathy for them. So, the subjects too loved him as their thickest friend and dearest kinsman, and they revered him for his affectionate interest in them. Rama followed strictly various rules of living, dictated by tradition, whatever the inconvenience or discomfort. To whomsoever he spoke, he had a charming smile on his face, a merry twinkle in the eye, and the sweetness and sustenance of milk in his words. No one had noticed at any time the slightest trace in his face of anger, dislike, despair, or hate.

He was the embodiment of compassion, sympathy, and eagerness to rescue those who surrendered their wishes to his will. Undesirable habits to which royalty is an easy prey never dared approach him; they kept themselves away from him. He was not a victim of the evil habits of talkativeness or dalliance. In spite of this, if any one displayed before him, his cleverness in argument, he would never fail to foil him by cleverer counter argument, and put him in place. He never knew illness. He recognised the needs of the people and, even before they represented them to the ruler, he considered the best response that could be made, and remedied the grievance after taking the permission of Dasaratha and getting the ministers interested in the solution. Dasaratha too did not obstruct his wishes in any way; he put them into execution the very next moment after he came to know about them. Rama paid severe attention to even the smallest detail of administration and took precautions, that problems and complexities do not raise their heads again once they had been solved and set right.

Another special excellence was evident in Rama. He never revealed to others what he had resolved in his mind. Until it attained fruition no one could make out his will or wish. Another speciality: his anger or resentment, or his satisfaction would never be futile. He would not delay or be diverted or deceived.

Rama was shining in Ayodhya, with such supreme characteristics. Dasaratha delighted in observing his dear son, Rama, and the way he was winning the love and loyalty of his people. He heard from ministers, priests, and others the growing fame of Rama and was thrilled at their appreciation.

### **The Warning of Old Age**

One night, Dasaratha got thirsty and he desired to drink a little water; he did not like to waken the sleeping queens; so, he poured out for himself into a small cup, the water from a 'kooja' near the bed and while drinking it, he observed that his grasp was not firm, since the fingers were shaking, a little. He had no sleep after that. His mind sank into a variety of thoughts and plans. Finally, he decided that old age had crept into him, that when nervous debility had set in, he should no longer rule over the empire, that any attempt to govern the people without strength of limb and full awareness can only spell confusion and calamity for the country. He counted minutes thereafter, so that as soon as day dawned, he could communicate his resolve to his ministers. At last, night melted away and there was light!

Finishing his morning ablutions and completing his puja rites, he directed the chamberlains to call together the ministers, the leaders of the people and the priests for a special meeting at the Palace.

Bowing to the command of the Emperor, all whom he wanted gathered together very soon, and awaited him. Dasaratha fell at the feet of Vasishta and informed him of the happenings during the night and the stream of thought that they aroused in him. He said that he had decided to place the burden of imperial administration on Rama. He prayed that no objection be raised against his proposal. He wanted that all arrangements be made soon, for the realisation of his desire.

### **The Preceptor's Assent**

The Chief among the Ministers, Sumantha, announced this decision to the gathering; the ministers, courtiers, citizens, priests and scholars who were gathered there, acclaimed the news with one voice of joyful approbation, They cheered, 'Shubham! Shubham!' ('O most auspicious! Fortunate are we'). Their applause reached the heavens.

Vasishta rose from his seat, and said, "Emperor! You need not worry over this, is the least. Rama is in every way fit for this great role but we can well afford to wait a little and, celebrate it on a grand scale inviting all these whom we wish to be present. I suggest that we wait for a month or two, so that the celebration of the Coronation of Rama is done grandly as we would like to.

But, Dasaratha exclaimed, "Mahatma! Nothing is beyond your ken; you are omniscient. When the king loses strength of limb, he does not deserve to hold the reins of high office. It is a bad sign when a king, whom old age has debilitated, entertains the greed to continue on the throne. It may indicate avarice in the heart. Knowing all this, if I postpone it, I feel I would have failed in the duty I clearly envisage. So please pardon me; do not try to adjourn this very urgent ceremony. Please grant me permission to anoint Rama as the Yuvaraja (heir-apparent) within the next two or three days." Dasaratha pleaded thus, in great humility and with deep reverence

### **Why so Sudden?**

Vasishta lifted Dasaratha up and conferred blessings on him. He said, "O king! The wedding of Rama too happened on the spur of the moment! It came down from heaven as sudden Grace. So the people of the kingdom, your subjects, had no chance to share in the joy of that momentous occasion. If the Coronation too is resolved upon and celebrated so suddenly, it would pain not only the rulers of many parts of this realm, but, even more, it will be a source of great, sorrow for the brothers, Bharata and Shatrughna! And Janaka who became your kinsman and friend just a short while ago, might not be able to attend! I suggest, therefore, that you may well ponder over these considerations before settling the date."

The Chief among the Ministers then rose and said, "May the revered family Preceptor pardon me! The decision of the Emperor has the appreciation and approbation of every one. Rama Chandra is, as the name indicates, as the Moon, which repels the burning heat and restores coolness and comfort to all. He removes the burning, caused by hate, malice, greed and envy, There should not be any delay in crowning him as Yuvaraja, for whatever reason. Please issue necessary orders in this behalf, O Emperor! I am praying for this, on behalf of the entire population of this empire."

When the Emperor and the Chief among the Ministers pleaded together like this, Vasishta could not hold on to his attitude any longer. He agreed and said that it was necessary to know what the people themselves thought about it.

### **What do the People Say?**

At this, Dasaratha stood up and with one sweep of his eye, he looked at the ministers, leading citizens, pundits and priests, as well as other members of the vast assembly. The assembly was acclaiming the auspicious proposal in a voice of thunder! In the midst of that excitement, one citizen, who belonged to a very important group, rose and acclaimed, "Maharaja! The mighty emperors of your line fostered us, the subjects of this empire, as if we were their own children. This Kosala realm attained prosperity and peace through the care and affection of Ikshvaku. Your eldest son Rama, is rich in virtue, highly devoted to the ways of righteousness, as heroic as the Chief of Gods, and more than all he has the ability to rule over the three worlds.

It is indeed our good fortune that you entertain the idea of crowning him as Yuvaraja. This is our good fortune; this is an indisputable fact of which no one can have any doubt.

When the Citizen spoke thus, on behalf of all the subjects of the realm, Dasaratha rose from his seat, and addressed the gathering, "Members of this Assembly! Following the path laid down by my forbears, I have all these years ruled over this empire and guarded its welfare and prosperity to the best of my abilities, with a sincere desire to promote the good of the entire world. All the years of my life I have spent under the shade of this White Umbrella that is over my throne I am now an old man. I have realised that the vigor and vitality of these limbs have declined. This dilapidated body has to be given a little rest.

I have decided on this and come to this conclusion. It is not a common task, not an insignificant mission, to rule over a kingdom, for, it is a dedication of oneself to Dharma or Righteousness. Dharma can be maintained unbroken through the process of government, only by a person engaged in constant Sadhana and who is endowed with rigorous, control of the senses. I have borne this burden so long that I am exhausted with the effort.

If all of you approve and appreciate this my plan, I shall tell you all about it. This is what I have decided to do. I shall never act against your desires and preferences.

There is no pressure on you; do not fear that I am forcing my wishes on you, or that this is a royal command, which you have per. force to obey. I leave you to your own free will and judgement. In case, some other arrangement strikes you as more beneficial, you are at perfect liberty to present it before us for candid consideration. There can be no objection to its presentation before this Assembly. Therefore, confer among yourselves and inform me by nightfall, what you have agreed upon."

### **Their Joyous Approval**

Even before Dasaratha concluded his sentence, the assembly became restive and excited, as a flock of peacocks under a dark cloud-ridden sky that promises copious thundershowers! They shouted their assent, their gratitude, their joy, in unmistakable terms. "You desire just what is our own desire" "We do not want any other gift, give us this gift" "O this is indeed good fortune" "O

Good Luck!" "Yuvaraj Rama Chandrajiki Jai" "Jai Dasaratharam." The acclamation rent the firmament. Listening to the popular acclaim, Dasaratha was tossed between joy and apprehension; he stood petrified by this spontaneous outburst of loyalty and affection. Recovering composure after some time, Dasaratha gazed upon the assembly and started speaking thus, "Members of this Assembly! No task is more important to me than acceding to your wishes. I shall, without fail, crown Rama as the Yuvaraja. But, I have some little apprehension in me. I want to explain it to you and receive from you consolation on that point. I desire that you should tell me the correct position and give me the satisfaction I crave.

### **Dasaratha's Doubt**

The fact is; while I was about to lay before you the proposal to crown Rama as Yuvaraja. Even before I spoke about it in so many words, you proclaimed that I must crown him without fail and that he had unbounded capabilities to rule over this realm efficiently and well. Looking at this in the face, it is obvious that you are a little dissatisfied with my rule, or that some of my laws were against your interests or inclinations. Or, did I exhibit any tendency opposed to Dharma? Are you yearning for the coronation of Rama as Yuvaraja, because you are doubtful of the prospect of my governing you for your good? Such doubts are tormenting me. So, I invite you to point out my faults or the errors I have committed, fearlessly and fully, There can be no objection to; this frank recital."

### **The Doubt melts Away**

At this, one of the popular leaders rose and replied, "The capacity and intelligence of Rama art beyond description. And, you, O king, are equal to the God of gods; you are like Sankara, with the same Divine compassion and readiness to confer whatever is asked on behalf of the subjects. You are Vishnu in your ability to foster us. We must be awfully vile and wicked, if we ever cast aspersions on your rule. Those who do so are atrocious sinners.

You have arrived at this resolve, since you are eager to do us good, and you are anxious to make us happy. We obey unquestioningly your command."

**(To be continued)**

*From the one joyti, you can light millions of joytis; its brightness will not suffer. When the full is deducted from the full, the full, as the Upanishad declares, remains full! It is not diminished, at all! This is how God is described in the context of the Universe, in the Upanishads.*

**—Baba**

## **Society and You**

## **You and They**

Man is a social being; he is born into a group that is knit by mutual help, cooperation and dependence. He is urged on or held back, by social pressures. Society hands over to him the know-how it has accumulated, the skills, the ways of living, the nature and characteristics of the Goal of birth and death. It trains him and shapes his opinions and attitudes and habits.

Society is not just a haphazard group of individuals, which provides sensual pleasure or security. It should not be conceived in that light. Its purpose is much nobler. It is not a device for promoting his pursuit of power prestige or possessions. Man shares with the bird and the beast the thirst for pleasure, authority, food and security. But, man is endowed with language, intelligence discrimination the moral sense, the means of transmitting knowledge earned once, to subsequent generations. He is able to realise that the security and stability and progress of society result in his own progress. He cannot thrive in isolation; he cannot start educating himself abinitio. This is the basis of the Vedic prayer that has echoed from millions of thousands of years in this land, Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu, "May all the worlds be happy." Man has to promote his best the happiness of others, so that he may be happy. You are all limbs of the Viratpurusha, Universal Corpus.

## **Act well your Role**

And, what is the best, you can contribute? Each of you has a particular duty, a definite task, a role, however big or small, which you cannot neglect. For, it has to be done for the well-being of society. Do that duty, carry on that task, play that role, as best as you can; you earn the approval of the great Taskmaster, the Director of this Comic Drama. The body tingles with health and strength only when every limb, muscle, bone, nerve artery, and cell, does its allotted task, efficiently. So too, an institution, a factory, a society can be happy and healthy, only when each member, worker or individual does his duty and functions to the best of his capacity.

## **Ignorance and Emotion**

But, an insidious disease is now eating in to this health and happiness. Strikes, for everything, by everybody! From the cooks in the kitchen, to the custodians of law an order! The interests of the owner of a factory and the workers, the employers and the employees, of all limbs of the organisation are intertwined. They prosper or fail together. One cannot thrive without the other. They have to be of each other, for each other. Tangles and problems are bound to arise; but both parties have to understand these, in love and mutual helpfulness. It is best to solve difficulties and suspicions through love. The welfare of both parties should not be endangered either by ignorance or by emotion, or passion.

—Baba (Discourse) Bangalore 2-1-72

## **The Dower of Eternity**

The holy hour of sunset,  
tranquil as the centre of a deep stream,  
The stretch of golden sand—

the full Moon, the star sprinkled sky  
Serene, radiant, and cool;  
the violet hills to the east  
Darkening into massive silhouettes;  
among them the one  
Standing majestic, apart,  
like a lonely sentinel, calm, watchful,  
Looking like the dome-like hump  
of Nandi—Shiva's Divine Bearer;  
Silent witnesses, all these  
of a miracle that baffles men's narrow logic,  
Yet a miracle that is simple  
to those who have faith and love,  
The wizardry of God,  
releasing in a flood of divine abandon  
The energy creative; for, to Him,  
all is sport Creation itself.  
Its myriad facets, its mystery,  
its light and gloom, laughters and wails  
All, to Him are expressions,  
from moment to moment, of His will

He is the Artist Supreme,  
Maker, Transformer, whose fathomless logic  
Unlocks the wonders  
of His own Supreme Nature. It is He  
Whose accents, soft, from ages  
have proclaimed Love's sovereignty,  
Revealed Truth's triumph  
over mind's myriad illusions  
And the ceaseless sway of Right  
through creation's tortuous march  
From unformed matter  
to Divine human form  
From chaotic particles  
swirling through space  
To cosmic perfection,  
From stone to Soul—One who has shown  
The power of Peace, that wells  
up from the springs of being—  
The, deep serenity of soul  
where all conflicts cease  
A heavenly Bliss resides in the heart .....

Lo! He comes, robed in resplendent red,  
and sits before a mound of sand  
The brown halo of hair  
glimmers in the twilight  
His lips curled in enchanting smile,  
eyes sparkling  
With infinite Love. There He is transformed  
once again into the Divine Child.

Hush! The swelling harmony of song  
in praise of Gopal, fills the moonlit landscape  
His own Divine voice, sweet, compelling,  
leads the chorus;  
And then, silence envelops the small group; again  
sitting around Him,  
Under the Full Moon and the Star-dotted heaven  
on the brown river-bed .....

"Only a little Fun," says the Lord,  
yet a miracle to the hushed group  
He puts His hands into the sand.  
Lo! He pulls out a splendid work of art  
Golden figurines of Rama, Sita and Lakshman  
standing on golden pedestal  
And, kneeling at their feet is Hanuman  
with folded hands in pure samadhi of devotion

The wonders are not yet over;  
again the sacred hands search the sands  
A silver goblet now! Exquisitely carved!  
Full of nectar, Amritam!  
Whose unearthly perfume  
is wafted over the sands .....

He pours it into a silver cup;  
stands holding forth the golden figures  
Dazzling with indescribable splendour.  
He waves His hand  
And, lo! a silver spoon!  
Breathless are the watchers, the witnesses  
In the soft moonlight, of the Lord's  
abundant Love and infinite Power.  
He moves slowly among the group; into every mouth  
He pours the golden drops

Exquisite, inexpressibly sweet is the flavour .....  
They are drops of Immortality,  
not the immortality of the body  
But of Life within all;  
for man is the Child of Immortality  
The inheritor of Grace Divine,  
God-in-the-making, a Spark of the Lord.

Under the constellated heavens  
a precious hour  
Gained from life's unceasing stresses,  
a brief moment,  
Insulated from the ever—revolving wheel of Time—  
a moment, with the  
Dower of Eternity, with the bright moon  
shining above,  
The stars sparkling in the blue-violet sky  
We spent, blessed by His Grace  
On the eve of this New Year...

—H. Sunder Rao Brindavan 31-12-1971

*In N. E. India, we face the problem of bringing faith back to people who have been reciting God's name in several different tongues, but with the same yearning. Here there is the problem of the angry young men who want to break the shackles of rituals. Here are tribal people at the crossroads; those converted to Christianity are attempting a synthesis of the inner call, echoing through the corridors of time, and the Faith which they have adopted. Here live other tribals attempting to stick to traditional faiths against heavy odds. Here is one place where the Message of Baba becomes meaningful, and, so, successful.*

—Muktinath Bardoloi

## The Pattern

Bhagavan does not need our admiration or, adoration; He calls upon us to have him as the pattern of our lives. He passes through the different stages of life in order to become a model unto us, a model of every virtue and excellence and every conceivable perfection. He becomes all to all, to induce all to follow him; "My Life is My Message." He declares.

Our Saviour yearns for our Salvation. When we pray to Him and march on the spiritual path, whatever is beyond our strength, becomes feasible, nay, easy, for, His Name gives us the needed inspiration and instruction. We learn to restrain ourselves, when are led into wrong and persevere in the right path. He will be our guiding Light, when we are caught in harrowing doubts and

fierce struggles. Bangaru, Give Me your Heart—He asks. Yield it to Him. His Love, the sweetest and the most prolific of all the Loves we know, envelops and saves us thereafter, forever. He is our strength during temptations, our consolation in suffering, our prop in perils, our light in the darkness of despair, and the charm and incessant delight of our lives.

His ways and works are too mysterious, too enigmatic, and beyond our comprehension Whenever I contemplate the glory that is Baba the words of Christ, "At the end of the World, there will be one flock and one shepherd", come to me. Baba has come to gather all mankind under His Banner and lead them on to Truth, Righteousness, Love and Peace.

—Vivian Joseph, Nellikuppam

## Counsel for the Young

—John Hislop

Bhagavan! Honourable Instructors! Sathya Sai Students!

Discipline is a word that is used in a variety of situations. The student disciplines himself to study longer and harder. The Sanyasi establishes the discipline of standing neck-deep in icy water, to gain control over the senses. The mother spansks the child in order to discipline him. The employer discharges an undisciplined worker, and, then, there is military discipline where the soldier is trained to march into the jaws of Death at the command of an officer.

By studying these outside examples of discipline, it does not seem likely that we would gain an understanding of what discipline means to us personally, in our own lives. In fact, outside examples may even be distortions of real discipline!

To understand discipline, it will be necessary to go to the heart of the quality, the achievement, and from thence, try to plan out application in our lives. We have to find the central core of Discipline, its very essence, in order to understand it and profit by it, is will-power the essence? Is intelligence? Is education? Is understanding? Is strength of character? Is experience?

If one asks himself questions such as these, he is bound to discover that the essence, the very central core of discipline is Love. Love prompts, promotes, sustains and sweetens Discipline. To apply discipline to oneself, one must first love oneself.

When we reach an important conclusion by a subjective approach, it remains an Hypothesis, until we can observe it proven by experience. We should look for proof, in the lives of persons of great purity; because, there, we will find the fewest distortions. For example, if a person wanted to clear a doubt about the true meaning of Dharma, he could do so by studying the life of Lord Rama! Is it not so? Such an enquiry would clearly show that Discrimination is the essence of Dharma.

Today, we are tremendously fortunate to have a Life of Matchless Purity that is available for study, and that is being lived before our very eyes. Swamiji is the perfect example of discipline. His every action, His every movement, His every word is brilliant with the perfection of discipline. And, what is the essence of that Discipline? It is very clear that Love is the essence. Swamiji is Love. He is a Flame of Love. Every one can see that Love is the Heart of each moment of his Life. Love is the Heart of His Discipline.

What is the end of Discipline? Is the end, the ability to create wealth, position and security? Is the end of discipline, the acquisition of power with which to dominate over others or the world? Asking questions such as these, one is bound to discover that the end of discipline is Bliss. Discipline is the arrow; Bliss is the target. If one applies genuine discipline to another, it is an action of Love, with the target of Bliss for that individual.

If one applies discipline to oneself, it is an action of Love towards oneself, with the intention of bringing about the realization of Divine Bliss. Of course, one may be confused and believe that he is using discipline for some immediate gain or release; but, with just a little wisdom, it will be clear that the end of discipline is Bliss and Bliss only.

This subjectively determined Truth may quickly be tested and verified in Swamiji's life. In Him, Discipline and Bliss are One. And, when He applies Discipline to a devotee, can there be any doubt that His aim is Bliss for that devotee?

How may one use Discipline in his personal life? Each situation will vary; but, for the purpose of illustration, suppose one were to find oneself with the habit of harmful talk about other people. He will certainly not cut off the offending tongue, because discipline is an act of Love towards oneself. Nor will he kill his interest in other people, because Discipline has no temporary end, its only end is Bliss.

The devotee could pray to God for help. "O Lord! This habit of speaking ill is not me, it does not belong to me, it came uninvited to my mind; it is not welcome here; I will not give it shelter. O Lord! Let this habit depart and never return"! You may find that you lack the strength to apply and maintain discipline. That simply means that yogi must ask help from someone who has the necessary strength. And, who except God will bother to be your strength?

God will be your strength, if you ask Him. Swamiji is God and He is here right now. You can see Him, and you can ask Him to be your strength and help you with your discipline. He is so kind that, if you are really honest, He will at once agree. For He lives always in your heart, as your True Self.

So, we have found that the essence of Discipline is Love, and the end of Discipline is Bliss; and, we have also found that the strength for Discipline will come if we ask God for help, and let Him be our strength.

—From Address at the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women,  
Anantapur. Jan. 5, 1972

## Question & Answer

—J C Das

God said, "I have resolved,  
As I've oft declared  
To play the role again,  
Of Saviour on Earth."

The Angels queried, half in fear,  
Full of loving faith,

"In human form?" "Of course",  
Said God, "For, man alone  
Has become mad, monstral,  
Blind, butcher beast!"

The Angels queried, "Where?"  
They fain would follow Him.  
"On the land long soaked  
In Godly thoughts;  
The land that serves the lonely  
Lowly pilgrim throng  
The land which has learnt  
That birch and death  
Are winks of the eyelids of Time  
And, birthless-deathless is the Bliss  
That man can earn by Grace of God"  
The Angels shouted, all in ecstasy,  
"We know, we know!"  
The land of Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari;  
Shy and shining  
Chithravathee ....."  
God said, "Just the place!"

The Angels queried, "When?"  
'Twas a November night, twenty two,  
Of nineteen hundred twenty six, on earth.  
"With the rising sun, I appear there!"

God answered!

## **Baba's Atmosphere**

*Pure fresh air  
Is good to breathe.  
It's subtle way  
Is all I need.  
Still and clear,  
IT does compose  
A picture of beauty,  
A landscape of rose.*

—Anthony, England

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### **The Coronation**

"O Greatest among Brahmins! You have heard, haven't you the expression of the wishes of the people? Do not delay any further; collect the materials and ritual requirements for the Coronation Ceremony" declared Dasaratha, thrilled with the excitement of anticipation.

"Erect the enclosures and platform so that the scriptures prescribe for the component rites, the sacrificial sites and other sacred structures", he said.

He fell at the feet of the Family Preceptor, Vasishta, requesting him to supervise the process. "Master! All those who can make it will be present; let us not delay, awaiting those who have to come from afar. They can derive joy, later, when they hear that Rama has been crowned. Do not suggest, as a reason for postponement, the need to invite the Kekaya ruler or Janaka and to wait until they arrive. Do not extend the time. Grant permission to have the holy rite of Coronation performed as quick as possible" he pleaded, and, prayed with folded hands.

"Maharaja!" Vasishta responded, "I have got all things ready; we can get going, as soon as you want. I have directed that the hundred sacred pots, the tiger skin, the covered sacrificial enclosure with its adjuncts, the materials laid down in the scriptures for the rituals of worship, the herbs and flowers, are all made available by dawn tomorrow. Nor is this all. I have intimated the four wings of the armed forces to be in good trim; also, the royal elephant, Sathrunjaya, the one which has every auspicious mark that the Sastras insist upon, to be caparisoned most magnificently. The White Umbrella of splendour, the Royal Flag of the Imperial Dynasty will also be kept ready at the Palace. The auspicious moment too has been selected; it will be tomorrow."

When Vasishta announced this good news the populace was overcome with grateful ecstasy; they leaped in joy. The roads were scrupulously swept and cleaned; elaborate designs were painted on them and on the walls and buildings facing them; festoons were hung, arches and awnings and shades were erected over the roads; every citizen was busy and happy. The entire city was working fast and excitedly.

### **Preparations**

The Brahmins and the leading Citizens took leave of Dasaratha and emerged from the Palace, a veritable stream of exhilaration and excited conversation. The Ministers and Vasishta proceeded into the inner halls with the Emperor.

Dasaratha sent for Rama, and meeting him in the Durbar Hall, he explained to him in full, all the ceremonial formalities and rituals connected with the Coronation. He reminded him that he should be ready before sunrise, and described to him the preliminaries he had to observe.

Lakshmana heard the news; he ran to, wards Kausalya, the mother, to convey the Joyful tidings and communicate his supreme exultation. She could not contain her happiness; she just waited for Rama to appear before her.

There was very little time before them; so, the entire city was agog with excitement. The villages around for miles and even neighbouring states knew of it pretty soon, for the tidings spread quick and fast. And, no one waited for another; no sooner did he hear, than he hurried forward to the Capital City. The flow of humanity along all the roads leading to Ayodhya became an uncontrollable surge.

### **The Silence of Rama**

Ramachandra listened to what Dasaratha was detailing to him; but he did not reply, his feelings were beyond words. He could not express his mind; he stayed silent. So, Dasaratha accosted him thus: "Son! Why is it that I do not see in you any sign of joy, at the prospect of your being crowned tomorrow as Yuvaraja? Do you not like to become Yuvaraja? Or, is it a sign of anxiety or fear, that we are placing on your brad the burden of the State? Reveal to me the workings of your mind."

In spite of long questionings and fond appeals, Rama did not reply for a long time; he just sat looking at the face of the Emperor. At last, he said, "Father! I do not understand why you are acting in such hurry. My dear Brothers, Bharata and Shatrughna are not here now. Again, grandfather is far away and he may not be able to reach in time. Father-in-law also might not be able to come. And, rulers of other States, Princes, the vassal Kings—they too may find it difficult to attend.

My mind is heavy because we are disappointing such large numbers of people. It does not accept the idea of celebrating the function, when so many are certain to feel pained." Pleading pardon for his sentiments, he fell at the feet of Dasaratha.

It was Vasishta who replied, "Rama! These objections were raised even by us; do not think that we quietly acceded to the wish of the Emperor. We thought of all the arguments for and against, and we consulted the opinion of the people, before we decided. Do not raise any objection now; respect the wish of the Emperor; the Coronation and the Anointment have to take place tomorrow itself.

You have to observe certain vows from this day. At night, you should not use a cot or silken bed. You and Sita have to be on fast. As soon as the day breaks, you must both take bath, after applying sacred oil on the head; then you have to wear yellow clothes and be ready; for, the auspicious star Pushya which has been selected for the holy rite rises at this time. So, retire into your residence now, without demur."

### **With the Mother and Brother**

As soon as the Preceptor finished Rains fell at the Feet of his father and of Vasishta and proceeded to his palace, accompanied by Sumantha, the trusted Minister; he had no hesitation

this time. He conveyed the news to Sita, and thence, moved on fast to the apartments of his mother, Kausalya.

He prostrated before her; she raised him tenderly and fondled him affectionately, overwhelmed with joy; She directed him to give away to Brahmins, as a mark of thanksgiving, many cows, which she had collected for the purpose and which she had decorated with costly ornaments. She made Rama give away in plenty, many other varieties of gifts to others.

Lakshmana and his mother were there, at that time. Kausalya had Rama seated by her side, and, wiping the tears of joy that flowed freely she said, "Son! I had long awaited this precious moment; my yearning is now fulfilled. I am happy; my life is rendered worth while. O dearest jewel! My golden son! From tomorrow, you are the Yuvaraja! Live long, rule over the empire, let the welfare of the people be ever your ideal; may your rule be happy and secure, in accordance with the dictates of justice and morality; earn untarnished fame and maintain the reputation and glory earned by the kings of this line; attain might and majesty more than even your father. The day you achieve that position, I would feel that my life has attained fruition; my vows fasts and vigils would have then borne fruit."

### **Benediction**

Kausalya, the mother, caressed Rama, stroked the curls of his hair, and spoke sweet words of benediction. She gave him very valuable counsel, to which Rama paid meticulous attention. Rama chuckled at Lakshmana and teased him with innocent fun. "Brother! Can you tell me which Rajyalakshmi (Bride Fortune) has wedded you?" Lakshmana was delighted at this lovely taunt; he soon retorted, "Brother, I need no Rajyalakshmi to wed me. In your kingdom, Itself, if you assign any responsibility, I shall fulfill it; that is enough fortune, for me." With that, he prostrated at Rama's feet!

Rama said, "Lakshmana! You are my second breath. So, half my responsibility in governance is yours. So, you too should get ready, with me, wearing jewels and regal robes. You have a half share in my burdens; and in my happiness, my fame and fortune. You have a half share in all that I am and will be."

While Rama was speaking thus, Sumitra was shedding tears, and showering blessings on both Rama and Lakshmana. She said, "Rama! The love that subsists between you and Lakshmana gives me great happiness. My son needs no higher status than being your servant. If he is able to have forever your love and affection, that is enough for him." When she finished, Rama fell at the feet of the mother and rose. Lakshmana too did the same, and accompanied Rama to his palace, when he moved towards it.

The vow of ritual fast was begun by Rama, with nightfall. He lay upon a mat made of the sacred kusa grass! Light from the east slowly spread over the Face of the Earth. The light was greeted by music rising from all parts of the kingdom, In Ayodhya, music filled the air; the recital of Vedic Hymns echoed everywhere.

For the ceremonial bath of Rama and Sita, the holy water of the Sarayu river was brought in pots of gold by attendants. Pundits recited hymns calling down benediction on them; their recitation was most heartening and pleasant to the ear.

### **The Crooked Maid**

The previous night, while Manthara the maid of Kaikeyi was returning, she witnessed the excitement of the populace and their exultation, and asked some one the reason. She came to know about the imminent Coronation of Rama Chandra, which was the cause of all the joy and gratitude. She also saw the maids of the Palaces of Kausalya and Sumitra dressed in jasmine-white saris and bedecked in costly jewels, hastening hither and thither.

She could not bear the sight any longer. She had creeps, all over her body! She felt scorpion-stings in plenty judging from the pain she had in her mind. She ran towards the palace of Kaikeyi, and finding that the queen had already retired into the inner apartments, she neared the door and shrieked, "Mother! Mother! Open the door! A very urgent matter, now! Your life itself in mortal danger! An earthquake is afoot".

Hearing her excited announcement in words that rolled one over the other, the Queen hastily opened the door and inquired in fear, "Why? What has happened? What is the calamity? Has anything caved in? Why all this anxiety and pain?" "No, nothing of mine is destroyed. Your life is being destroyed, that is all. You have to live henceforward as a crazy care-worn woman." Manthara said. All in tears, she elaborated the pitiable state that awaited the queen and with many a gesture and groan, she lamented, loud and long.

Kaikeyi could not make out why. "The Maharaja is quite well, isn't he? And, Rama, Lakshmana? Kausalya? Sumitra? There is nothing the matter with them? Well! If these are quite well, and no danger threatens them, I am not worried at all. What can happen to me? Has any danger come to them, tell me, Manthara! Tell me soon!" the Queen insisted. She turned the maid's head towards her, held her chin in endearing appeal and pleaded for an answer.

### **The Poison in the Ear**

Manthara replied, "Nothing evil has happened to those whom you mention! But, they have decided to wring the neck of your son!" and she broke into a pathetic wail at this, Kaikeyi retorted, "You are committing a mistake, Manthara! The Maharaja is not such a person; nor is Rama, or Lakshmana, or my elder sisters, Kausalya and Sumitra! These my sisters love my son even more than their own sons. Your statement reveals your warped intelligence, that is all. It is not the truth! Well, you have not told me yet, what the matter really is; come on, give me the details."

Manthara answered, "Matter? At dawn, tomorrow, Rama Chandra is to be crowned Yuvaraja! The Senior Queen, her mind, full of unrestrained joy, is giving away costly silk saris and jewels to her maids. She is asking Rama to give away gold and cows in plenty. Engaged in all these activities of celebration, they are neglecting you! I cannot bear this in silence. I cannot tolerate it. You are unable, yet, to understand the implications. You have lost the love of your husband! But you revel in the empty boast that there is none so fortunate as you are! Like a lake in summer, your fortune is drying up fast."

"For your husband and co-wives, you have become a useless negligible person. Before long, you will be reduced to the despicable status of a maid. Be advised to be a little alert, ere that humiliation overtakes you. Awake from sleep; plan your course of action, with full awareness of the consequences. Decide upon the means by which you can escape from the calamity that yawns before you, the calamity that is approaching you fast."

### **The Queens Contempt**

"When Rama becomes Yuvaraja, the entire empire will be held in the grasp of Kausalya, remember! just as every one else you too will have to dance to her tune." Manthara was acting her role and shedding false tears to reinforce her wily stratagem.

Kaikeyi was impressed by her loyalty, but, she was not convinced of the rightness of her arguments. She said, "Manthara! What has happened to you? Have you become insane? Why do you talk like mad? Rama becoming the Yuvaraja, is the happiest augury for the entire empire. Here, take this necklace of mine, as a reward, a gift, for bringing me this great good news! Be happy, be full of Joy! The coronation of Rama as Yuvaraja gives me even more joy than perhaps to Kausalya. My joy at this good news is boundless. Rama Chandra too loves me more than he does even his mother, He reveres me more. I will not listen to such imputations regarding such a pure, loving person. Your reason has suffered a setback; it has been spoiled badly." Kaikeyi reprimanded Manthara sharply.

Manthara became even more demonstratively aggrieved. She got more excited and clamorous. "My reason is clear and fresh; it is yours that has suffered!" She ejaculated. "You are not concerned with the evil fate that awaits you. You hug blindly your old faith and fend attachment. I am anxious and worried, for the sake of your happiness and self-respect. The others are all play-acting, and pretending just to deceive you. They have no respect for you in their hearts. The Maharaja has no love towards his other Queens; he is enamoured only of the Senior Queen, Kausalya. Just to please you, he might use some words of love now and then, that is all; but, he has no love in his heart towards you.

### **Talk of Intrigue**

Consider this: Have these people, who did not inform you much less consult you, about this Coronation proposal, have these people the least bit of regard or respect for you? Have they spoken to you about it even once, on one single day? Consider how many months they usually deliberate and plan in order to come to such a decision. You cannot have a Coronation so soon; it doesn't drop from the sky, one fine day, of its own—can it?" But, they have settled it silently and secretly.

"The whole thing is the intrigue of Kausalya" said Manthara. Kaikeyi could not suffer it any longer. She intercepted, "Stop that stuff, Manthara! My sister is incapable of intrigue; we will never descend so low. It can never happen. It will never be. And the Maharaja? He is much nobler, more righteous than even my sisters! You cannot find in him a trace of low subterfuge or mean-ness. They must have resolved upon the Coronation, so quickly, for some very good reason. The wedding celebrations of Rama which would have involved months of preparation took place at short notice, didn't they? So too, the Coronation of Rama might have been decided

at short notice; why should it not be? The Maharaja himself will reveal to me the special reason that induced him to arrange it so.

### **Driving it Home**

You have not cared to know the truth; you have imagined all kinds of absurd reasons and baseless fears and cast doubts on the motives of pure hearted innocent persons! In a few minutes, things will be clarified; have patience." Kaikeyi admonished the maid, even more severely.

Manthara feared that her stratagem will suffer an ignominious defeat! It was in danger of complete failure. So, she descended into even worse tactics of persuasion. "Dear Mother! Ponder over the matter a little more deeply; I have listened to many, matters while moving about, outside the palace. In fact, this Coronation Affair has been decided upon months previously. That is the reason why Bharata and Shatrughna were sent out of the capital and the kingdom. They were apprehending that their presence here will cause complications. And, there is good ground for such fears; or else, who will arrange for the Coronation, when they are away? Have you become incapable of asking yourself this simple question?

### **The Plighted Word**

Formerly, when you were accepted in marriage, Dasaratha had promised and given his plighted word that the son born of you will be crowned king of this realm; you might forget it, but, I refuse to ignore it.

It is the fear that the presence of Bharata here, at the present juncture might rouse the memory of that promise and prove an obstacle to their plan, which made them keep Bharata out of the way, by sending him to his grandfather's place. When once the Coronation is accomplished, nothing can be done, isn't it?

To promote this mean trick, they kept the entire idea very secret and kept it from you so long; think about this for a while, the real inner purpose of their behaviour. You do not spend any thought on such matters; you believe that "all that is white is milk!" Your foolishness and innocence are taken advantage of, by others. You simply exult in your love for Rama and recite 'Rama, Rama,' in your infatuation.

Well, leave everything aside! Did that Rama, whom you love so greatly, did he at least, inform you of this great good fortune happening to him?"

**(To be continued)**

## **Sivaratri at Brindavan**

On Mahasivaratri Day, Bhagavan was at Brindavan near Bangalore, and so thou, sands gathered there from all parts of India and from overseas, for Darshan. Bhagavan moved among the gathering, during the Bhajan Sessions in the morning, and distributed Prasad. In the evening, there was a Public Meeting, at Brindavan. Dr M. B. Sundara Rao while welcoming the gathering

introduced three students of the Sri Sathya Sai College who were to speak that evening. He announced that the College will be the Centre for a Project sponsored by the University Grants Commission on the Instruction of Youth on Values, for which Dr Gokak was the Director.

Sri Sathish Chandra of II B. Com. Class said that students of the College were privileged to be always under Bhagavan's direction and supervision and hence, the atmosphere was ennobling and uplifting. Sri Rajen Patel of the I B. Sc. Class said this, education, in the College was not commercialised, but spiritualised. He spoke of the instruction imparted in religion, and spiritual Sadhana, and announced that the students had no worry, and were not sorry at ail, since there was no sense of hurry. They were happy to shape themselves as instruments in the hands of God, by the Sadhana of doing good to others, and, seeing good and being good Sri S. Raghavan of the I I B. Com. Class said that Bhagavan had incarnated for the upliftment of humanity, and since the students of today are the leaders of tomorrow, He is establishing Colleges, for imparting inspiration and guidance. He described else situation of the College away from the bustle and distraction of the City as conducive to calm and concentrated study and Sadhana.

Dr. Gokak, in his Address, explained the various legends and scriptural interpretations, which reveal the significance of the Sivarathri Festival, and its twin vows of 'fasting' and 'vigil'. He said that Bhagavan has filled these rituals with a new meaning and given the ancient customs a sense of fulfillment.

Bhagavan, in His Discourse, emphasised that self-realisation is a social process, operating in and through social urges, and pressures and evidenced by the awareness of the Divinity that shines in all men and all beings. It is not a lone adventure, away and apart from fellow-sufferers; it is a search for the Truth that is inherent in all and that can explain all. It must result in a more meaningful contact with the world and its contents. "All the holy days and festivals marked out in the Calendar, at regular intervals, are devised to purify the emotions, sharpen the intellect, sublimate the passions, and generally to draw attention to the need to turn inwards, and cleanse the springs of Love, so that awareness of the Divinity that is one's essential core can become clear and constant.

"The very first stop in spiritual progress is to be fixed in the knowledge that nothing in the relative world is permanent, or unchanging. The strongest castles are but airy structures built on sand. Nothing is what it seems to be, either to the senses, or even to the intelligence. That is why the Universe is said to be a Delusion, Maya, for; it is appearance manifesting on Reality, a Reality that has to be din, covered by overcoming the fog of Ignorance.

Some advise, that man must seek the Truth; but to believe that Truth has to besought after, is a delusion. Become aware of It, that is enough; that very moment, the delusion will disappear, just as, darkness is dispelled when a light is brought in! These holy days are days when the light is lit. Professor Gokak spoke now of the Sacredness of this Day—that this Day, Siva consumed the devastating poison Halahala that arose to destroy the Universe, that this Day Siva first danced the Cosmic Thandava dance, that this Day Siva first manifested Himself in the Linga Form, and so on. These are all tales to suffuse the mind with a sense, of the usefulness of the vows, connected with the Day, to induce people to observe the vows, which are the really valid things, after all. 'Fasting' is not desisting from food for one day; it is desisting from 'intakes' that are

harmful, not only through food but through all the senses, on all days. 'Vigil' is not simply keeping off sleep for one night, by hook or crook, but, life-long vigilance against the evil forces of lust, anger and pride.

Above all, the Vow of Service, of worshipping God in and through all, is the most important, to be taken up as a lifelong Sadhana on every Festival Day. That will make the Rathri or darkness into Sivam, or ecstasy—illuminated Day. Serve the living, feeling, responding idols of God that are all around you, in the shape of your fellow-men. and fellow-beings.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with a few Namavalis, which He sang in His Murali Voice, for being repeated in chorus by more than ten thousand devotees who had assembled on the Sacred Day at Brindavan.

## **Those Eyes!**

—A. Dayanand

"O World Invisible, we see Thee", sang the seers of the Upanishads; they saw, not with these mortal eyes, but, with the subtle pure Inner Eye. We all have eyes, but, we see not. Even if we see the world; it is an enigma, for us!

Baba's Eyes are different. They penetrate into the past and the future; they see the beyond. They are hard sometimes and at the same time, soft and compassionate. They go deep into the heart; nay, even into the soul. His looks are flames of fire which purify the sinner and, to the devotee are like rain on parched earth, or the morning breeze to the fever-stricken.

His eyes are all pervading; they pursue one, like the Hound of Heaven, pictured by Western Mystics. On New Year Day, I had a fall and I dislocated my shoulder. On the fourth of January, when I met Baba, He told me all about it and described the dislocation. How well He sees everything! His Eyes ever see me and protect me.

The Eyes emanate flames that cleanse and save; they haunt us and chase us until we come to Him. If you are guilty of sin, you cannot look into those Eyes and face Him!

His Love conquers all. He envelops us in His loving looks. He is Love. Come, all ye, burdened with care! Come into His merciful affectionate Fold; and be relieved, and live in Rest and Peace.

## A World Force

—Stewart Robb

("Baba" by Arnold Schulman: Viking Press New York. N. Y. "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles", by Howard Murphet; Frederick Muller Ltd., Fleet Street, London, E. C.)

The books are amazing indeed, not because of the way they are written, but, because of the Indian God-figure they tell about Apparently, there actually lives today a spiritual leader with full power to control matter in the most miraculous manner.

Well, why not! It is not only the Christian Scientists who affirm the null and void nature of matter; but, throughout the ages, the greatest philosophers and theologian have maintained that this world is but illusion, "maya" as the Indians, including Baba, call it.

Says Baba, "If you are not careful for one second, maya comes in." Most of us are not careful for many more than seconds.

This Indian man of God, 'God-man' say his devotees, aware that matter is but a mental concept, takes from the air without legerdemain, candies, photographs, medallions; materialises a book with no earthly publisher, heals any kind of sickness, multiplies food, travels astrally and is seen at two places at once.

What else? Almost anything else, apparently. Yet he merely says, "My miracles are my calling cards. I give the people what they want so that they will later give me what I want—their love of God. Some people may call it advertising, and if it is, so be it. I am here to serve my devotees the best way I can." He is not a Jesus, but, he may be an Avatar. His followers are multiplying by droves, the Western World is becoming aware of him, and soon, he may be a world force, to be reckoned with.

He seems to be all benevolence, and it is hard to see how he can be what he is, without an innate and unassailable purity that considers the body merely a manifestation and not a vehicle for pleasure.

The Arnold Schulman book is written from the point of view of a non-believer, but, a friendly and truly puzzled one. Baba's claim to Godhood is too great for acceptance, admires this American screen-writer and playwright; but, he accepts as a matter of fact the astonishing miracles. He cannot worship anyone who is in human form, and that is understandable.

The Howard Murphet book on Baba, however, is written by a believer, an eye and ear witness of the Avatar, for a much longer span of time than Schulman. His book is weightier, more philosophical.

Murphet is nobody's fool. This Tasmania-born writer was educated at the University of Hobart. During the Second World War, he served with the Eighth Army at Alamien and Tunis, was in on the Invasion of Normandy, and later was in charge of the British Press Section at the Nuremberg Trials.

(THE REGISTER Leisure-time, USA)

*Sai Baba: the meaning of this Name is: Sa—Sarveswara, the Godhead, who confers Salokya the Blessing of Residence in the Divine Sameepya, of Adjacence with the Divine, Sarupya of Identity of Form and Sayujya, of Mergence with the Divine—in short, The Divine Compassionate! Ayi-means Mother, and Baba means Father. Thus, the Name means: The Divine Mother and Father, the Siva-Sakthi.*

—Baba

### **Bhagavan at Delhi**

(For a Full Account, with Pictures: await our Next Issue).

#### **March:**

- 21: Bhagavan reached Hyderabad, by plane.
- 23: Sri Ramanavami Celebrations: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi: Bhagavan's Divine Discourse.
- 25: Bhagavan arrived at New Delhi, by plane. Rapturous Welcome from lakhs of Citizens.  
:Granting of Darshan: at Bhajan Gathering, Morning and Evening, at Special Shamiana, on the Grounds, before Residence of Sri. Sohan Lal, State President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Delhi. Continuous Flow of Grace, on aspirants, and on the sick who sought relief: also, grant of interviews to hundreds every day.
- 25: Bhagavan's Divine Discourse: Modern School Campus, Barrakhambha (road: Mammoth Gathering.
- 27: Special Programme: by Bala Vikas Pupils in Bhagavan's Presence: Kamani Auditorium 2 : Kamani Auditorium: Address: Dr. V. K. Gokak; Bhagavan's Divine Discourse.
- 31: Bhagavan visited Meerut: (Uttar Pradesh) Mammoth Gathering of Lakhs.

#### **April:**

- 1: Bhagavan visited Kurukshetra (Haryana): Venue of All India Sadhu samaj: President: Sri Gulzarilal Nanda
- 2: Bhagavan's Divine Discourse, at Shamiana, Golf Links Road. Special Messages to Bal Vikas, Delhi; Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, Delhi and the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi. Delhi.
- 3: Bhagavan reached Bangalore, by plane
- 5: Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam
- 8: Bhagavan's Divine Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam.

## Mid-West-Center

I am an ordinary housewife; unlike many Americans, who have found deep spiritual values, I had found none; for many years, I thought only of material things; indeed, I was critical and even sarcastic about the spiritual; I was also cynical towards those who sought the spiritual.

One day, for a selfish reason—free childcare—I began taking lessons in Hatha Yoga at the local YMA. I found a certain joy in them which I wished to communicate to others. I attended a talk by Mataji Indra Devi, who told us about Sai Baba.

It all seemed strange and curious; didn't care to know about this strange "man". However, at a teachers' seminar, given by Mataji, I came upon a certain picture of Baba which I had never seen before. It seemed directed to me; it had joy and humanity in it and yet more. Most of all, it made me happy to look at it. I put it on my bureau, and did look at it often.

After another teachers' meeting, I decided to begin meditation, and read Baba's books. Since that time, my whole life has changed—joy and contentment seem to be all around me. Life has never been so joyous! I truly want to follow His suggestions for living and to be what He wants His devotees to be!

My friends and I are now attempting to form a Midwest Sai Baba Center. For me, there is no greater thing than this: Joining with others to praise Him.

—Joan Wysong

## New Year Day

There is a pleasure in the dateless days,  
In walls with no calendars, table tops diary free.  
No clocks on shelves, no watches on the wrist,  
Nothing to chop Eternity into bits  
And tell us we are getting old.

All living things.  
And even rocks do disintegrate  
And stars and planets fade to dust  
And dust, to swirls of Force  
And Force to Love and Love to God!

We all trek back to God, from whom we strayed.  
Let others call this, New Year Day. Let them!

I treat each moment as a little step  
To God, with God, in God.

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27

### **The Crooked Mind**

Manthara of the crooked mind employed many a devious turn of argument to cloud and tarnish the pure unselfish mind of Kaikeyi. She manipulated her tricks to such an extent that the queen decided to insist on her rights with the Emperor, and win them from him. Yet, lest her pure intention had nor been completely altered, Manthara continued her nefarious tactics assuming even more servility and anxiety, and shedding copious false tears at the feet of her mistress.

She said, "Mother, who is there in this city of Ayodhya, willing to pay regard to us? Who treats you as worthy of count? They are ever one, united against, you, any day. You are a stranger here. They might even pack you out of Ayodhya, shortly; they will not desist from even such meanness."

"The Emperor is a crafty trickster, a clever juggler; when he approaches you, he speaks soft endearment, to win his whims; and leaves triumphant! You do not realise your fundamental fault which is depriving you from attaining the high status you deserve."

### **The Plighted Word**

"Mother! You may remember: the kings of this realm are ever ruled by lust, and riot by love. Your father knew this fact, and so, he did not agree to give you in marriage to this aged suitor. Later, after prolonged negotiations and confabulations, through the intercession of age Garga, it was decided that you be given in marriage. And, even that decision was arrived at because the suitor was compelled to agree to many conditions. At last, he married you."

"This day, those agreements have been sunk in the stream; you have been cast into flames; and your son has been cheated; and, all the time, they are quietly playing their merry drama! Else, why should they use this chance, of your son being away, and why should they hurry so much that no ruler can attend from any place beyond the bounds of this empire? Consider how their low mentality reveals itself! How full of mischief and deceit are they!"

"When rulers are invited, your father will certainly not miss the opportunity to attend. Naturally, he will then bring to the notice of all, the promise made to him. So, their plan is to finish the function without informing any one, and once that is over, they know nothing can be done by anyone. This conspiracy of foxes is hatched with this objective; so, be warned in time. Once this moment is missed, your fate will be as contemptible as that, of a dog."

### **No Time to Lose**

"Therefore, do not delay; ponder deeply; decide upon some method of preventing the Coronation from taking place" Manthara fanned the flames of anger and hatred. Kaikeyi yielded to her machinations at last! She said, "Hearing your words, I feel that each statement is more real than the previous one! Yes, indeed! This is no matter that can wait. What has to be done next? If you can indicate the step I have to take, I shall put it into action."

When Kaikeyi gave this clear sign of having been won over by her wiles, Manthara was overwhelmed with pride and joy. She spoke with greater assurance now. "Mother! There is no need to spend further thought. The arguments that can support your demand are ready, and strong. That day, when the Emperor thankfully accepted your timely help, did he not offer you two boons, any two that you might demand of him? And, did you not tell him that since you had no need for anything, then, you would reserve the gift and ask for the two boons, when the need arose? This day, these two will serve a thousand purposes! You can demand that he grant them now, can't you?"

### **The Two Boons**

When Manthara spoke thus, plainly and emphatically, Kaikeyi raised her head as if she was startled, and said, "O Manthara, how clever you are! Though in appearance you are an ugly hunchback, in resourcefulness and intelligence, you are extremely charming? Though wanting in beauty of body, you make up by being an expert in intellectual attainments. Tell me how I am to secure these two boons, and what those boons are to be?"

Manthara replied, "Mother! One boon shall be that your son shall be crowned Yuvaraja. The second can well be that Rama shall not stay in the empire." Listening to her suggestions, given on the spot, without a moment's thought, Kaikeyi fell into a trough of reflection; she said, after recovering herself, "Manthara! It may be a just demand that my son should be crowned, but, my mind will not agree to send Rama out of the kingdom. I am pained at the very thought." With that, she dropped into a seat.

Manthara saw that she must act quickly. "Mother! This is no occasion for cowardice. Procrastination turns even ambrosia into poison. There is no wrong in this. You have to be a little hard, or else, we cannot succeed in our plan and achieve our aim. For the cruel wrong, done by them, this is no reprisal at all. If you desire that your son must rule as King and that you should have the status of the Queen Mother, then, act this way; or, I shall swallow poison and die. I cannot bear to see you suffer while I am alive." Manthara wept aloud, as if she was carried away by her love and attachment towards Kaikeyi.

She was the nurse who brought up Kaikeyi from childhood, she had petted her, fondled her, played with her all these years; towards Manthara, Kaikeyi had great affection and regard; she raised no further objection; she started to calm her sorrow instead. "Manthara! Rest assured! I shall, without fail, act in such a way that you are pleased. Tell me, how shall I act now?" she said.

## **Fourteen Years**

Manthara replied, "When I suggested you should ask that Rama be sent into exile into the forests beyond the realm, do not imagine, I had not weighed the consequences. I did it only after due deliberation." Since Kaikeyi was a child in political affairs and legal lore, she said, "The law declares that unhampered possession and enjoyment of usufruct for twelve years continuously, gives the person ownership of, the property. So, it is better to fix a length off years for the exile, say, fourteen years; when he returns after that period, he can nor claim the kingdom; it becomes the unquestioned property of your son."

Manthara noticed that the Queen had accepted the proposal to ask for the two promised boons in the form suggested by her. So, she said, "Mother! Don't delay further! If you beg him for the boons, just as you are now, the Emperor will not be persuaded to yield. You must work up a wave of rage; scatter the pillows and sheets in your bedroom; throw off your jewels into the corners; loosen the hair and make it wild and disheveled; act as if you have resolved to give up your life! Go and lie down on the floor of the Hall of Anger, the room where queens who are overcome by anger and grief retire, so that they may be discovered and consoled.

You cannot just go to him as you are and straightaway ask for the boons. Pretend that you are in desperate agony and that only the grant of the boons can save you from death. Then only will your demand be strong and worthy of respect. Rise! Take the first step forward, for the work ahead!"

## **The Hall of Anger**

When Manthara pressed her thus, Kaikeyi yielded to her persuasion, and after carrying out her directions, she entered the Anger Hall and lamented her fate and the impending calamity. And, Manthara flopped on the floor outside the door of that Hall, after drawing the doors together, as if she was unaware of what was causing all the furor.

Meanwhile, the Emperor had finished making all arrangements for the Coronation Ceremony, and when he emerged from the Durbar hall, he felt that, instead of proceeding to the apartments of Kausalya, he should communicate the happy tidings to Kaikeyi first; so, he hurried towards her palace. The maids who stood at attention all along the passage appeared very much upset with anxiety; the emperor argued within himself that they had not heard the good news; for, it would have lit up their faces! He pitied them that they did not know that Rama was to be crowned the next day! He directed his steps to the bedroom where he expected the Queen to be.

There his eyes fell on the scattered jewels, the unkempt bed, the heaps on the floor and the general state of untidiness and dis. traction. He was surprised at all this and searched for the Queen in the room, peeping into the corners.

Then, a maid-in-waiting announced, "Maharaja! Her Highness Kaikeyi Devi is now in the Hall of Anger." Hearing this, he was sadly disappointed; he turned his steps in that direction. Kaikeyi was sprawling on the floor, in the blinding darkness of the room, wailing and weeping. He said, "Kaika! What ugly scene is this! Why are you so angry? Who caused you so much sorrow? Tell me, I shall kill them this very moment; I shall confer joy on you. You have only to tell me what you desire; I am ever ready to fulfil your wish. Your joy is my joy. Don't you know

that I have nothing in this world higher than you? Come, do not test me further." The emperor sat by her side, and caressing her head, he consoled her in various ways, and questioned her about the reason for her anger and grief.

Kaikeyi was in a fit of rage; she bit her teeth noisily; she lifted and threw aside the hands of the emperor when he tried to fondle her.

### **The Desperate Queen**

She said angrily: Enough of this false pretence! I put faith in you so long, and this is the degradation I have brought on myself! I do not trust you any more. I could not so far believe that you are capable of this type of hypocritical game. Is this the punishment for putting faith in you? Go, go to your favourites; why sit hereby my side? You mortgage, your mind in one place and your tongue in another. Give your tongue to the place where you have given your mind. I am not in a mood hereafter to place faith in your words. Do not inflict more sorrow on me, but, go back the way you came hither. What do you care, what happens to me? Better to die a queen than drag on as a slave! This day is the last day of my life."

These wailings heard between her sobs and sighs conveyed no meaning to Dasaratha. He was utterly confused, and struck with amazement. He sat nearer the queen and tried to console her and assuage her anger. "Kaika!" he began. "What do these words mean? I do not understand. I never use false hypocritical words, nor can I ever use there. My mind and my tongue act, in unison; they will ever be in the same place; where my love is, there my sweet expressions will be. My tongue will not falsify my mind; it is impossible for it so to behave. I do not know how it has happened, you have not been able to know me and my sincerity in spite of the lapse of so many years. Without telling me plainly what has actually happened to give you so much grief and pain, do not torture me like this. Tell me what has happened; why are you behaving like this, what has caused you this agony."

Dasaratha pleaded piteously, for a long time, but, with no effect! The queen retorted sharply, brushed aside with effrontery, ridiculed sarcastically and turned a deaf ear to the importunities of the emperor. She pretended as if she treated his words as of no worth. So, Dasaratha was wounded very much at heart.

### **Manthara plays her Part**

Not knowing what to do, he called Manthara in. She rushed in with more poignant play acting, shrieking for help for the queen, her mistress. "O King! Save my mother!" She cried, and clasped the feet of the emperor.

The emperor was really the embodiment of innocence; he had no trace of duplicity in him. So, he could not see through the drama they were both enacting before him. He feared that some calamity must have happened to make his beloved so perverse and stern in her anger. So, he asked Manthara again to tell him what exactly had taken place.

Manthara said, "Maharaja! What Can I tell you? I am not aware of the least bit of what happened. Mother does not divulge the reason for her anger to any one. All of a sudden, she hastened from the bedroom into this Hall, of Anger. Noticing this, I came hither. I prayed and

pleaded in various ways, but, she does not disclose the reason. See! She does not confide in you; will she then reveal it to me? We have been seeing her suffering and agony; it is unbearable; we cannot simply look on, any longer! We are afraid of what might happen to her, and so, we have been waiting for your arrival. Unless you comfort her and bring back joy into her mind, her condition might become critical. Even now, she has suffered too long; her condition is growing worse, every moment. We will retire now."

### **Kaikeyi Speaks Out**

Manthara left the Hall with the other maids, appealing "Find out from her the reason for her grief and anger and, pacify her by appropriate remedies."

Manthara only added to the mystery, and Dasaratha was even more confused by her statements, He sat by the side of the disconsolate Queen, and said, "Kaika! Why do you keep me in the dark?" He gently lifted the head of the queen from the bare floor and placed it on his lap, and sought to persuade her to reveal to him the reason for her inconsolable suffering.

After sometime Kaika shook off her stern silence, and began to speak. "Maharaja! You haven't forgotten, have you, the two boons you promised, to confer on me that day, during the battle between the Devas and the Asuras?" Dasaratha was relieved much. He said, "Kaika! Why have you put yourselves into all this temper and pain for the sake of this simple thing? I will not forget the promise of the two boons, so long as there is life in me; I can never forget it, That promise is as dear to me as Kaika herself; you are the breath of my life, and the promise too is as the breath".

**(To be continued)**

## **Triveni**

16th March, It was the New Year Day, for the Telugu and the Kannada speaking peoples; and also for all who follow the Lunar Calendar. Brindavan was scintillating with joy and devoted excitement. For, Baba had arranged that the Foundation Stone for the New Magnificent Building for the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College be laid that day, by H.E. The Governor of Mysore State. Besides, the College was celebrating the College Day too that Day. So, the thousands who gathered there from all parts of India and outside had their fill of ecstasy. Baba gave Darshan to all during the morning Bhajan Sessions in the charmingly decorated area round the Dais. He also gave each one sweets as 'New Year Prasad.' The Foundation Area was sanctified by Vedic Rites, in the Divine Presence of Baba in the morning hours.

At 5 P.M., H. E. Sri Mohanlal Sukhadia, the Governor arrived at the Site where the Members of the Sri Sathya Sai Education Foundation, the Governing Body of the College, the Principal and Members of the Staff and the Members of the College Committee from the village where it is situated, Kadugodi were introduced to the Governor by the Convener and Secretary. The College N.C.C. provided the Guard of Honour and played Band during the Ceremony.

The Governor was then escorted to Brindavan, where the College is functioning now in temporary structures. Baba and the Governor were then taken in procession to the Dais, with Pundits chanting Vedic Hymns, the College Band playing, the richly caparisoned Prasanthi Nilayam Elephant Sai Geetha leading the way, with majestic gait.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, M.A., D.Litt., welcomed the Guests and explained the prime purpose for which Baba had planned the establishment of Colleges in all the States of India. "They are charged with the vibrations of Baba's Divine Presence and they foster a spontaneous fraternity of earnest, disciplined knight-errants of truth, righteousness, peace and love. The Colleges promote the worldview of a tolerant humanity, a universal love-inspired brotherhood of man, inspired by the faith in the Fatherhood of God," he said. Sri Sathis Chandra, a student in the B. Corn Class, spoke about the elevating influence of the College. "We aspire to get the double BA. degree that BABA is; so that we may enjoy the Bliss that He is", he said. "Real education takes man to God; it grants harmony, peace and tranquility. Baba gives us this true education, for watching Him is itself liberal education of the highest order", he said. "Every teacher in this College is a student counsellor, whereas in some other Colleges they have a special Officer called so! Though we are progressing academically, and studying sincerely, all of us have an inner wish, that we may fail in the examination, so that we may remain in this College imbibing the higher values of life for one more year!" he revealed. Speaking of the Ceremony of the laying of the Foundation stone for his College, he said, "It is not merely for the building that the Foundation was laid today it is the stone that ushered a new generation full of peace and good will, through dedicated and devoted youth. The College with its atmosphere of Love and Joy, of Service and steady Study is so inspiring, that surely, the Gods are jealous of us", he concluded.

The Principal read the Report of the College for the Year; he said it was temple of knowledge, service and high moral strength. Col. Joga Rao announced certain spontaneous offers of assistance that the College Committee had received from individuals in India and abroad.

Sri. Mohanlal Sukhadia, the Governor, then addressed the vast gathering. "I find that in the short period of three years, this region has been blessed with a fine institution that is imparting the best instruction and providing the most valuable type of education. Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man; this College provides fine inspiration for the cultivation of Divinity. The physical intellectual and spiritual aspects are being given here equal attention. True to our great culture, Baba has chosen this lovely rural atmosphere. If the cool waters of the stream of Dharmic activity fail to flow, the world will be ruined. We are committed to the ideal of a secular state, but that does not mean that we have to live without religion. It only means we have to lay emphasis on tolerance, adjustment of mutual viewpoints and understanding. It means the recognition of the Divine Presence in all that we see and the realisation of an inscrutable Power behind everything. The unrest among youth that is spreading fast will melt away like morning mist, if education has a moral basis. The youth of India have been denied the moral fervour that once was evoked by the Gayatri, for example. This College is sheltering and fostering the great ideals of national cohesion and inner discipline," he said, and he congratulated the Students on the occasion of their College Day and the Day on which the Foundation was laid for the New Home of their College.

Bhagavan then blessed the gathering with His sweet Discourse, revealing the basic excellence of a spiritual basis for education. Baba said that in the educational as well as in other fields of life, burrowed ideals and imported systems, fanatic loyalties and fickle policies will bring only disaster. Unless education sweetens and sublimates the passions and emotions of man, the community cannot be free from eruptions of discontent and greed. Education is not mere accumulation of information or even the acquisition of skills. It is the cleansing of the mind, the strengthening of unselfish tendencies and the discovery of the truth, beauty and goodness that lie dormant in every being. It is the cultivation of integrity, tolerance and compassion. It is the revelation of the Divine, which is the very core of every created being, and thing. Bharatiya Culture emphasises these basic objectives and so, the Sathya Sai Colleges also aim at their realisation. The alumni of these Colleges will restore the ancient glory of this land, for they will know and practise the discoveries of the sages enshrined in the Upanishads and Gita.

"The student of this College who spoke just now gave us a glimpse of the attitude in which their minds are rooted. Our young men have steady pure simple hearts; but, parents at home, politicians outside and even teachers in schools and Colleges are turning them along wrong ways. No one sets good examples for them to follow; all are engaged in advising and exhortation, but, no one practises what he preaches or teaches. When these students become available as teachers, the New Era can be established, that is my plan.

"This is the reason why I have decided on a permanent building to house all sections of this College in its own Campus. In this quiet rural atmosphere, it is easy to eradicate unhealthy symptoms of agitation and conflict, and implant the habits of simplicity, sincerity and service.

This is a thrice-blessed Day, a Triveni, for it is Yugadi, the College Day and the Foundation stone Day! Yugadi means, not New Year day, but the Day that marks the dawn of an Era! There are four Yugas, mentioned in the Puranas, the Kali, (the present age), the Dwapara (the one previous) the Treta (the one earlier than that) and the Krita (the earliest). These are not to be reckoned as chunks of time, but, as stages of the growth of the individual in spiritual advance—the stage where one is unaware of the good, the awakening in. to that awareness, the stage of action and the attainment of Ananda there from."

The students of the College then enacted two plays, Abou Ben Adhem, in English and Dhruva in Kannada. The Message of the two plays was brought home to the thousands through skilful acting, attractive stage settings and inspiring dialogues.

## **Vision of Not-Two**

What Indian Philosophy teaches is the Unity behind the Diversity, the One Truth which is the substratum of all this plurality—the world of Names and Forms. But, how can we see this Unity in diversity? It is only through Satsang, the companionship with the godly, that we can gain this vision.

Our Sastras teach us four paths to the realisation of this Unity, God: Jnana-marga (Sathya); Bhakti-marga (Prema); Karma-marga (Dharma) and Yoga-marga (Santhi). Jnana (Realisation of the Unity Wisdom) is the culmination and fruition of Samskara or True Refinement. University Education makes one a Pundit, not a Jnani; through that education, one becomes a pedant, an expert in hair-splitting logic, but, not an adept able to recognise the One, the God inherent in all beings. Karma Bhakti and Yoga culminate in Jnana, that is, the intuitive Realisation of the Unity in all Creation, the Abhedha. In Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, as in Jnaneswar Maharaj, we have the born Jnani who has the Swayambhuvajnana. He is Yoga-Siddha; He is Jnana-Siddha; He is Brahma-bhava-paripurnam, the Boundless-Absolute-Bliss.

Baba can create anything; the whole Universe is His Creation—nothing is ever beyond His Powers. His miracles are indications, evidences, proofs of the existence of a Higher Power, transcending the limits of Science, beyond the reach of the poor intellect and the poorer reason; they are manifested for our Adhyatmic-samskara, spiritual awakening. They are Baba's Birthless Nature. They are meant to touch the inner depths of our hearts, to refine us, to prompt us to discover Him in us.

From the Deha-bhavan, one has to reach out to the awareness of identity with the Divine Core of all Beings. Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (All this is verily Brahman)—that is the Advaitic Vision, the Vision of the Not Two, but, One.

When a thorn pricks the foot, tears roll from the eyes, because, they are all 'one being': this feeling is Ekatma-bhavana. As long as there is one tear-drop in the world anywhere one can feel no joy. Such will be the true vision the real Advaitic Vision. Service is Sadhana; Daya is Bhakti. (Service is the best spiritual exercise; compassion is the highest expression of devotion), Baba's Divya Sandesh (Divine Message) is that Seva and Sadhana are identical.

—**T. S. Bharde, Bombay**

*The journey to the Kingdom of God is now rendered easy, since Bhagavan is incarnate, and He has illumined the Path even for the common man. Surrender to Him! It is your right to travel un-hindered! He will remove all obstacles from your Path.*

—**Col. I. S. Dhingra**

## **Bhagavan in Delhi**

### **I**

A visit by Bhagavan Baba to Delhi was due long since. No doubt He had stopped there for a few days, on His way to Rishikesh and Kashmir once, and to Badrinath, a few years ago. But, that was when Delhi had hardly known Him. In recent years, when Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh were resounding with His name, there was a regular stream of visitors from Delhi, waiting on Him and praying Him to come and stay at Delhi for some days at least, and confer His Grace on the thousands pining for His Darshan there. Bhagavan had agreed to do so; and, the time finally came for it, when on 25th March, 1972, He flew to Delhi.

The Indian Airlines had brought quite a few devotees to Bangalore from Delhi before this for discussing preliminaries. Sri Sohan Lal, an ex-M.P., and a prominent businessman in Delhi was to be Bhagavan's host, at 16 Golf Links Road, his residence. Sri Sohan Lal made all the arrangements and he flew to Hyderabad, to escort Bhagavan to Delhi. Sri Sohan Lal is the State President for the Shri Sathya Sai Organisations in Delhi and in Himachal Pradesh.

Bhagavan had said that there should be no crowd at Palam Airport to receive Him. In fact, He had got the booking changed from the morning to the evening flight to avoid crowds. Only two or three members of the Samiti were to be there when He landed; the rest were to assemble at 16, Golf Links Road. These instructions were scrupulously observed. But, there was a crowd of a different kind, awaiting Bhagavan! The police and customs officials were there with their families, surrounding the gangway and all! It was an arduous task to clear the way for Bhagavan from amidst eager devotees. This was done, and Sri. K. Hanumanthaiya, the Railway Minister, had the honour of taking Bhagavan in his car to Golf Links Road.

Bhagavan does not like breaches of discipline, even when then they proceed from genuine devotion. He did not approve of the inconvenience caused to the authorities of the airport by an excited group of devotees.

On the plane itself, Bhagavan is not so much at ease as on long car journeys. A car journey means the company of a few chosen disciples, sprightly and luminous conversation, anecdotes, singing and Bhajans. One does not know how the time passes. But, on an aeroplane, He feels like one on whom great restraint is imposed. He may seem to thumb the pages of a book or be in reverie, with eyes closed. But, there are passengers who come every now and then and touch His feet, eager not to lose this golden opportunity. The captain, the pilot, and the air-hostesses pray for Vibhuti with genuine devotion. Bhagavan blesses them and they feel happy.

By the time that Bhagavan reached 16, Golf Links Road, a huge crowd consisting of thousands of devotees had assembled in the gorgeous pandal which was beautifully decorated and lighted. The crowd acclaimed Bhagavan's arrival with thunderous delight. The place was a park converted into a pandal. At a rough guess, it could comfortably hold a gathering of some fifteen thousand people. It was nearly 11-30 P.M., before Bhagavan could retire for the night.

## II

Next morning, the 'park turned pandal' presented an impossible sight. More than thirty thousand people had crowded together where about fifteen thousand could sit or stand! The crowd overflowed on the roadside, where restaurants and refreshment stalls had sprung overnight. Buses were lined up—any number of them—coming from the interior of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The Delhi crowd was of course there, spearheading all these arrivals.

It was announced on the mike that Bhagavan would move into the crowd and give darshan to all, but that there should be no scramble to touch His feet. Each should bow to Bhagavan in his own heart.

Bhagavan moved out accordingly and there was a tremendous ovation. He collected letters and gave Vibhuti and the love that spoke through His eyes and His countenance thrilled people. Where people; could not resist the temptation to move forward to hand over a note to Him or to touch His feet, he cut the line short and moved into another lane. This had an immediate educative effect. The devotees realised that a whole line would miss His close darshan even if some persons disregarded instructions. Sri Sohan Lal spoke the truth, when he said that they had all despaired of controlling the crowd into orderly behaviour. It was only Bhagavan's love, which overwhelmed each and every devotee, that kept them in their places and enabled Him to penetrate deep into the heart of the crowd.

Thereafter, for the rest of the day, Bhagavan refused to grant any individual interviews. He said that His first concern was to give happiness to the countless number of devotees that came from far and near to have a glimpse of Him.

He accordingly appeared on the first floor balconies of 16, Golf Links Road, a number of times, and on the top terrace, where He could be seen from all sides. He waved both His hands blessing there all, a Divine smile beaming on His face. When the crowd went ecstatic and shouted itself hoarse with joy. Sai Baba ki Jai Ho! He put his hand on His lips and gestured so as to indicate that they should not be loud in their delight. And the crowd learnt to experience its joy silently. A section of the crowd would now and then raise its voice—Sai Baba ki..., thinking that this was the key to persuading Bhagavan to come and give darshan; but, He made them learn the lesson that He would give darshan when He chose to do so and not in response to impulsive shouts. And He appeared on the terrace seven or eight times a day. Each day was a step forward in education for the crowd. It was only on the morning of Sunday, 2nd April, that it became impossible for Bhagavan to move into the crowd. A crowd estimated to be a hundred and fifty thousand strong had over-flowed into the roads, a mile deep on either side. They stormed around the railings of the compound, which itself was filled to capacity. The iron gates were broken and people poured in, eager for a glimpse of Bhagavan. Everyone knew that this was the last morning for darshan in Delhi and each was eager to hand over his letters of prayer try Him and touch His feet. The best that could be done was to give 'terrace darshans', and announce that Bhagavan would deliver a discourse in the evening and sing bhajans. It was only then that the crowd began to diminish in order to come properly reinforced for the evening meet.

### III

Bhagavan could not attend to the Physically afflicted during the first two days. It was a surging crowd and the best that could be done was to calm it down with darshan. But, as soon as the crowd settled down, Bhagavan began to choose the physically afflicted and disabled, for interview. Children stricken down with polio; old men with legs like tendrils of creepers, wheeled down in chairs; women in visible agony with some disease or the other; teenagers with leucoderma on their faces: all these were interviewed, blessed, given Prasad and hope and courage to live their lives. Some of the disabled men were made to walk, Bhagavan holding them by their arm! They had lost all faith in looking after themselves. He put them on the road" to recovery by infusing into them faith, courage and a mysterious force that worked wonders.

His feeling for the common man was so intense that He dropped His visits to the homes of several office-bearers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Delhi, in order to grant frequent darshans to the crowd and attend to the disabled. Some of the office-bearers, women and men as well, were in tears over this misfortune. One of them, a close devotee, said, "My wife and children refuse to take their food till you visit our home. They are crying and going without food."

Baba told him, "You will all now understand the agony of thousands of these women and children who stand for hours on end, in the scorching sun, hungry and thirsty, just to catch a far glimpse of me." Nevertheless His compassion was such that He spent all His hours of rest at noon and up to midnight, visiting most of the office-bearers of the Samithi and their families in their homes. Those He could not visit were given the privilege of bringing breakfast, lunch or dinner from their homes and serving it to Him at 16 Golf Links Road! On such occasions, Bhagavan jokingly made it clear to Sri Sohan Lal and his family that they themselves were guests, as much as Bhagavan Himself, in their own home!

Bhagavan met all the members of the Samiti and also members of the Seva Dal, who had served as volunteers ceaselessly during the period of His stay in Delhi.

The volunteers, the women and the men, had an unenviable task to do. They had to cordon off the crowds surging forward to touch Bhagavan's feet, when He walked right into their midst. They had to be on duty from 3 A.M., maintaining order in the pandal where people sat hours in advance to secure vantage seats for Bhagavan's darshan and blessings. They had to keep the storming crowds, desperate for a near view and for blessings, from the railings, from the compound and the iron gates, which were broken open twice. The volunteers discharged their duty admirably well. The women volunteers took it on themselves to supply drinking water to the thirsty crowd, waiting patiently in the sun.

They also maintained order in the women's section in the pandal. The volunteers had a thankless task to do, all the time. They had to control a crowd which resented all restrictions. All this was done with patience and good cheer. There were announcements to be made on the microphone from time to time. These were put through by a member whose voice was ideally fitted for the task. As scarves were being distributed to the volunteers, by the Seva Dal

office-bearers, they said that it was their privilege to receive them from the "hands of Bhagavan Himself." Bhagavan gladdened their hearts, giving to them the scarves Himself.

The volunteers who waited near Bhagavan's room had, of course, a privileged and glorious task to do. In spite of their best vigil, it happened that an American, a hippie, managed to enter, not only the compound, but the corridor on the first floor, right up to Bhagavan's room. The arrangements were tightened and the volunteers worked with such selfless enthusiasm that Bhagavan became very fond of them. He got to know from them about their family and their career. He told one of them that he desired admission to the post-graduate course, but that his marks were not adequate for the purpose. But, Bhagavan blessed him for admission. Another student was due to appear soon for his public examination. Bhagavan told him that he had been rather careless in his studies; He materialised a pen and gave it to the volunteer and said that he should write his answers with that pen, in the examination hall.

It would be invidious to mention names. All the members of the Samiti and Mahila Vibhag worked with a great sense of devotion and helped to make Bhagavan's visit to Delhi a memorable success. The members of Sri Sohan Lal's family worked day and night and were always ready to attend to the most trivial details.

#### IV

The 'park-pandal' near 16, Golf Links Road, proved to be far too small for the mammoth crowd that assembled there on the first day. Since the National Stadium had already been reserved for sports, the Organisers thought of making arrangements on the lawns of the Modern School, Delhi. This was twice as large as the park and it was estimated to hold an audience of at least forty to fifty thousand! But, the meeting held there on the evening of 27-3-72 exceeded all expectations. A lakh and a half of people collected there, without any press-bulletin or wall-paper or any other kind of publicity. A sitting mass of humanity was surrounded by a standing mass! A crowd waiting to be as near Bhagavan as possible burst in on all sides of the dais after He came, and it looked as though there would be disorder. But, the crowd soon settled down listening to Bhagavan's enchanting 'Prema mudita manase kaho', and other bhajans, and His thrilling speech. He spoke of the nations of the world as a railway train, the railway engine, called India leading them on the spiritual path, the engine driver being the Avatar!

Dr. S. Bhagavantham, D.Sc., translated Bhagavan's speech into Hindi. This was the first time that Dr. Bhagavantham had anything to do with Hindi from a public platform. Nor had he cultivated the language in any special way. But it was a miracle that he was able to do what he actually did. For the rest, the gestures and intonation of Bhagavan filled the eyes and ears of the people.

Mixing with the crowd, one got to know their responses and reactions. Some of them were saying that they could hardly believe till they saw Bhagavan in action, that such a Phenomenon was at all possible in the twentieth century. Others were saying that such a vast gathering for a spiritual purpose was unprecedented in Delhi.

One thing is certain. As the metropolis of the country, Delhi is inevitably the touch, stone of each social political or spiritual movement. If any movement has to succeed in India it has to succeed first in Delhi. The cradle and cemetery of dynasties and empires, Delhi has developed this testing power through the centuries.

If the Modern School Lawn meeting roused and satisfied the expectations of the common man in Delhi, the meeting in Kamani Hall was meant to bring the elite in Delhi into contact with Bhagavan, The Hall is designed to hold an audience of seven hundred and fifty people. For the Bal Vikas function which was held there, about fourteen hundred people were present, filling the passage and other spaces. There was a similar audience for Bhagavan's lecture, adding to it the overflow on the stage itself and outside the Hall.

The meeting was presided over by Sri K. Hanumanthaiya, Railway Minister, who is a devotee of Bhagavan. He was a frequent visitor and Bhagavan had also dinner with him during His stay. He paid a graceful tribute to Bhagavan after Sri Sohan Lal spoke welcoming the guests on behalf of the organisers. Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak then spoke for some minutes interpreting the mission and message of Bhagavan. Bhagavan then made a soul-stirring speech, vindicating spirituality in the modern world. Dr. Bhagavantham translated the speech, step by step and fluently.

It was a representative audience. The elite of Delhi had been invited. As 'Motherland', a Delhi paper, retorted, on 30th March, '72, "The guests invited were the city's top-drawer elite; they included Cabinet Ministers, former Governors, ex-Royalty, leading industrialists, important bureaucrats, members of the Diplomatic Corps, chic and hippily dressed foreigners and svelte Indian women,"

"Some of the VIP's sighted entering the Hall included Ministers such as Dr. Karan Singh, and Sri Hanumanthaiya; Minister's wives such as Sm. I. K. Gujral, ex-Governors like Shri Dharma Vira and Sardar Ujjal singh, with his wife; the Chief of the Navy, Admiral Nania, the U.S. Ambassador, Sri. Kenneth B. Keating, and the Chief Justice Hon'ble Sri. S. M. Sikri." Let 'Ariel' of the Sunday Standard speak on the subject: "Last week Delhi was invaded by one of India's most renowned mystics and seers, Sathya Sai Baba, who received a welcome from the classes and masses, more rapturous than most welcomes Ariel has witnessed over the years." And, all this, without the least publicity of any kind!

The members of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti were anxious that Bhagavan should visit Meerut and grant darshan to thousands of devotees there. Meerut is hardly forty miles away from Delhi and Bhagavan agreed to go there, on the afternoon of 31st March 1972, and just 'be present' at their Bhajan party. The Samiti arranged for bhajans in the Meerut Stadium and a huge crowd assembled there. But, the volunteers were more anxious to have darshan than to arrange for it for others. In the scramble that followed, the microphone arrangements broke down. It was with great difficulty that Bhagavan had to find His way back to the Stadium Porch, where the car was waiting for Him.

But there were pleasant surprises on the way, which gave us a glimpse of the common man's reverence for Bhagavan. The people in the Modi Industrial Township on the way had put

up a beautiful Arch to welcome Bhagavan and a big crowd had assembled to catch a glimpse of Him and, if possible, to touch His feet. The crowd made way, as Bhagavan blessed them, and made them realise that the party would be late for the visit at Meerut. The motorist, the motor-cyclist and the rickshaw-wallah were excited as they saw the fleet of cars passing through; their joy knew no bounds when they recognised Bhagavan in one of the cars and they pointed Him out to each other. Bhagavan had ceased to be a mere name and form, to the people in the North. They had now known and felt His presence in the flesh and responded rapturously to it.

The visit to Kurukshetra, an important centre in the Punjab-Haryana area, turned out to be a memorable event. Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, who functioned as a Minister in the composite Bombay State, and again at the Centre and was Prime Minister for short periods, had invited Bhagavan to bless the many institutions that Shri Nanda is building there for preserving and interpreting ancient Indian Culture. Bhagavan agreed to go there the devotees in Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh felt that Bhagavan should have visited strong Sai centres, like Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Jullunder and Simla. But, the visit to Kurukshetra justified itself in an ample measure, for, devotees from all the three States and Union Territories flocked to Kurukshetra and an eager crowd, a lakh and fifty thousand strong, had to be managed. Excellent arrangements had been made, and hundreds of policemen had been posted to enable the crowd to see and listen to its beloved Baba, without any discomfort. The meeting was held in the Kurukshetra University Stadium; Sri Nanda the Governor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Minister, the Finance Minister and others were present, to welcome Bhagavan. It was a great and memorable meeting. Mr. Richard Bock, the devotee from America, who filmed it, said, that, he had never dealt so far with such a vast mass of humanity, with the tiny figure of Bhagavan on the dais, seen against this setting.

## VI

During the eight days that He was in Delhi, there was a continuous pressure on Bhagavan from many of the top men and women in Delhi for interviews. Men and women from various walks of life wanted to have the benefit of His insight and wisdom, and it was impossible to meet all these demands during the limited time that Bhagavan had at His disposal. But, He did meet a number of them.

Bhagavan had dinner with Sri G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India. He met here some of the most prominent persons among Delhi's elite.

Sri Yeshvantrao Chavan, Finance Minister, Sri Jagjivanram, Defence Minister, Dr. Karan Singh, Minister for Aviation and Tourism, Sri Khadilkar, Minister for Labour, Shri. L. N. Misra, Minister for Foreign Trade and Sri V. C. Shukla, Minister for Defence Production called on Bhagavan and spent some time with Him. Bhagavan had also been to Sri Chavan's house, acceding to insistent requests.

Members of the family of Mrs. Indira Gandhi called on Bhagavan a few times and spent quite some time with Him. Sri Dharendra Brahmachari who teaches Yoga to Smt. Indira Gandhi also spent some time with Bhagavan. Shri and Srimati Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya

leader spent some happy time with Bhagavan. So did Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit and Srimati Hiren Mukherji.

Bhagavan also met Mr. Kenneth B. Keating, the U. S. Ambassador, Mr. Fredrik Calkoren, the Ambassador for Netherlands, Mr. Abdul Hakim Tabibi, Ambassador for Afghanistan, Mr. James George, the High Commissioner for Canada, and the Ambassadors from Spain, and Iraq. He had tea with Mr. Kenneth B. Keating. He graciously gave him a ring that he had materialised; the ring was a little loose on the finger, and Bhagavan mentioned it Himself, when He went there for tea. "It will be tightened. You may ask how it will be tightened; just as it came from nowhere, the ring will be tightened from no where," said Bhagavan, smiling. Mr. Keating admitted that it was so tightened by the time the tea was over

General Manekshaw, Chief of the Army Staff and Air Chief Marshal Lal met Bhagavan at Dinner, at the house of Admiral Nanda. General Khanna had also some time with Bhagavan. Bhagavan also met Shri S. N. Sikri, Chief Justice of India, and Justices Grover and Vadyalingam of the Supreme Court. Shri Satyanarayana Sinha, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Baleshwar Prasad, Lt. Governor of Delhi, and the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court also spent some time with Him. The Chief Minister of Bihar also called on Him and was with Him for some time. Shri Swaminathan, Cabinet Secretary, Shri. T. P. Singh, Secretary for Agriculture. Shri Sunderrajan, Financial Adviser, and Shri Khanna Deputy Auditor-General also met Him.

Dr. D. S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission and Shrimati Kothari, and Shri Chitkara, Deputy Educational Adviser to the Government of India also spent some happy time with Bhagavan. Among those that met Bhagavan, film artistes were represented by Shri. M. Sunil Dutt and Shrimati Nargis.

Prominent among the journalists that met Bhagavan was Mr. Frank Moraes, Editor, Indian Express. He had a fairly long interview with Bhagavan. He wrote in the Sunday Standard, on 9th April, '72, "Ariel is no respecter of holy men, and indeed approached Sai Baba with skepticism. In the course of a fairly protracted conversation with him, he was first interested and then impressed by the perceptive views and reactions of this truly remarkable man...He presented Ariel with a materialised ring and a stone Cross. What however impressed Ariel more was the psychic quality of his mind, conversation and thinking."

This is by no means an exhaustive list. There were many others who received comfort and happiness from Bhagavan, during personal interviews. Delhi, as Ariel wrote, was 'invaded' by Bhagavan and Bhagavan let Himself be 'invaded' in return by top dignitaries from all walks of life for blessing and for interviews. The common folk received in ample measure healing grace and comfort from Bhagavan, all the days He stayed.

## VII

On the morning of 3rd April '72 a strange look of forlornness had come over Golf Links. A number of devotees had turned up for leave-taking even in the small hours of before dawn. For over a week, 16, Golf Links had been shifted as on a magic carpet to the sea-margin, where it had learned to live with the multitudinous roar of the ever-lasting ocean! It was now to be

brought back again, to live its wonted life. It was difficult to imagine how Golf Links Road would digest this contrast. Amidst touching farewells and tear compelling scenes, Bhagavan drove to Palam Airport. Waving His hand to the devotees assembled near the gangway, Bhagavan boarded the plane, and was promptly surrounded there by passengers and by the air staff...An Avatar has no rest!

—Vinayak Krishna Gokak

### Note

*An Account of the All India College Students' Summer Course on Spirituality and Indian Culture, being held at Brindavan, Whitefield, throughout the month of May, '72, under the Divine Direction of Bhagavan, will be included in our June issue.*

—(Ed)

## Mother Passes Away

Readers will be shocked to hear of the demise on 6th May, of Bhagavan's Mother, revered Easwaramma, at Brindavan, Whitefield. The end was quite sudden; she was cheerful and conscious till the last breath, since she was in the Gracious Presence of Bhagavan. She was over 80 years, in age.

As the Mother of the Avatar, she had a unique role and she fulfilled it with success and distinction. She was loved and respected as Mother by every member of the far-flung Sai Family. The hundreds of thousands of devotees who streamed into Prasanthi Nilayam or wherever Bhagavan happened to be, paid homage to the Mother, and received from her benign benediction. The picture of the Mother distributing saris to hundreds of poor women during every Dasara, with a word of cheer to every recipient, and the picture of her applying consecrated oil on Bhagavan's Head on the Birthday of Bhagavan are cherished by every devotee in his heart. The Mother whose Feet we longed to touch, to whom we offered our gratitude for the Avatar she bore and nourished, whose smile we yearned to earn has left, after the role allotted to her is over. We can still resolve to win her blessings in spirit, for she is Immortal and her Love is ever present and available.

Mother's Body was buried the same evening, placed on the left of the Samadhi of the father of Bhagavan, Sri Pedda Venkama Raju, who passed away on 4th November, 1963.

The body was carried by devotees in a floral seat, to the site, adjacent to the Prasanthi Nilayam, towards the East. Devotees in hundreds filled the air with the chorus of bhajans; thousands of villagers assembled to pay their last respects, and joined the procession with traditional beating of drums. The Students of the Pathashala rendered bhajans on the School Band. Others recited Vedic Hymns. Every one was struck with the serenity and composure on the countenance of Mother as they turned for a look with tearful eyes. The rites were performed by Sri Seshama Raju, the eldest son and by Sri Janakirama Raju, his brother, Every one of the thousands who were around felt a deep sense of personal bereavement, for, each of them had lost

a wise guide, a sympathetic guardian and generous helper. Easwaramma—the Name significantly means, the Mother of Easwara, the Mother of God. She was the Mother of Sai, who is the Mother of All.

Sai alone can give us the strength to bear the loss. Jai Sai Ram.

—(Ed)

## My People

The longing of my people in the Delhi area was so poignant that it took nearly half an hour for me to alight from the plane! And, all the nine days I was there, I shared my Ananda without a moment's respite, with lakhs and lakhs of eager devotees.

Huge concourses of men women and children streamed continuously into the Park opposite where I was, and sang Bhajans, night and day, clamouring for Darshan, crying out, "Sai Baba! Darshan Dedo." I was busy all through the day and most of the night, moving among them, relieving the sick and consoling the distressed. Hundreds of buses flowed in from the moffussil towns and pressed along the road, full of pilgrims from the States all round Delhi. Since Delhi is the seat of the Central Government and of all the Embassies from foreign lands, most of those in charge of Government were anxious to receive blessings and many Ambassadors who had learnt of the excellence of Indian Culture desired to know more of its uniqueness from me.

When Gulzarilal Nanda wanted me to meet the All India Sadhu Samaj at Kurukshetra I felt that it was not proper to disappoint the lakhs who come every day to Delhi for Darshan; but, finally, I left, during the hot hours of the day, so that the least number will be affected. There, I spoke of the essential virtues the Sadhu has to cultivate. I spoke also of the campaign against religion started by the secularists and said that unless the Ganga goes dry, Sanathana Dharma cannot be destroyed. One is as eternal as life-giving; as sustaining as the other. Another day, I went to Meerut, but the gathering there, was so huge that some people pressed us to return! But, I appeared on the Dais even while all were wondering what to do and gave them Ananda through Bhajan songs.

Two meetings were also arranged by the Samiti at Delhi, one at Kamani Hall and another at the spacious grounds of the Modern School. Lakhs of people were thus able to secure Darshan and derive Ananda. Those who felt that God and Godly ways have lost their appeal were confounded by the massive response. Some papers described it as a triumph, as my having taken Delhi by storm, etc! But when I go among my own people, and share their Ananda and allow them to share my Ananda, it is not appropriate to exult over it or characterise it as a 'triumph'. It is only a natural manifestation of kinship, a spontaneous outburst of Love and Reverence.

—From Baba's Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam: 8-4-72

*In Delhi, a traffic jam is a rare occurrence. Roads and kerbs are broader than in any other city. But here it was—a traffic jam, with cars and buses snarling up all avenues within a radius of two miles. The focal point was the house where Shri Sathya Sai Baba was staying.*

Editor,  
Illustrated Weekly Bombay 7-5-72

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28

### **Oath on Rama**

"Queen! Has any one harmed, you? Or, is your health affected adversely? Or has any wicked person dared act against your will? Speak! For your sake, I shall face even mortal injury, and punish them so that happiness may be restored to you. Do not doubt me.

O, Embodiment of Charm! Why do you suffer thus? Are you unaware that the entire Empire is at your beck and call? Whatever you wish to have, from any region, you have only to tell me, I shall endeavour to secure them for you and bring you joy. Inform me, what is it that you fear, what has brought this sorrow, do not withhold any thing, or hesitate to speak out! As the sun scatters the mist, I shall shatter the grief that smothers you."

Dasaratha fondled the Queen, and tried various means of consoling her and restoring her spirits. Kaikeyi kept in her mind the advice that Manthara had given her; she resolved that she must secure from her husband a promise on oath, before revealing her bitter wishes to him. To induce it out of him, she displayed false and seductive love, and wiped tears from her eyes; she held firm the hands of the King, who was pitifully enslaved by her enchantments and greatly enamoured of her charms.

She said, "Lord! I have no resentment against any one, nor has any one done me any harm or dealt me any insult. I have no craving for anything from any distant region of the earth. But, I have a long-nourished desire, I must admit. If you swear on oath that you will fulfill it, I shall tell you what it is."

She enticed him with a smile playing on her face; Dasaratha too smiled in response, and sliding a little towards her, said, "O, you foolish Queen! For this one simple affair, why was it necessary for you to put on so much of temper, and cause so much of anxiety and anguish? Hear this: You are most dear to me among women; and, among men, Rama is most dear to me. No one else among women and men do I love as much. You are both my very breath you know this well, don't you? I cannot survive a single day, without feasting my eyes on you and him.

Therefore, I swear on that Rama himself; tell me what your wish is, I shall fulfill it, without fail " When he declared thus on oath, with both her hands in his. Kaikeyi was

overwhelmed with supreme joy! She rose and sat up; she demonstrated even more love towards him for, she was glad he had changed into a well-wisher of hers.

### **Ask and it shall be given thee**

She asked, "O King! You have sworn on Rama; he is witness of the oath; is this genuine?" and, she made her position doubly secure, saying, "Lord! You are a Votary of Truth! You are the Highest among the Righteous! You are endowed with sovereign Might and Majesty! You must have in your memory the war between the Gods and the Demons; yet, let me remind you of that exploit, once again. That day, when the Demon Sambara slaughtered all before him, you struggled desperately with your last breath. Had I not guarded you and nurse I you into life, keeping myself vigilant and alert, you know what would have happened to you. You appreciated my devoted sacrifice, and declared, "Kaika! You rescued me from death itself. What can I give you in return! Whatever it may be, ask me two boons; I shall fulfill them, and repay the debt I owe you, the gratitude I have to evince. You desired that I should ask the boons you offered to grant. But, I felt then that your coming back to life was itself the most precious boon for me, and so, I replied, "Lord! I have no boon to ask from you now; I shall present my request for them, some time later; keep them with you in reserve for me." I pleaded with you, entreatingly; you were elated at my attitude, and expressed your admiration. You said, you liked my renunciation, and declared that the boons will be kept by you on trust, so long as life lasts, and can be drawn upon, with no objections raised. All this must be awake in your consciousness, aren't they?

You are the monarch of the earth. You are faithful to the plighted word. Therefore, give me now the two boons of mine that you kept in abeyance on my behalf. Make me happy thereby, I pray. I do not demand any new boon from you. I ask only for what are really mine. I need not remind you; for, you know it very well, that it is a heinous sin to refuse to give back riches placed in trust in one's hands as for safe custody.

### **Boons kept in Trust**

If you say now that you cannot grant them, you will be injuring me, with that breach of faith. I cannot bear the disappointment; rather than live with that sense of defeat, I consider that getting rid of life is more honourable. When the husband does not honour the word given to the wife, how can the wishes of the people in the kingdom be realised? The emperor who stoops to deceiving his wife, making her believe him and then, acting against that belief, does not deserve the position of protector of his subjects, does he? You know that the lawgiver sage, Manu, has laid down that such ungrateful prevaricators should not be treated as monarchs.

Why should I dilate further on this point and, repeat a thousand arguments? In case my boons are not granted this day, Kaikeyi will not be alive at dawn." Announcing thus, she burst into loud weeping and wailing. Dasaratha was rendered helpless and weak, by her histrionics; like the innocent deer that is drawn into the net spread for his capture, by the imitative cries of the hunter, Dasaratha overcome by cooings of love and drawn by the entrancing gestures of the Queen fell into the trap, yielding to her wishes, like an inane and ineffective man. He vowed solemnly "I shall certainly give you the two boons," her palms tightly held in his.

No sooner were those words uttered, than the eyes of Kaikeyi bloomed wide and bright. She watched the face of Dasaratha intently for some time, and said, "O King! This day I have

realised how good a person you are! This day, you have proved the genuineness of your claim that you will never break a promise once made, She started extolling Dasaratha in this and other ways. The love-torn emperor was highly elated by her praise; he urged her on, with the prompting "Kaika! Why do you delay further"? Ask! Ask for the boons!"

### **The Queen's Demand**

Kaikeyi hesitated; she stuttered. "With the arrangements made for the coronation of Rama tomorrow, perform the coronation of Bharata, my son: this is the first boon I demand! Next, Rama, wearing matted hair and deerskin, and dressed in tree-bark raiment, shall go into the Dandaka forest and remain there for fourteen years, as a forest dweller: this is the second boon I ask for. Bharata must become the Heir-Apparent, with no one obstructing his path. Rama must set out, into the jungle, before my very eyes. Grant me these two boons and maintain the honour and dignity of your line untarnished; or else, assent to the extinction of Kaikeyi's life this very moment." Thus declaring, she stood up and stared wildly in a determined stance, like a demoness.

The Emperor was shrivelled by the cruel bolts that rained on him. Was it a dream? Could it be true! Was it Kaikeyi who asked for these boons? Or, was it a bloodthirsty spectre? Could it be a terrible hallucination, of his? Was it the vile trick played by some horrid illness? He could not gauge the answer!

### **The Kings Agony**

So, he cried, "Kaika! Is it you, there or, is it some ogress who has assumed your form? Tell me first who you are." Like a person who has lost control of his limbs, he moved unsteadily, unable to mouth the words he wished to speak. He rolled listlessly from side to side like a madman, his eyes stared wildly around him. Suddenly, sparks flew from his eyes as he gazed at Kaikeyi. He exclaimed in terrible anger, "Vile vicious woman! What exactly is your aim? Is it to uproot the entire royal line? What injury has my dear son Rama inflicted on you? How could your heart agree to send my Rama, who loves you even more than he does his own mother, Kausalya, into the thick dark jungle? I took you so long to be a Princess: now, I find you have been a poisonous cobra; I allowed you to infest my home; out of sheer ignorance. How could such a sinful idea enter your head, when Rama, the very breath of my life, is being acclaimed by every being that breathes?"

If imperative, I am prepared to give up the empire or even my life; but, I cannot give up Rama; no; you crave that your son be hailed as Emperor? Well have him so. I shall hie to the forest, with Kausalya Sumitra and others, taking my Rama with me. But, I can never send Rama alone into the jungle. That is impossible. Give up this atrociously sinful desire. Give up the hatred of Rama that you have cultivated. Kaika! Tell me frankly: do you really desire that these things take place? Or, is all this merely a stratagem to find out whether I have affection towards your son, Bharata? If so, you can ask that Bharata be crowned Yuvaraja; but there is no meaning in asking that Rama be exiled into the forest. Such a desire should not be entertained or spoken out lightly or in fun.

## **Why exile Rama?**

Kaika! Rama is the first-born son. He is the repository of all virtues. The years of his reign will be most glorious; you have told me often that you are looking forward to the time when such golden dreams will come true. Anal, now you want that this very Rama should be sent into the forest! What is the deeper meaning of this request? Are you joking with me? If it is all a joke, why this entry into the Hall of Anger? Why this rolling on the hard stony floor? Jokes too have limits beyond which they become pitifully cruel. I cannot entertain the idea, even as a joke. No. I can never be separated from Rama. Kaika! You have been behaving quite like an intelligent woman all these years. But, now, the intelligence has become crooked, and wicked. Such perversions are always harbingers of self-destruction. It is a heinous sin to injure good persons. Only demonic characters will torture the virtuous. Of course, the good will not be affected by these tactics; the stratagems of the wicked will only add to the fame and glory of the good. They might appear hard to bear, only for some little time.

Your wicked plans appear to me to be fraught with disaster to the Ikshvaku dynasty itself. For, until this moment, you have never spoken an unpleasant word or thought of an inauspicious act. I find it impossible to believe that it is the same you who is asking me such things today!

Kaika! You were all along afraid of transgressing the codes of moral law, at every step; you were anxious to win the Grace of God by each little thought, word and deed. Where has that fear of the unrighteous gone now? What have you done with that devotion to God, which kept you on the path of righteousness? What is the gain you envisage, when you want the righteous Rama to be sent to the forest for fourteen years?

## **The Glory of Rama**

His body is soft and tender, like the petal of a freshly blossomed flower; he is most charming to behold. Rama is so enticingly beautiful. Of what profit is it for you if he suffers unbearable pangs of pain in the forest? In this palace, there are many thousand attendants and maids. Can any one of them point a finger at him and say, that he is faulty in any respect? Well. Leave alone our palace. Can you bring from the capital city any single person, can you name any single person who blames Rama? He has discovered many in misery and propped them up with gifts and riches; he has shown great consideration for them. He has noticed many persons who are homeless and provided them with houses. By his love and care, he has won the affection of all people. That you should harbour hate against such a loveable son strikes me dumb; I cannot find words to describe your devilish barbarism.

There are many who exploit their own subjects, and, act only to foster their own selfish interests; such demons are appearing in good numbers today. But, in your eyes, due perhaps to the age, or your own past sins, persons who assuage the wrongs done to the poor and the distressed and foster their advancement, those who directly inquire into their difficulties and problems and afford relief, such good men appear as bad, deserving exile and punishment! Every one in this empire relish the description of the virtues of Rama and take great delight in recounting his goodness. While they are exhausted in the fields, the farmers and labourers sing songs on Rama and his charms, so that they may make their tasks lighter; when I came to know of this, I was filled with joy. How can your heart agree to inflict on such a compassionate soul this excruciating sentence?

This very evening, when I placed before a gathering of leading citizens, sages, elders, ministers, scholars and many other experts in statecraft, the proposition of the Coronation of Rama, no one raised a whisper of dissatisfaction or dissent. On the other hand, they praised Rama in countless ways, and declared that it was the fruit of the merit that they have accumulated in many past lives that they could now secure as Heir-apparent and Lord, such a spiritual hero who has mastered his senses, such an embodiment of selfless activity, of intelligent detachment, of unflinching loyalty to Truth, as Rama; they indicated their joy by continuous jai Jais.

### **The king's No**

This treasure of my love, this favourite of my people, do you desire to send into the forest? Whatever you may say, this is certain. I will not send my Rama into the forest. And, listen to this also. The coronation of Rama shall take place tomorrow; it cannot be cancelled." Dasaratha announced this, in an outburst of blunt pride and courage.

At this, Kaikeyi assumed a terrific mien and retorted: Raja! Remember, a few moments ago, you vowed under many oaths that you will grant me the boons I ask. And, now you are going back on your plighted word. Now, who is dragging the glory of the Ikshvaku Line in the dust, you or I? Ponder over this deeply. It is the pride of the Ikshvaku Line that no one of that dynasty shall break his word, when once it is spoken. You are now soiling that fair fame. Without weighing the pros and cons, you promised to grant without fail the boons I wanted. The mistake, if any, is yours, not mine. You gave me the boons then, you promised to grant them today. You are the very person who gave your word twice. Consider your honour, your status, your dignity, when you deny the very words you spoke then and now.

It may be common usage for rulers to harm the weak, and act contrary to the premises solemnly made. But, it cannot help their self-respect or esteem. Those who break their promises and cheat women are savages not sovereigns. When rulers slide into this savagery, their subjects will naturally resent and revolt; the kingdom will fast become demon-dom.

**(To be continued)**

### **The Treasure**

*Long waited ambitions of the saints and sages  
Long waited desires of the poets of ages—  
What a Treasure! What a Fortune I have come to be true!  
So, now, we can write even letters to You!  
By ordinary Dak! And, lo, they're read by You!*

—Vijay Lakhani

## **Ashok Kumar and The Vow**

Ashok Kumar, aged of 21, the three-wheeled scooter driver, was not honest! He cheated his customers, every time, to the tune of at least 25 paise. One day, he took a customer, to Golf Links, where he heard `a Baba' had come. He stayed on, to have His darshan. He saw Him, twice, that day. He desired to have His photograph, but, could not get one.

Next day, Providence directed me to him. I hired his scooter and he was taking me, through Golf Links Road. He turned round and asked me, `Did you see this Baba?' I pretended not to know, so that I could draw him out. "Who is He?" I asked. For full half-hour, he narrated to me the miracles of Baba and how lucky he was to have His Darshan, not once but, twice. I was touched by his genuine enthusiasm. He said, "While taking His Darshan, I took an oath that I would never cheat anyone." When I reached home, I took him into the little altar, where I had photographs of Baba, garlanded, with small oil lamps burning and incense sticks filling the room with fragrance. I gave him a photograph of Baba. He received it gratefully and said, "Baba has heard my prayers." I engaged him again and after reaching the destination, he said the charges were Rs. 4-40; I gave him a ten-rupee note; he returned a fiver and I asked him to keep the small change due.

Meanwhile another customer got into the scooter; while Ashok and I were engaged in conversation, the `customer' managed to `pocket' the ten rupee note which had fallen on the ground! As I was about to leave, he came running, "Saab! You have not given me the ten rupee note!" That was a great shock. I gave him another tenner, and told him, "If you find my first note, in any of your pockets, return it to me". Next day, he came to my place. He returned the ten-rupee note. He begged, "Saab! I committed a big mistake". He explained, "The `gentleman' who hired the scooter, had stolen this note. I detected it when he took the money from his pocket, to pay my dues. When any one gives me a currency note. I fold it always in a different manner I saw such a note in his possession. He refused to give it to me. There was a fight, a crowd gathered, a policeman came, and the `gentleman' reluctantly parted with it! After the crowd dispersed, the policeman asked me, "Why should you return the note to that Saab? Let us share it; give me five and you take five" But, I told him, "If I am involved in an accident, you are not coming to help me! Baba will come there and help me. I have taken an oath before Baba that I will never more cheat any one".

This is one specific example of how an illiterate scooter-driver turned honest. May be, many thousands have turned a new Leaf in their lives. He Knows. Delhi's polluted air has been sanctified by His visit. He alone can do it.

**—R. Ramanujam, New Delhi**

### **East Africa**

*The Second Annual Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, East Africa, was held at Nairobi under the auspices of the Nairobi Centre from 31st March to 3rd April last. Dr. C. G. Patel President for East Africa inaugurated the Conference. Over 800 members participated. The Secretaries of the Samithis from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania presented the*

*Reports of their activities. There was a lively and useful programme of discourses, films and entertainment items, from Bal Vikas Children. It was decided that the next Conference will be held at Kampala, Uganda.*

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### **The Accusing Finger**

But, Kaikeyi could not be silent. She said, "All these years, you have striven to acquire honour and renown; and, you have won them to a large extent. Now the infamy of breaking one's plighted word, is on your head not on mine. Recollect the careers of the kings of old. Take good care that you do not act counter to your vows and oaths. O King! Ponder well. You are proceeding along a path that is atrociously bad! Beware! You are moving against the dictates of Dharma.

Well. Were you as intelligent as you are reputed to be, you should have first ascertained fully the nature of the boons I wanted before you gave the promise. You did not look before and after; you were enchanted by my words and you gave your word that they shall be granted.

After all this, you blame me, when you are asked to fulfill that promise. Consider how seriously you are mistaken in this! How foolish you proclaim yourself to be! You accuse me, for having given up my fear of the unrighteous and devotion to the Divine, and entering into reprehensible cruelty. But, what about you? You are acclaimed as Dharma-vrata (a strict adherent of the vow to be righteous in word, thought and deed), and Daiva-samana (equal to God Himself). How can you parade that claim now, when you are going back on your promise on oath? Examine and pronounce judgement on yourself.

The cleverness that dives and discovers the faults of those before you isn't commendable; if one dives into one's own faults and failings end is vigilant that they do not lead him astray into wrong and sin, that use of intelligence is really commendable. Kings and rulers are highly intelligent; they are taken to be all-knowing. If, such as you, do not carry out this self-examination, but, are concerned only with your own selfish interests, what right have you to blame us, as selfish and narrow minded?

You granted the boons; it is a fact. You took an oath; it is a fact. You broke the oath, you went back on the given word; it is a fact! Reflect within yourself, whether these three are true or no. You are deluded by attachment to the son; you are overwhelmed by fondness for the wife. So, you dump your promise into the waters! I am no culprit; it is you who have done wrong.

### **Maternal Nature**

For, it is natural for the mother to be attached to the son. Every woman who is a mother will yearn that her son must rise to positions of high authority, that of the Monarch of the Realm. It is the prompting of Nature. It is her bounden duty that the kingship she covets for her son is

unassailed by others; and, it is only natural that she contemplates measures in advance to counteract all possible assailments in advance. I am only carrying out my natural duties and responsibilities, remember: there is nothing unnatural or wrong in my conduct.

When Rama is crowned as Heir-Apparent, his mother Kausalya, will become the Rajamata, the Queen-Mother. My son will stand with folded arms, awaiting the command of Rama, ready to run errands for him. He will fall at the feet of Rama, while reporting to him about the task he has accomplished for him; may be, he will be reprimanded. No; I cannot be a witness of such scenes; I will be so humiliated that I cannot live a day longer. Better far to drink poison now and die, than look on the shameful condition of my son that day.

O King! I am declaring this, as a solemn oath, taken on the name of my son Bharata, whom I value as much as my breath. I shall not be satisfied with anything less than exiling Rama into the forest. With these agonisingly harsh words, Kaikeyi fell on the floor and started sobbing and groaning in a fit of extreme sorrow.

### **The King's Despair**

Dasaratha reacted like a mad man, beating his head, in despair. He said, "Kaika! Has any one advised you that this calamity will benefit you? Or, has some evil spirit possessed you, and forced you to utter these desires? What is this absurdity—this ridiculous madness—sending Rama into the forest and crowning Bharata? Why not wish well for me, your husband, Bharata, your son, and this Kingdom of Ayodhya? Give up this desire fraught with certain calamity. Think deeply over the consequences. Or else, you and I, and your son, all three, will become the targets for the direst infamy. It will not end with that. The entire kingdom will be ruined, and many more tragedies are bound to take place.

Mean, degraded woman! Can we believe that Bharata will agree to get himself crowned, even if I now accept your request and promise to do so? Bharata is a true adherent of Dharma; he is intelligent and full of rectitude. He will not agree either to exiling Rama into the forest or to himself becoming the Heir-Apparent. Not he alone, but, the Ministers, the Courtiers, the Vassals, the Allies, the Sages the Commons, the Citizens—every one will oppose your desire. How can you be happy, when so many are unhappy? Consider the situation you are responsible for!

The elders and sages endorsed it: they were all of one mind; this evening, at the Grand Assembly of Citizens, I announced that I shall celebrate the Coronation of Rama. If I act counter to that Announcement, I will be counted as a coward who runs back from the battlefield at sight of the enemy. All arrangements have been completed for the Coronation. All have been informed about the Festival. The people have started preparing the City for the Celebration; the streets are already packed with happy throngs, with faces shining in expectant joy.

At this moment, if I send Rama, into the forest, will not the people laugh at me, saying, 'What! This man has finished three chapters—The Coronation, the Ruling of the Realm and the Exile—all in one single night! In what manner can I explain my action to them, after what I publicly declared in the midst of the mammoth gathering of the populace? How harshly the people will blame me, feeling that their king is such a big fool. I ruled over them all these long years and won their applause as a consistent adherent of Dharma, as an embodiment of high

virtues and as a redoubtable hero, brave and full of courage. But, now, how can I bear the dishonour of being bantered about as a fool, who descended to this low level of conduct?

Dasaratha spoke in this strain, reminding her of the hard blow that his fair name and unblemished fame will receive, if he acts according to her desire.

Nevertheless, Kaikeyi transformed herself into a Demoness of Destruction, and brushed aside Dasaratha's importunities, as if they were trash; she did not attach an atom of value to them. She refused to yield or loosen her hold. On the other hand, her grip became tighter every moment, her greed more deep rooted. She spoke quite contrary to the appeals of the Maharaja and insisted on reminding him only of the promise he had made, from which he threatened to resile.

### **The Dance of Death**

So, Dasaratha said, "Kaika! If it happens that Rama goes into the forest, I will not be able to live a moment longer. And, I need not tell you what will happen to Kausalya; she will draw her last breath the very moment. And, Sita? She will be mortally shocked; she cannot live a second away from Rama. Will the people watch on all this with equanimity? When the great hero, the virtuous, the paragon of wisdom, Rama, is being sent as an exile into the forest, can Lakshmana keep quiet? Why detail a thousand things? The very next moment, Lakshmana will cast off his body. This is the bare truth. Thus, our Kingdom will have to sugar all these catastrophes and calamities.

You too are aware of this string of tragedies; but, I cannot understand why you are attempting, with eyes open, to win a widow's role? O, wicked, vile soul! I was deceived by your charms; it was like cutting one's own throat, charmed by the sword of gold. I drank the cup of milk, unaware that it had poison in it. You cheated me, with many a winsome trick. At last, you have planned to consign to the dust my dynasty itself.

Shame on me! What a fool I am! I secured this sanctified son, after performing many a scriptural Yaga (Sacrifice); Divine Grace gave him unto me. I sold away his fortune and his future for the paltry pleasure a woman gave is this low deed worthy of His Majesty Emperor Dasaratha? Will not the meanest dog in my kingdom despise me for this act? Will not every child in my kingdom hurl stones at me, in derision? Alas! Is this to be the fate of Dasaratha in his last days? I tightened a thing round my own neck, not realising that it was a rope that strangles. I never knew that it was the Deity of Death with whom I dallied and diverted myself so long.

Alas! I flirted with Death and fondled it on my breast. I treated her as my favourite, comrade and companion. It is surely the burden of my sins recoiling on me now. Or else, is there ally where, at any time, a father, who, for the sake of a woman's bed drives his son into the fearful forest, as an exile?

Ah! What strange behaviour is this, of a human being! I am unable to believe this, in spite of everything.

### **Disgracing the Dynasty**

Kaika! Change your foolish thought; Rama will not retort at any word of mine. The mere report of these happenings is enough—he will prepare himself to move into the forest! He will not even ask the question, why are you anxious to send me into the jungle! He is of such sterling virtue. Why mention only Rama! No one of my sons will disobey any of my commands. Bharata will be disgusted when he hears of your plan. He may even ignore the fact that you are his mother and behave quite inexplicably. He may be ready for any dire step, For him, Rama is the very life, his very vital breaths, all the five put together. He may do something to defeat your pet desire. That is to say, he may exile himself into the forest and ask that Rama be crowned. He is of that stamp of goodness and rectitude. I am wondering at your crooked intellect, which cannot grasp the workings of Bharata's mind. Kaika! Wicked designs are precursors of self-destruction, as the saying goes. This design has entered your head; presaging your ruination, remember.

You are bringing on the fair name of the Ikshvaku Royal family an indelible blot; you are plunging so many in the fathomless depths of grief; you are bringing about the end of so many lives! What happiness do you hope to have, after achieving all this?

Even if you do achieve it, will that be Ananda? Can you call it so? O Shame! Those who exult over the sorrows of others are in truth, sinners of the darkest hue, of demonic brood. Those who strive to cause joy to others, those who yearn that others must be happy, these are the holy sort. You are a Maharani (Queen); you are a Princess, of Royalty born; yet, you are not conscious of this little truth. You are a disgrace to royal blood.

One final word! Rama is my very life. Without him, I cannot hold on to life. No! I cannot hold on to life. He cannot disappoint you; so, though I may not order him by word of my own mouth to go into the forest, he may, on hearing of my oath and your desire, himself proceed thereto, in order to make my word valid; his act will brook no delay or denial. As soon as I hear news of that event, know that I drab my last breath.

Lakshmana, Sita and Kausalya may, in all likelihood, follow Rama. Ask me why; I shall tell you. Kausalya cannot exist alive, apart from Rama. Sita will not stay away from Rama. Lakshmana will not stop walking along the footsteps of Rama. Urmila too may proceed along with Lakshmana into exile. There will be none here then, to perform the funeral rites of this body, and days will elapse to get Bharata and Satrugna from the Kekaya kingdom, sending them the message. Till then, this will have to lie without the ceremonial rite. Perhaps, the people will rise against me for having descended to this low level of barbarism, and condemn my body to be thrown as carrion for crows and vultures, since it does not deserve decent disposal, through prescribed rites. Perhaps, no; for, my subjects will wait until Bharata arrives, embalming the corpse by some means or other. Bharata will never agree to accept the throne and be King. Under such circumstances, he is not entitled to touch the body or perform the funeral rites.

### **A Widow's Role**

"Come! At least, promise me that you Will have my funeral rites performed by him," he pleaded. He said. Of course, you may even promise me so; but, you will not give up the Ananda you hope to derive from a widow's life. What is it that you hope for, tell me, O vile viper! You have turned into a demon, at last! Are you undermining and laying under the Earth, the Raghu

Clan, this Royal Line? Is this the upsurge of your basic nature? Or, is it some mysterious Divine fate that dogs your thought and forces you to act against your will in this strange way? I find it impossible to gauge the secret."

While Dasaratha was being tortured in mind like this, the night rolled on into its third section. He groaned like a man in pain afflicted with some chronic illness. He was being broiled in the agony.

**(To be continued)**

*Saint Manickavasagar took shelter from a downpour of rain on a narrow step before a door. He laid himself to sleep, but, was interrupted by another man who ran in for shelter. The saint said there was just enough space for two to sit; and, they both sat in comfort. Within minutes, another stranger too wanted some space, free from rain. The saint welcomed him, saying, "There is certainly space enough here for three to stand! Come on!" This is the way Love takes in all, who need help.*

—Baba

## **The Alchemy of Brindavan**

More than 300 College Students from all the political and linguistic regions, from Meghalaya to Kerala, from Darjeeling to Madurai City gathered at Brindavan, Whitefield to be 'transformed' into true inheritors of the great culture of India in its manifold aspects, through the alchemy of the Love, which Bhagavan showered on them, and the inspiring contact with many of the leaders of the Literary, Scientific, Artistic and Spiritual Renaissance of today, for a period of 31 days, in the month of May, 1972.

The Camp was declared by all who participated in it, as well as by every one of the distinguished visitors, as 'unique' in the history of modern Indian educational reconstruction. As Dr. Gokak announced during the Valedictory Function on the 31st May. Bhagavan was the "author, producer, director preceptor and spectator" of the entire Course on Spirituality and Indian Culture. The curriculum for the course was planned to correct three defects in College Education as prevalent today by 1. Acquaintance with the heritage of our national culture 2. Acquisition of a World View, in consonance with the Universal Spirit of that Culture 3. The Cultivation of positive Secularism. Five courses comprised the curriculum: The many-faceted Culture of India, including Dhyana and Yogasanas; The Texts of Hinduism, the Systems of Indian Philosophy; the Physical and Social Sciences, Culture and Values; and, The Outlines of Comparative Religion.

Five lectures a day, for six days of the week with a Discourse by Bhagavan, every evening, formed the core of the Course. The participants underwent a very tight schedule of engagements; for, they began the day at 4-30, with Om-recitation, and went, through omnibuses, to some one village which lay around, and walked through the streets in groups, singing Bhajans, an item of service which ranks high in the estimation of Bhagavan. After breakfast, they were

ready for the three lectures included in the morning sessions. At 1 P.M., they took their lunch, and after some rest, were up again at 3, for two more hour-long lectures. At 5, they had tea, and at 5-45 Bhajan started, to be ended at 6-30. Then, someone selected State-wise, read a succinct report, to the gathering, of the three classes held in the morning, and another from the same State reported about the evening lectures. After this, Bhagavan blessed them with His Discourse clarifying many a knotty problem of spiritual practice, and inspiring the young men and women to lead a purer, more useful, more worthwhile life. The 50 teachers, 100 women students and 200 men students that attended the Course were indeed singularly fortunate, for they have become the vanguard of the Sai Era of Atma Vidya, in the Colleges of our land.

The teachers too felt the thrill. The atmosphere of Divine Love, Self-discipline Earnest Study, and Mutual Service that pervaded the Camp was a novel, though welcome experience for them. They could scarce believe that there were 300 College students before them; so quiet, so orderly, so avid were they, though they belonged to all parts of India, and professed Islam, Christianity Zoroastrianism Jainism, and the various Creeds grouped under Hinduism. On Sundays, after Pranava Recital, Nagarasankirtan and Yoga Sessions, they listened to a Call for Loving Service from Bhagavan, who also used the occasion for answering questions on Spiritual Disciplines posed by the participants. Then, the boys and girls busied themselves in active unstinted service of one type or other, at Brindavan, until lunchtime.

And, what a Galaxy of Teachers helped the Camp to enrich the Course! Sri. Mohanlal Sukhadia, Chancellor, Bangalore, Mysore and Karnataka Universities, Dr. R. R. Diwakar, former Chancellor of Patna University, Dr. S. Bhagavantham, former Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University, Sri. Tukol, present and Dr. Gokak, former, Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore, General C. M. Cariapa, Sri. Nakul Sen, I. C. S., Lt. Governor of Goa, Dr. Sri. Rukmini Arundale, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director of the Institute of Philosophical Studies, Madras, the Rajamatha of Nawanagar, Sri. K. Gurudutt, I. A. S., Bangalore, Dr. Verma, Director, Mental Health Institute, Bangalore, spoke to them and were glad for the opportunity. Learned and popular exponents of traditional lore, like Dr. Diwakarla Venkatavadhani from Hyderabad, Jammalamadaka Madhava Rama Sarma from Guntur, Kulapathi Kollur Somasekhara Sastri from E. Gadavari, Brahmasri Pidaparathi Krishnamurthi Sastry, Bramasri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastry from the Godavari Delta, Prof. G. P. Raja. rathnam, Prof. Pandurangi of Bangalore, Prof. Magal of Delhi and Dr. A. K. Saran from Simla, Dr. Chandrasekhar Thakur from Jamnagar, Dr. P. K. Sundaram from Madras, Dr. Chaturvedi Narasimha Sastry from Guntur, Mr, Landon Carter from Colorado, gave lectures on the subjects they have specialised in Justice Gopivallabha Iyengar, of the Mysore High Court, spoke to them on Hindu Law. Professor S. S. Bhandarkar from Gwalior. Dr. D. R. Bendre, the poet and seer of Karnataka, spoke. Brarnarshi Daivaratha Sarma, the renowned Vedic scholar and poet addressed the students on Vedic Thought. Yogasana was taught by Sri Venkateswara Rao of the Kaivalya Dham, Bombay (for the boys,) and Srimathi Indra Devi, 'the First Lady in Yoga' in the United States, hailing from Mexico for the very purpose of instructing the girls. Principal H. Sundara Rao. M.A., Vidwan Thirumalacharya of Venkatagiri and Sri. Sriramurthy M. Sc., of Aukiripalli also addressed the students. Gavai Chathurbhuj Rathod from Bombay trained the students in Bhajan. Vidwan Somayajulu Venkatachala Sastry spoke to them on the Gayatri and the significance of Sandhya vandanam. Altogether, a bouquet of brilliance rarely available for any Summer Course in any land!

The impression that was indelibly left on the minds and hearts of the young participants can be gauged from the spontaneous and sincere speeches made by four of them, on the Valedictory Evening,

Meera Bharany (Delhi) said, "The first thought that strikes me is the uniqueness of the situation in which we are (!) discussing, in this 20th century, culture and values, spirituality and adjustment, while the world around is busy discussing rockets that land on the moon, computers faster than the existing models, and the new Ambassador car.

An awakening has come about in us, we have realised that the world of values is as important as the world of fact, that tangible has to lead us back to its source, the intangible. This realisation that the finite and the infinite are not disparate, that snow and ice are not separate from water, has come to us, because Baba has put the darkness that haunted us, into flight, and heralded in, the hour of God, of which this Summer Course is the first Ray of Dawn. Here, information has been consummated into knowledge, knowledge into wisdom, and life into living. During the day, we had theoretical and rational knowledge, which was transformed in terms of life, by Baba in the evening, and realised and lived by ourselves, during the daily Bhajans.

This novel experience has come, through the dynamic force of Divine Love, the Prema that aroused compassionate concern for the suicidal state of affairs in the World, that planned and directed this Summer Course. We carry to the World the Message of Divine Love; we have learnt how futile it is to know only why the neighbour's vacuum cleaner runs smoother than ours! We have to learn why man is better than the beast, why it is covetable to be born as man. We have to make nature our teacher, life our school and the service of humanity, our task."

Anita Bahl, also from Delhi, said, during her speech, "We came to Brindavan a month ago, to live with God, to eat His food, and seek His shelter and take refuge in His wisdom. We came, typical examples of this generation of youth—seldom knowing that God is a way of life, and that spirituality begins when you acknowledge your very breath to be God's. Without God, we now know, man is blown this way and that, since desire is his sole motive force, and chance, his sole law. This Summer Course has planted faith in God in our hearts.

The past one month has evolved for each one of us a daily schedule of love, sacrifice and service which were there from dawn till the break of dawn. Lifting a neighbour's chair, sweeping a public compound, quenching the thirst of a drooping plant, or telling the truth even when it hurts, are actions we have started doing, with a new awareness that our Lord loves us for them. Baba's personal supervision of every act of ours—from sweeping the garden, to keeping 'tala' during the evening Bhajans—is an inspiration, which has given a new purpose to our lives.

For, the aim of this Course is not to transmit information, but, to effect transformation. The sincerity of the Professors, their sense of dedication, their emotional involvement and prayerful attitude, these gave us an experience of the 'Gurukula' in the modern context. It has planted in us a profound sense of humility."

Kamal Sawhney from Maharashtra spoke thus: "To rise with the sonorous vibrations of the Omkara, to sing the glory of God in the sweet atmosphere of the rural dawn, are experiences

we had never enjoyed; our sense of satisfaction at bringing the Name of God to the villages surrounding Brindavan was reflected in their spontaneous response. They poured into our stream of devotion their tributary of faith. On our return, Bhagavan gave us Darshan and blessed us.

The evening Bhajan was a fitting counterpoint, to the refreshing round of the morning, providing delightful relaxation, after a strenuous day. Bhagavan's accompaniment with the kartal enlivened the Bliss. The practical aspect of, our spiritual education was not forgotten. Dhyana and Yoga were taught to us; our urban muscles were given thorough stretching, though initially each one of us was a comic scene for others.

Sunday provided a fertile field for Karma Yoga, under Bhagavan's Guidance. We learnt that the true spirit of social service lies in Self-Confidence, and Self-realisation. We hope to infuse this spirit of 'unity' with all, into all actions of our daily lives. Through the alchemy of His Discourses and His Contacts with us, Bhagavan has saturated us with a Code of Conduct, whose basic principle is: Be Good; Do Good; See Good.

For the first time I sense the inadequacy of the English language which does not contain any word or phrase that can describe my emotions towards Bhagavan, of reverence, love and gratitude." Deepak Nanda, of Delhi, said, "Beloved Bhagavan! The treasure chest of wisdom, handed over to us by You and by the Teachers drawn into Your Presence, is ours now. On behalf of my brothers and sisters, I pray for your Grace, to enable us to implement it in our daily lives. This Summer Course, we all feel, is the brilliant Dawn of the Sathya Sai Era, in the Colleges of India."

The student participants were from all levels of College Education from the post-Graduate Classes to the First Year Pre-University Class, and, so, to assess the success of the Course, five papers each of one hour duration were set, for securing answers from them. A wide variety of choice was given them to select the questions they could tackle. The papers were on (1) Culture and Yogasana (2) Values in Physical and Social Sciences (3) Sacred Texts of Hinduism (4) Systems of Indian Philosophy and (5) Comparative Religion. Ethics and Law. The results revealed that the students had assimilated the lectures in a surprisingly successful manner. Ten students, two in each of the sections, were awarded prizes, and they were graciously distributed by Bhagavan Himself on the 31 May, during the Valedictory Gathering.

Readers can get an idea of the contents and character of the Course, from these extracts, from the questions papers: How many Chakras are there? Which posture affects the pituitary and pineal glands? What was Gandhiji's idea of non-violence? By which masters was Jawaharlal influenced? What was the nature of their influence on him? How should we adapt ourselves to fit into an Age, which has inevitably been an Age of Technology? Give an example of reckless exploitation of nature and state the consequence to men of such exploitation. Bring out the significance of the story of Yama and Nachiketa. What is the Gayatri Mantra? Explain briefly its significance. Why is Sri Rama called the Embodiment of Dharma? Give the inner meaning of the Gajendra Upakhyaana, the Ambarisha Story and the Dhruva Episode, in the Bhagavatha. What is the significance of the idea of Trimurti in Indian religion? Elucidate the statement, Yogah Chittavritti-nirodha, Explain the nature and purpose of Yajna. How would you explain the term, Avatar? Mention the significance of Sivarathri. Mention Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Four Fold path to

a good life. What is meant by Rasanubhava? Describe the effects of Nama-Sankirtan. What are the Four Noble Truths, proclaimed by the Buddha? Write on the possibilities of a World Religion. Write a paragraph on 'Means and Ends'. How would you answer the question, 'On what compulsion should we be moral?' Describe the main features of the ideal of Gunatita, Sthitaprajna, Yogi and Brahmajñani. What is the importance of Law in human society? What is the significance of Sai Yoga?

A Synopsis of all the Lectures including the Discourses by Bhagavan will be published soon and readers can have in their hands a book about the Course and its impact on the participants. As Dr. D. S. Kothari, Chairman of the University Grants Commission and Author of the epoch-making Kothari Commission Report on Education, said, while presiding over the Valedictory Function, "The tangible Lectures, Classes, and Social Service Activities combined with the intangible Atmosphere of Brindavan instilled in you, a creative synthesis of material and spiritual values."

Sri Badri Narayan, the Minister for Education, Government of Mysore said, on the same day, "How grateful to Almighty should we all be, that we have this Incarnation in our midst! He is the Living God whom we can see and hear. Under His Guidance and Grace, these students have lived for one full month in this quiet charming place, full of spiritual vibrations. When the West is looking to the East for practical lessons in acquiring peace, the East, alas, is forsaking its heritage and copying the evils of the West. Bhagavan is correcting this tendency and saving the world from spiritual ruin".

Sri Mohanlal Sukhadia, Governor of Mysore, in his address to the participants on 30th May, said, "Even extremely brilliant boys and girls that pass out of our College are ignorant of the basic truths of our history, mythology and religion. The formative years of their lives are spent in mastering skills and attitudes that deny them a full, free and happy life. I cannot imagine a more useful and profitable Camp and Course of Study, than what has been organised here, by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

In fact, as Dr. Gokak told the participants, no one of them can be the same again! Bhagavan loved them so deeply that He was with them every moment, watching, counselling cajoling, warning, clarifying and showering Grace! He explained most lucidly the fundamental ideas: Maya, Karma, Atma, Paramatma, Sraddha, Bhakthi, and Dharma. He exhorted them to cultivate Prema, and realise the Oneness of the Universal Atma that is the Reality in all this variety of Creation. Dr. Gokak said that He was the most taxed of all the lecturers! In all, He addressed them 38 times. Every Sunday, He solved for them the doubts they raised on spiritual problems: Where does the soul reside? How can we win over Maya? How can we attain full concentration? Will not service entangle us still more in Karma? What happens on death? How effective is Breath-control for Sakshatkara? And so on. He warned them against the evil influence of films, horror comics, pen friendships and the blind fanatic imitation of the West. His love radiated throughout the course in every heart.

On 1st June, when the time came for leaving Brindavan, it was found that no one would depart, without Bhagavan's persuasion and pressure. They had learnt to love Bhagavan and the rigorous schedule so much. Bhagavan sat among them, State-wise, for group photographs; He

filled their hands with gifts created for them; He gave each girl a sari, and each boy, a shirt and a dhoti, so that they presented a spectacle of purity and conformity to the traditions of Bharatiya Culture. He gave them solace and strength. He admonished them to keep up the disciplines He had emphasised. He assured them that He will be with them, wherever they are and guide them.

About fifty of them accompanied Him to Prasanthi Nilayam, when He left Brindavan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June, and He took them with Him when He went to Anantapur, next day.

There was on view during the Month at Brindavan a pictorial Exhibition illustrating the defects of the present educational system and the highlights of Bhagavan's New Educational Revolution, from Initiation by Him into the alphabet with Om and culminating in the Sathya Sai Colleges, in every State. Films on the Indian Renaissance and the Sathya Sai Era were also exhibited to the participants.

Truly, the participants in this Course will be the pioneers in the great task of spiritualising College Education throughout India.

—(Ed)

## Blessings for Youth

Manifestations of the Divine Atma! You are here, before Me, resplendent with the inspiration you have imbibed from this atmosphere of peace and self-control, the vision you have gained about your own Reality, the Sense of Mission you have cultivated, the resolutions you have invested yourselves into, and the invigorating contact you had during these thirty days with teachers who are sincere guides of youth. You have been taught the elements of Yoga and Dhyana, the essential unity in all the different paths to Self-realisation, the correctives necessary for a life of peace and joy in this technological world.

Tomorrow, when you leave for your several homes, I am sure your hearts will be hankering for God, though your bodied journey towards your native villages. I am glad at this; for, the treasure of devotion is more precious than gold silver, and property. These cannot grant mental peace or lasting joy. Virtue is the real treasure-chest; sterling character is the universally accepted 'sterling'. The realisation that you are a wave of the Ocean of Bliss is the richest possession for man. You are witnessing the plight of the princes in India, demonstrating that power, authority, status, sovereignty are all but flashes in the pan. Rains fill the tanks to the brim, and, for a brief span of time, huge hordes of frogs croak around the shores acclaiming the glory and the wealth. Let the tank go dry, as one day, it must; no single frog will stay to croak allegiance or praise. Fame and affluence are as unsteady as the homage of the frog. True glory is won, when you discover your Self and revel in its Divinity.

Consider how well-educated, how powerful, how strong physically, how heroic, were the epic personages: Ravana, Hiranyakasipu, Hiranyaksha, Duryodhana. Each of them, had all these in ample measure; but, the absence of virtue, the yearning to be righteous, the adherence to Dharma, that flaw led to their irreparable ruin.

Prior to the confrontation on the field of battle, Duryodhana as well as his rival, the Pandava Prince Arjuna hastened to Lord Krishna, seeking aid. Krishna allowed them to choose for themselves; He placed before them two items of aid: the Army that would be an addition to one's military potential, and, Himself, the Divine Guide and Guardian, who would not be useful for the actual fighting in the battle. Duryodhana chose the army; he preferred quantity, manpower! Arjuna chose quality, God-power. Krishna was for him as valuable an acquisition as the conquest of the entire world.

The Individual must install himself in a chariot with the wheels of Detachment (Tyaga) and Truth (Sathya); the Lord will then accept the position of Charioteer; He will hold the reins (mind) and direct the horses (the senses) straight and smooth over the road (the path of salvation through self-realisation).

Atmavidya by which one can become aware of the Infinite Eternal Absolute Self has to be pursued by every one. Education must result in this discovery, or else it does not deserve the name. The process by which one gets skill to eke out his livelihood, or to exploit nature and his brethren cannot be education, in the real sense. Books only burden the brain with second-hand stuff; practice, experience, feeling, doing with one's own hand—these give insight and

intelligence. Swotting is just waste of time and money. Book-learning helps you now to gain marks at school and college; I prefer students, who do not acquire adverse `remarks' in their records, even if their `marks' are a little less.

Study must endow one with humility, they say. But, today, students are afflicted with aggressive audacity. We have in the field of education factions and fights that bedevil relations between students, teachers and administrators. Politicians are at the bottom of it all. Neither the students nor the teachers are to blame. Students have tender, eager, self-denying, idealistic, compassionate hearts; that is the reason why I have given each of them immaculate white to wear this day, appropriately, at `Whitefield'!

Field means, Kshetra; your personality and person are the kshetra, but you must, by earning and maintaining purity, cognise the Kshetrajna, the Master of the Field who dwells within. How stupid, how wasteful it is to fritter away the glorious destiny, echoing the angry outbursts of vainglorious climbers, who misuse your energies for the destruction of the properties of innocent citizens and for terrorising the neighbourhood! When the reservoir is full, the water-taps will flow; when the heart is the reservoir of love sympathy and faith, acts words and thoughts will help peace and joy. Politicians however do not recognise these needs; they fill the young hearts with hate, envy, and greed, and spur them on to violence and vituperation. They draw them away from the classroom, the library and the laboratory and make them tramp the streets. They prod them to injure innocents, damage property and behave wildly, with fury.

Indian Culture, as you learnt at this Summer Camp from distinguished exponents never encourages the use of force for, effecting changes in law or social conditions or people's attitudes. Gandhi directed the movement for Indian Independence along spiritual lines with emphasis on non-violence and truth; he drew courage and confidence, and communicated both, to the people from Namasmara, the recitation and reflection on the Names of Goa. He cleansed the heart of the nation, of hatred and envy, of fear and doubt. He stuck to the ideal and the path; you too should do the same. A student has study as his ideal and his path. That duty cannot be postponed or done slipshod. So, whatever the obstacle or temptation, it must be overcome.

Students deserve an atmosphere of peace; t teachers too must teach in an atmosphere of Peace and joy. Dronacharya taught archery to Arjuna, as well as to his own son, Ashwatthama; but, Arjuna received the lessons with avid enthusiasm, and so, he became the greatest archer of that era. Ashwatthama could not rise to that height. Attach yourselves to the teacher by means of earnestness and humility; then, you get the best out of him. If knowledge is handed over in anger and discontent, and if it is received in anger and discontent, how can the gift bear fruit? How can the receiver be strengthened by it?

I bless you that you may progress in life, with the help of the ideals and inspiration you have garnered during these thirty days at Brindavan—the discipline, the social conscience, the wisdom of the ages, the lessons of the past, of the future. Draw upon them whenever you are afflicted by doubt or despair. Put them into daily practice; meditate on them; reflect on their importance and significance. To reveal a truth, you got this chance as the reward for the merit you have accumulated in your past lives. I need not describe to you the affection that your

teachers developed for you; you have yourselves witnessed how they were in tears while taking leave of you, at the end of their series of lectures. What they taught you with such Love, you too should treasure with great reverence. Your Sadguru, your Swami, I will be with you evermore; so, go back happily and with courage born of self-confidence; share your Ananda and your new outlook with your parents, your friends and companions, kith and kin, teachers and the people with whom you come in contact. I exhort you to strive sincerely to serve others and serve your own best interests.

I bless you that you may have success in your endeavours.

**—Valedictory Discourse: Summer Course for College Students, Brindavan 31-5-72**

*When a child went to bed, at night, it pleaded with its mother, "Mother! Wake me up when I am hungry and give me something to eat." The mother answered, "There is no need, my child! The hunger itself will wake you up." And so it is, in spiritual sleep too. When the hunger for God arises, it will activate you and bring the food that will appease the hunger, to you.*

### **Camera Down the Throat**

I was already in the hospital; the doctor had told me about the tumour in the stomach which needed quick operation. Of course, I had told them No; I would much rather go to India, that Sathya Sai Baba will cure me. Then, I said to them, that it will be best to wait a few days and take more X-ray.

So, they waited and called two more specialists in gastrological disorders. They inserted a tube through my throat, with a mirror to look inside, and also a light and a camera, to take pictures in color in the stomach. That was done on the morning of Friday; when they came in the afternoon, they said they could not find anything in the stomach, that all I have is gastritis which is nothing serious!

I had to laugh at them; because, I had told them in advance that Sai Baba had already cured me. They did not believe it. I showed them the Sai Baba Book, "At the Lotus Feet", page 57, where it said, "He is a Healer par excellence who has forced several medical men to alter and revise their pronouncements. It is little wonder, for, Baba is Bhavaroga Bhishagvara". So, I was discharged from Hospital on Tuesday!

This is the second operation from which Sai Baba has saved me. Some months ago, they wanted to perform a hysterectomy, but, when I got back to the hospital they could not find anything wrong with me. I am and will be, till I die, a humble servant of Sai Baba. There are no words to describe how great is His Love for His Children.

**—Emma Vicente Meyers, New York.**

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30

### **Approach through Flattery**

Dasaratha tried his best, now, to win the affections of Kaikeyi and persuade her to accept the Coronation of Rama; he began to flatter her, in sweet honeyed words. "O, Queen! You are the very embodiment of auspiciousness and prosperity. I treated you so long, as my very breath. You too fostered and guarded me, as if I was your very heart. Come, let us spend the remaining years without giving room for scandals about differences between us; let us be peaceful and happy, during the rest of our allotted lives.

O, Charming Princess! I will not live many years more. Throughout my life, I was famed a steady adherent of Truth, and all men honoured me on that account. I have sworn at the public gathering that Rama will be crowned tomorrow as Heir apparent. Consider how my subjects will despise me, if the function does not take place! Consider how they will cast insults at me!

You saved me that day, during the battle between the gods and the demons. Are you giving me up, now, when something worse is threatening me? This is not just, or proper.

Well, I shall endow on you this entire kingdom as dowry. Crown Rama, yourself, tomorrow; Bharata too will be very happy if you do this. Not merely hot ministers, sages, elders, scholars, common citizens, the entire populace, all will appreciate and thank you for this. Your fame will last eternally on this earth.

Instead, if you create obstacles in the way of Rama's Coronation, the whole world will castigate you, and condemn you. Even your son will find fault with you and fall foul of you. Your mental fancy will bring ruin on you, besides, it will cover this royal line itself with shame. You will become the target of the 'Fie', that the smallest of the land will fling at you. Reflect over these possibilities! Earn eternal renown, stop the stratagem to prevent the Coronation, crown Rama with your own hands, tomorrow!

### **Kaikeyi is Adamant**

Dasaratha described the joy she could derive from this good fortune, in sweet enticing words, artfully put together. He hoped to enrapture her at the prospect of herself crowning the Heir apparent; but, Kaikeyi interrupted him, and said, "King! Your words strike me as strange. You are trying to slide back from the promise made on oath, and to cover up the sin, you spin fascinating yarns! No. A thousand such tricks will not induce me change my stand even by a hair's breadth.

You said; on your own, 'Ask the boons you desire for; I shall grant them; and, now instead of acting on that promise, you exhibit a variety of sighs and groans! This does not become you at all. You are, by your own conduct undermining your reputation and honour. I am not in the least responsible for this distress of yours.

Recollect the pronouncements of those who are masters of Dharma, that Sathya (Truth) is the Parama (Highest) dharma (Principle of Righteousness). I, too, have based my request for the promised boons on the same principle of Dharma, and, as befits a follower of Dharma, you too, agreed, and said, "Right! They shall be granted". Nevertheless, you have started imputing motives to me, that I am thrusting you into unrighteousness that I am set upon committing an atrocious sin, that I am attempting to bring lasting infamy on your name! This is most improper; it is thoroughly unjustifiable.

I am absolutely innocent of any wrong, in this affair. You made the solemn promise without paying a thought to the past or the future: and, when that promise had to be put into action, you suddenly become confused and desperate. The fault is yours mine. Those who promise and are not willing to act accordingly, are sinners of great magnitude. Act as the promise directs you to; then, the Truth you have maintained will itself wash off any related sin.

Don't you remember? In the past, Emperor Sibi sliced flesh from his own body, as food for an eagle because he wanted to keep up a promise he had made to the eagle which was pursuing a dove for prey! So too, Emperor Alarka had pledged his word that he would give whatever was asked from him; he was a king of unique splendour. And, to keep up his promise, he plucked out and gave the Brahmin his own two eyes! Look at the Ocean. It is the Lord of all the Rivers; yet, bound by Its Vow, It limits Itself beyond the shores, instead of transgressing them.

### **The Queen Quotes Dharma**

Why repeat a thousand examples? For all things, for all men, Truth is the highest authority; the highest ideal. Truth is Brahma. Truth is the Primeval Sound. It is Dharma. Truth alone undergoes no change, diminution. Royal Majesty like you should not give up the Imperishable for the sake of trivial perishables. Hold fast to the promises you made, and, ensure lasting fame and glory yourself.

That is the right thing to do. Do not yield to delusive attachments with the son, or deceptive admiration for women; do not there by overrule the dictates of political idealism and royal obligation. Do not tarnish the Ikshvaku Dynasty with irredeemable dishonour!

Don't plan otherwise; call Rama to your side and tell him to get ready to proceed to the forest, and set foot preparations to get Bharata to this City from where he is now. Instruct the Minister concerned to attend to these matters without delay. See! The eastern sky is getting bright. These two boons must be realised, before dawn. However long you argue, I will be content with no less than these.

If, on the other hand, you are adamant and you consummate the Coronation of Rama, I am determined to end my life, in full view of the thickly packed Assembly. This is my vow this shall happen."

Dasaratha watched Kaikeyi raging and swearing, fast and fearful; he could neither demonstrate the anger that was surging within him, nor could he suppress it. He was like Emperor Bali who promised three feet of land to God (in the form of Vamana) but, discovered

that could not fulfill that promise, for Vamana measured the entire earth with one foot, the entire sky with another foot, and stood asking for the third foot of land, that had been gifted to Him! Dasaratha dreaded the curse that awaited him, for breaking the rules of Dharma. His eyes were dimmed with doubt and despair. His head became heavy on the shoulders. He fell on the floor, where he stood.

At last, mustering up some courage, he shouted, "O' Sinful Woman! If the Coronation of Rama is cancelled today, my death is a certainty. After that, you can rule over this kingdom, as a widow, as freely as you wish." Giving vent to his anger in this strain, Dasaratha cried out, "Alas! Rama! Has it, come to this, that I have to send you, with my own hands, into the forest? No, I will not send you. I will rather give up my life; I cannot keep alive a moment, apart from you. O, vicious demon! How could your heart entertain the plan of sending my lovely tender Rama into the thick dark wild jungle? Terror striking Fury! What a Horror have you become!" And, with that, Dasaratha swooned, and fell.

### **The Great Day Dawns**

The night was melting before the brightening dawn. The Nine Instruments of Music began heralding the Day of Joy. The roads started getting the showers of rose water. The air was thick with fragrance, and festivity. The sky was charged with hope and excitement. The constellation Pushya rose as the Star of the day. The sage Vasishta proceeded with his group of disciples to the Sarayu River for the ceremonial bath, and returned from thence, with Consecrated Water necessary for the Coronation Ablutions. He passed along the Royal road, where the citizens had gathered to witness the sacred articles; the palace guards cleared the way for the holy group. At last, they entered the Royal Palace through the decorated Main Gate.

Even at that early hour, the open spaces inside the palace were filled with priests, vassal rulers, representatives of the people of the realm, and elders. They occupied the seats allotted to them. The sound of Vedic Hymns recited by scholars along the streets echoed through the skies.

Meanwhile, Vasishta beckoned Sumantha, the Minister, and said, "Sumantha! Go; the auspicious hour fixed for the rite of Coronation is fast approaching, many preliminary rituals have to be attended to quick; go and inform the Maharaja that his presence is urgently needed. Convey the message, that Vasishta is waiting for your arrival". Sumantha being an old faithful, had the freedom to enter any of the inner apartments of the palace; so, he hurried into the chambers of Queen Kaikeyi, in search of the Emperor.

### **The Minister Shocked.**

Entering the Hall, where the Royal Beds were, Sumantha was shocked out of his wits. He was struck with wonder at the sight of the Emperor fallen on the floor! Are my eyes seeing aright, he wondered; and lost his moorings. He went near the King, and said, "King! This morning must find you like the sea at moonrise, heaving with ecstasy. I cannot understand why you are lying prostrate on the ground. The most auspicious hour is approaching. The great sages, learned in Vedic Lore, are ready for their roles, awaiting your arrival at the Hall of Ceremonies. Rise and wear royal robes and jewels, and come into the Hall, accompanied by the Queens, in full regal splendour. The sage Vasishta bade me hie hither and bring you into the holy precincts of the Throne."

Listening to his importunities, Dasaratha could not restrain the outburst of his grief. He wept aloud, and spoke to the Minister between sobs thus: "Sumantha! Your adulation pierces my heart." His words touched the springs of compassion. Sumantha could not take a step forward, nor could he take a step backward. He stood transfixed, where he was.

He prayed with folded palms, "Maharaja! why this turn of events? At a time when you have to be immersed in Ananda, why this grief, this piteous weeping? What is the reason behind all this? It is beyond my understanding."

When Sumantha stood helpless, sunk in sorrow, Kaikeyi intervened and said, "O Best of Ministers! The Emperor spent the entire night without sleep, in anxiety about Rama. If you can go immediately and bring Rama with you here, the mystery will be clearly unravelled. I am telling you this; do not misunderstand me but, bring Rama here quickly."

Sumantha took her instructions as the commands of the Sovereign; he went very fast to the Residence. At the entrance of that palace, he saw on both sides of Rama long lines of attendants and maids, carrying huge plates containing gifts of silk, brocade, jewels and gems, garlands and bouquets, scents and sweets. It was a delight for the eye, but, Sumantha did not stop to cast a lingering look at them. When he hurried into the palace, he felt something precious lacking in all this festivity; he was overwhelmed and non-plussed. The joy that he had a few minutes previous had sunk into the depths.

When Sumantha was riding in his chariot towards Rama's Palace he had noticed how the hundreds of thousands of loyal subjects who filled the streets talked among themselves that he was on his way to bring Rama into the Coronation Hall, for the ceremony. He saw their faces blooming in joyous expectation; they scarce winked their eyes, lest they miss some incident or instant of joy. At last, Sumantha stepped into the Palace of the Prince. He could walk straight, without any questions asked, into all sections of that seven-storeyed mansion. As the crocodile dives noiselessly through the depths of a flooded river, Sumantha glided through the corridors and halls of that Palace!

### **Rama is Ready**

Within the Palace, there were many friends of Rama, who were elated and happy, ready with their bright countenances and splendid robes, waiting to accompany Rama to the Festival of Coronation. Sumantha went into the apartments that were still deeper within the palace. There he saw Rama, seated on a golden cot; scattering Divine Light all around him, and Sita standing by his side, gently fanning him. He shone like the Moon, with the star, Chitra. Sumantha was in a hurry; he could not brook any delay. He said, "Rama! Mother Kaikeyi and your Father have both asked me to bring you quickly to the Palace of that Queen; they have sent me on that mission here; I have hurried hither for that same purpose".

As soon as he heard these words, Rama turned towards Sita and said, "Sita! I know this is a sign of some obstacle, and not anything else. I am not unaware of this; but, I kept silent, and said, 'Yes' for everything, so that Father might be happy. Father's orders are to be honoured, lest Father be pained. Though I knew, this I had to carry on my duties, and so, I had to agree to all

this". While Rama was talking in this strain, the heart of Sumantha was pounding fast inside him. He was trying to interpret Rama's words with the picture of Dasaratha lying wailing on the floor, which he had seen some little time previous. He was now convinced that the obstacle Rama spoke of was genuinely real.

But, Sita interrupted Rama; she said, "Lord! What are you talking about? On this auspicious occasion, you should not speak thus. Whatever the obstacle, father-in-law's words must be honoured. If he is content, we are content. For his sake, we must renounce whatever is required. Do not hesitate even a little go immediately. Whether the Coronation takes place or not we shall be equally happy. Mother Kaikeyi has inordinate affection towards you; anything that she directs us to do, any order that she gives us, will be for our good, beyond doubt. There is no one here on earth who is solicitous for our welfare as Mother Kaikeyi.

When Father and such a Mother send word that you should hasten towards them, how happy we should be! Saying this, Sita followed Rama up to the main door of the Hall where they were and wished him well. Rama told her, "Sita! Don't I know all this? For me, the days that are past, the days that are around us and the days yet to come are all the same. I welcome each day with full joy. To uphold the reputation of Father, I am prepared to do anything. I am prepared to go anywhere. I am indeed immensely happy that you share my feelings and will share my determination."

Rama moved out, accompanied by Sumantha. When they ascended the Chariot waiting on the road in front of the Palace, the people raised shouts of, jai Jai, Ramachandra Prabhu ki Jai. The acclamation shook the skies. Sumantha announced to the populace, "Now the chariot is not taking Rama to the Coronation Hall, It is taking him to where the Emperor is. So, do not cause any delay; allow the chariot to go as fast as it wants". Rama will return in a few moments; so wait here itself. Sumantha explained the reason for the hurry, so that they might understand it clearly. Then, he drove the horses in hot haste towards the Palace of Queen Kaikeyi.

**(To be continued)**

## **The Vidyapeeth Mantra**

**—(Presidential Speech: College Day: H. E. Sri Khandubhai Desai)**

It is a great privilege and honour to be invited to come to an Institution, so soon after one has laid the Foundation Stone, to find it complete and in perfect running condition. It is no joke, really, to bring so many institutions, a Library, an Auditorium of this magnificence, a Hostel of this size and a complete College, into fruition, within a year and a half. All this is due to the mastermind of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His personal effort and supervision, and organisation. I appreciate and respectfully admire the amazing work that has been achieved here.

I am also happy that some ideas which I had entertained about the reform and reorganisation of education in our motherland are being realised here. After the attainment of independence, a series of Commissions from the Radhakrishnan Commission to the recent Kothari Commission toured the length and breadth of the country, accumulating and analysing evidence, and arriving at recommendations for improving the system in all its stages and phases. Their reports have been placed on the shelf.

Academicians of the country anxious to correlate the curriculum and training given in our schools and colleges with our culture and traditional values have to come and see and observe this College where the real purpose of education is realised in practice. Education has to be purposeful. Nowadays, we are complaining of the growth of indiscipline in schools and colleges. But, we forget that indiscipline is bound to raise its head, when spiritual and moral principles are not imparted to the students, and an atmosphere of spiritual and moral earnestness is not provided in educational institutions. This College instructs pupils on those lines and provides that atmosphere.

Gandhiji had this ideal, when he started the Gujarat Vidyapith. I was among the first batch of students who graduated from that Vidyapith, way back in 1920. I wish to mention that the slogan, or rather, mantra (mantra is surely the most appropriate word) inspired the Vidyapith, which Gandhiji chose for the Vidyapith as its motto was, Saa Vidya, yaa vimukthaye. The real meaning of this mantra is:- "Real education gives moral, spiritual and psychological strength and stamina, thus releasing man from fear of all sorts, and gives him Liberation from pain and grief." I think that this institution has succeeded in translating that Vidyapith mantra into actual practice, as much as, nay, even more than the Vidyapith itself.

Here, in this College the message of Sathya Sai Baba which is the Message of God, is transforming education in. to what it really ought to be. The Report read by the Principal gives us some idea of how this Message is being implanted in the minds of the students. The years that boys and girls spend in College are crucial years. What they become during the age period 16-24 will decide what they will be in the future too. This is the period when the body, the mind and the heart have to be trained well, the precious period of adolescence. If the mantra of the Gujarat Vidyapith, and the mantra adopted by our Nation when it achieved Independence—Sathyam eva jayathe (Truth alone wins)—be accepted as the moving forces of education, not to be merely chanted, but, accepted as guidelines to be practised, then the world will be really happy.

I appeal to the Academicians who study and plan the future of the country to come to the Sathya Sai College and take back with them lessons which will help them a great deal. This is a unique example of something concrete being achieved in the field of education, to rehabilitate and reform it on the right lines.

**Untiring Teacher**

My father was a very pious individual. He was a Guru, hereditarily, that is to say, a preceptor and preacher. He was away from home for long periods of time, since he had to visit the villages where his disciples lived. While at home, father used to do Prasanga (Bhajan), three times a day at the Kirtanghar (the temple for Kirtan). When he was away among his disciples, i used to sing Bhajan three times daily. For, at the age of nine, i was initiated into this daily rite of Prasanga.

When i came to know about the Incarnation of the Lord, whose innumerable names i have been singing from childhood, my mind flew to Him. In fact, i flew by plane in May, 1971, and had the Darshan. i followed Baba, to wherever He was—Whitefield, Anantapur, Prasanthi Nilayam. i could return home only after two full months. i could not stay there either. i went again in February, 72 and came back, when Baba sent me, in the last week of March.

Baba gave me Ashirvad (Benediction) that i will have peace of mind, Shanthi, and from that very moment, i have got it. It was on the second day of March, 1972; the happiest, the most important day in my life. O, how touching, how loving, how heart-easing were His words, when He bestowed upon me His Grace of Benediction!

Baba is the Yugavatar, God incarnated, to save the world from disaster. The greatest Mahima of this Avatar is the effect His Darshan has on the individual. He is always benign; always the same. i watched Him for some days prior to the inauguration of the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women at Anantapur. He was supervising the work of hundreds of people from engineers to labourers. Not even the minutest omission or fault or failure did escape His notice. But, i did not see Him upset or displeased or ill-disposed towards any one. He was radiating love; He made those who had committed faults ashamed that they were the cause of His attention. Baba merely pointed out the mistakes for rectification, without showing the least sign of annoyance. He is always benign and calm, at peace with Himself and with the entire Creation.

Baba is the highest living example for all, of the untiring teacher of the Nishkama karmayoga: the Anasaktha karma yoga. He is ever-busy doing good to all, in every sphere of life, everywhere.

He is curing hundreds and thousands of people, by means of the Vibhutis, and even by a mere pat on the back, or a word, or Darshan. He is all-powerful; there is nothing anywhere, or in respect of any beings or things that He cannot do. Due to our ignorance, we imagine that we do, we think, we speak, we act; we are but His instruments; He causes the thought, the word. We have nothing of our own; we belong entirely to Him.

He wants us to take advantage of His Advent and transfer our sorrows, anxieties, and worries to Him and receive from Him the Ananda He is ever ready to bestow. He wants us to repeat any of the Names of God and reflect in the heart on the Form appropriate to that Name. He says, "Seek the good in others, and the evil in yourself. Develop good habits good attitudes, good characteristics, good character. Love all, serve all, revere all, for, He is in all. Learn to speak little, speak soft and sweet. Offer all acts, thoughts and words as worship to the Lord that pervades the Universe."

i am convinced that the path laid down by Baba is the only way to lasting peace and prosperity, for humanity.

—Lohit Chandra Deva Goswami, Gauhati

### **When? Oh! When?**

these human eyes have never beheld  
the Form that treads this earth—  
a pilgrimage holy i have not made  
to find you, on sacred soil.  
Bhagavatha recounted, makes my soul yearn  
to see the COSMOS in saffron berobed.  
how i cherish the Vision of days to come  
Holding Your Feet in my hands!.

O... When shall i meet Thee?  
in worship? come, gently, bidding  
"Rise now; and meet Thy Self!"

how You prize Your little suns—  
stars that compose Your crown!  
other eyes you have given your children  
with which to adore their God.  
i know Thy touch;  
i know Thy smile.  
My heart is locked in Thine.  
Your Blessings are conveyed  
on throat of mourning dove;  
blossoms hint at Your nectar sweet!  
the infant babbles Thy twinkling Mirth.

again, i am appeased.  
i rest.....  
in Your blanket  
of Omnipresence!

—Karen Shultz, Tustin

## **Builders of the New Era**

The Teachers of the Secondary Schools in the District of Anantapur have formed a Study Circle to improve teaching methods in various subjects, to prepare graded assignments of Class and Homework for the pupils, and generally to ensure that the imparting of education is done more efficiently. They have designed new tests for measuring the results of teaching, and planned a novel type of Bala Vihar, where children will learn the rudiments of Arts and Sciences in the play-way, under guidance. The Assignment Books published by the Circle have now secured enthusiastic support in this District, as well as others. They are proving of great help in the advancement of educational standards.

Bhagavan blessed the Study Circle, for its sincere dedication to the cause of national uplift, and graciously gifted the Circle a Bala Vihar Building on a three-acre campus, as well as a Central Library Service. On Saturday, 12th August, the Foundation for the Bala Vihar was laid by Bhagavan, in the presence of thousands of citizens and the Minister of Education in Andhra Pradesh, Sri Bhuttam Sreeramamurthy.

Bhagavan then proceeded from the Campus, with the Education Minister, in procession, along the main thoroughfares of Anantapur, to the Stadium where the Study Circle had organised a magnificent Children's Rally in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of Indian Independence Day. Baba appreciated the mass drills, the physical culture demonstrations, the enthusiasm of the children and the efforts of their teachers.

Conveying His Blessings, Baba said, "Your parents expect you to be strong healthy happy skilful intelligent children; if you do not turn out to be such, they feel sad; so also, Mother India expects you to be good honest self-sacrificing, spiritually minded, unselfish men and women, eager to serve and love all. If you do not become so, the mother, India will be sad and disappointed."

In the evening, Baba addressed a Special Session of the Circle attended by over 500 teachers. The Minister of Education inaugurated the Sri Sathya Sai Library Service, and said, "Bhagavan has taken birth in this District and naturally, you are proud of the fact. But, He belongs to the entire country and the whole world. His blessing is the Foundation on which educational renaissance is being constructed." The Director of Public Instruction spoke of the need to utilise the excellent Library, presented by Bhagavan, for raising the academic standards of the teaching profession. The teachers, in their Memorandum said, "Bhagavan has blessed our efforts; this has strengthened our conviction that honest work done in a dedicated spirit transcends the limits of human recognition and strikes the chords of Divine Grace."

Bhagavan called upon the teachers to extend love to the children under their care, to set examples of service, efficiency, study and universal love before them by means of their own acts and words, and to maintain close contact with the parents of the children so that together they can provide the growing child the environment and atmosphere to learn the basic qualities of Truth, Love and Yearning for Self-inquiry.

He said, "Those who guide must themselves obey the rules that they lay down; every teacher must be like the physical education instructor standing before the lined up students and swinging his own arms and legs just as he wants the pupils to do—one, two; up, down, etc! It is no disgrace to do so; for, it is done, through the desire to teach and to improve the physique of the pupils. When a baby is hungry and when it wails, the mother approaches and stoops to lift it to her shoulders. Stooping is no disgrace. It is a sign of affection. Therefore, do not stand on formality, or prestige. There is no prestige higher than service to the children placed under your care. Be inspiring examples, effective leaders, worthy guides"

—Ed

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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### **Father and Son**

Rama was proceeding on the city streets to the Palace of Kaikeyi, in his Divine Chariot. As soon as he was sighted, heroes cheered like lions. The minstrels and courtiers started paeans of praise. The strains of many instruments of music filled the sky. Acclamation of "Jai" "Jai" rose from the thick masses of people on both sides of the roads. Women in their best clothes: bedecked with jewels, thronged the terraces of the houses and filled the windows, eager to wave the auspicious lamps when Rama passed by. When he approached the palace, they showered floral petals and waved the sacred lamps. People gazed upon the Prince until he passed beyond the reach of the eye; then, they relished with joy the picture of Rama in the chariot, which they had imprinted—on their hearts, and, stood without stirring where they were, like idols of themselves, lost in contemplation of the Bliss that filled them.

The Chariot rode into the precincts of the palace of Dasaratha named Vardhamana, as imposing as Mount Kailasa itself. It passed through each one of the three quadrangles guarded by vigilant bowmen. Then, Rama alighted from the vehicle. Thereafter, he moved through two more quadrangles on foot. While walking across, he told his companions and even Lakshmana to stay back. For, Rama knew even then what was about to happen there. In spite of this, he was acting like an ordinary mortal, as naturally as any one would under the circumstances! In the end, Rama entered the apartments of the Queens and the place where Dasaratha had fallen on the bed. His hair was dishevelled; he was wearing the clothes of yesterday. He was lying on the bed like a madman, without any regard to propriety. Rama was astonished at the spectacle as he drew near: Kaikeyi was standing by the side of the bed. Dasaratha had lost all trace of brightness: he was lamenting and wailing.

He raised his head and his eyes fell upon Rama. His tongue failed to spell out what he longed to say. Tears streamed from his eyes. Though he tried to speak, no sound emanated from his mouth. Rama had never before seen or experienced such a fearsome scene. He was filled with anxiety; he hastened to the presence of his father, and held both his feet in his hands. "Tell me, why you lament so. What is the cause? I shall try to confer joy on you, in the best manner

possible. I shall dedicate my very life for the sake of restoring your Ananda. Tell me what has caused this grief; do not weep," he pleaded.

At this Dasaratha exclaimed, "Rama!" and broke into tears again, unable to continue. He lost consciousness. Rama tried to revive him and console him; but, he fell deeper into grief, and could not be pacified. Then, Rama mustered courage and took his father to task. "Father! What is all this? You ought to instill courage into young persons like me; on the other hand, you are weeping and wailing and filling us with fear! No. This is not right. This is the time for you to be happy; but, is it Dharma, is it proper, for you to sink into such horrible grief? Till today, whenever you were angry or worried, my coming near you used to remove in a trice all signs of those troubles, and you beamed with Ananda. You gained peace once again when you drew me near, didn't you? How is it then that this day the longer you look at me the more you suffer from sorrow? This is what makes my grief too, more and more painful. Can you not mention the reason for this strange behaviour and bring solace to me? Wont you tell me? Has any wrong been committed by me?

Or, if there is anything I have to do, tell me, I shall do it without fail. I shall correct myself, if you tell me my faults. Do not grieve; do not doubt or hesitate; tell me, with the authority of affection, what I have to do, and I shall bow my head to the order. Father! Your being plunged in grief like this is not good for you, for me as well as for the empire."

### **Step-Mother Speaks**

Praying thus, Rama turned towards Kaikeyi. With folded palms, he asked her, Mother! Have I committed any wrong? Tell me who that execrable sinner is who caused such grief to father! The moment father sees me, he used to beckon me lovingly, draw me close to him, and fondle me caressingly! Now, he does not even look at my face; why is he so? He does not utter one word; he keeps his face turned away from me!

If, however, the fault, the crime, is mine, I am ready to suffer any punishment, to atone for it. It is enough for me if father is happy. Or, is he suffering from any illness or disease? Else, have my brothers, Bharata and Satrugna sent any bad news? They are all well, aren't they? Mother Kausalya and Sumitra, are well, I hope! I am overcome with grief, since I am unable to understand the reason for father's agony! I shall do whatever is needed to bring joy back to him, however hard it may be. His command, however painful, I shall discharge to the full, most loyally, with bowed head. Whoever is born, the father is the cause of birth. Therefore, the father is every one's visible God. I seek no thing higher than his happiness. Have compassion on me; tell me what has taken place."

"Mother! Was your self-respect hurt by any incident, resulting in your speaking some harsh words against father? Or, did my mother act against his will and hurt his feelings? Mother Kausalya will never behave like that. And, Sumitra? I am more certain about her. She will not act so at all. And father will certainly not lament so distressingly, even if either of them acted so foolishly. There must be some very serious reason for this plight. When father is reluctant to tell me what that is, at least, you can tell me about it and console my grief."

Looking at Rama who was so pathetically praying to her, Kaikeyi gave up all sense of mercy and moderation, all consideration for the husband who might be plunged in deeper misery when he hears her words spoken in utter disregard of the calamities that they were sure to usher in. She did not stop to inquire whether the words could be uttered or whether they were better left unspoken. She did not discriminate between the fleeting present and the lasting future. She brushed aside the claims of love, and cast off her own innate dignity and status.

She said, "Rama! Listen! Years ago, during the battle between the Devas and the Asuras (Gods and Demons), your father was wounded by demonic arrows and he suffered unbearable pain. Twice, I nursed him back to life and strength. He appreciated my sacrifice and service and told me to name two boons which I wanted, promising to grant them to me. At that time, I felt that the only thing I craved for was his recovery and happiness; so I replied "I do not desire any boon now; I shall ask you for the promised boons, when I feel the urge, later." Your father said, "Right! Whenever you like, ask me whichever two boons you wish for; I shall certainly grant them and fulfill your desire. These boons have no limit of time and are bound by no subject. At whatever time you ask, during my life, whatever be the boons, I shall give them to you," he vowed.

You know that those of the Ikshvaku line never break their promised word. Putting my faith in that well known fact, I asked now for those two boons: one, that my son Bharata should be crowned Emperor and two, that you should be sent into the Dandaka Forest for a period of fourteen years. Merely for this, your father is creating all this hubbub! Why elaborate further? I shall not modify or withdraw my demands. If your father has the idea of proving that he is an adherent of Truth, and if you have the desire to prove that you are an adherent of Truth, you have to go this very moment to the Dandaka Forest, wearing deer, skin and matted hair. You have to reside there for fourteen years. Since you are the very life of your father, he does not like to send you into exile; he is reluctant to tell you to go; he apprehends you may take it amiss; that is the reason for this grief. Rama! No other deluge has happened here.

It appears meaningless to exaggerate this minor matter and make out that a mountainous catastrophe has landed on us. Rama! The father can be saved from the sin of breaking his word, only when his very image, the son, resolves to fulfill the vow he fails to fulfill. Else, if he who vowed and he who is the son of the person, who vowed, both neglect it, then, the father has to meet the doom of eternal downfall. You are not unaware of this."

Rama was not affected in the least on hearing these words which she uttered with such deliberate hard-heartedness. With a smile playing on his lips, he replied, "For just this reason, it is not proper that father should lament." He nodded his head as if to signify his approval of the proposals made by Kaikeyi.

### **Rama Accepts**

When this conversation fell on his ears, Dasaratha felt as if his heart was being sawn in pieces within. He rolled and groaned in extreme agony. Rama turned towards Kaikeyi and said, "Mother! It will all happen as you have contemplated! I am reverentially placing on my head the promise made by my father. It is enough if father draws me near him as he so lovingly used to do until now and speaks to me affectionately, and blesses me. Well. If I am at least told that I don't

deserve these, that I have not earned that much merit, I will accept it without demur and with equal joy and satisfaction. For, father always wishes the best for me. He blesses me always and desires that I progress ever. He is a great seer; he is for me not only the father, but, my preceptor who teaches me the highest path. What grander responsibility and duty have I than conferring joy on him, who is both father and teacher? This is my most genuine duty, my Dharma. I will derive immense Ananda, when Bharata is crowned. I will derive immeasurable Ananda when I reside in the forest for fourteen years. Not merely fourteen, if father's wish is such, I am prepared to live all my life in the forest itself! But, why is it that father is hesitating to tell me about these two boons? This is what pains me. Will I say no to what he says? This Rama is the servant and support of the parental word, not, its opponent. Is there any act of gratitude nobler than dedicating this body which was received from the father to his service alone? I shall offer it with Ananda; I am not one who waits to be told to do so.

Mother, why did you not mention to me that Bharata is the person to be crowned? You could have told me so, at least, once. I and my brother—there is no difference between us; why then did you entertain any difference between us, who know no distinction among ourselves. Also, why is it that you say, 'This is your father's command'? Do I ever disobey your commands? No. I never do so. Whether you say it or my father says it I unhesitatingly carry it out. I am leaving Ayodhya this very day, and proceeding to the forest.

Mother! Send proper messengers charged with the task of bringing Bharata from the grandfather's place. It is best to prepare quickly all things necessary to get him. If my moving out into the forest and the coronation of Bharata happen at the same time father will be saved from physical strain and mental anxiety and the sense of void. And you too can have full contentment! Who can say how events will shape themselves?"

When Kaikeyi heard these words from Rama, she derived Ananda on one side and apprehension on the other. She feared what might happen if Bharata arrives, while Rama is present in the city; she concluded that it is best to insist on Rama leaving for the forest that very day itself. She replied.

"Rama! It is possible now to make arrangements to get Bharata from where he is to Ayodhya; but, there is no need why you should continue here, until he reaches this City. Since you have decided to start the hermit life, why should you delay your departure? For the more the start is put off, the more your return will be delayed! It is advisable that you get ready even now, to leave."

### **Dasaratha's Agony**

"Your father is eager to tell you all this himself, but, he is unwilling directly to express his command. Though his heart insists that he should say it, he is bothered by a sense of shame, for, he loves you much. He is reluctant to inform you of his promise to me; that is the reason for his distress. He has no other grief. The quicker your departure from Ayodhya, the sooner his recovery from agony. Until you leave Ayodhya, I am afraid, he will not take food or bath. Therefore, if you yearn to restore him to happiness, the sooner you depart, the better."

Dasaratha lying prostrate on the bed heard these heart-piercing words of Kaikeyi; he could not contain within himself his anger and sorrow. He burst out in indistinct fury, "Fie on you, you traitorous demon!" and turning to Rama, he cried, "Rama" twice, before he fainted again. Rama sat on the bed, with the head of his father on his lap; he stroked the forehead and consoled and comforted him with sweet lovingness. He also spoke to Kaikeyi, "Mother! I am not a greedy fellow, poisoned by worldly ambition. I have no desire to win over the people and establish my rule over the kingdom. I wish to live like a hermit; I yearn to foster and maintain righteousness (Dharma) that is all. I have only one resolve: to confer joy on my most revered father. To realise these three objectives, I am prepared to undertake any task. I shall sacrifice even my life. A son has no greater duty, no higher good, than serving the father, obeying his word. Mother! Though father has not directly spoken to me, you are telling me what his command is, aren't you? That is quite enough. Besides, you are speaking in his very presence, and despite his hearing what you say, he is unable to alter or deny anything. Therefore, I infer that your words are virtually his. So, I bow to the order and shall leave as directed.

Mother! I have one little wish, which I hope you will fulfill. When Bharata is ruling the empire, see that he obeys in every way the orders of Father and that he contributes to the joy and satisfaction of Father by his acts. For me, for Bharata, indeed, for every son, there is no vow more holy and more fruitful than the vow of filling the heart of the father with contentment and happiness. Service of the father is the Sanathana Dharma, the eternal duty, of the son"

With these words, Rama fell prostrate on the ground and touched the feet of Mother Kaikeyi. Dasaratha who heard all this writhed as if Dharma that Rama expounded and the equanimity which he revealed aroused his love even more and thus, multiplied his sorrow beyond control. Knowing that Rama will not stay in Ayodhya any longer, he lost all sense of propriety and status, and shouting, "O Rama!," he slumped on the hard floor of the room. Women in the zenana heard the loud thump, and were stunned into grief and wonder. They lamented loudly at the turn of events, alone among themselves. Rama realised that it wasn't advisable to delay any longer. He prostrated before his father and touched his feet. Then, he walked out of the women's apartments in the palace.

### **From Step-Mother—to Mother**

Lakshmana was standing at the door and listening to the words spoken inside the room. He was in tears; he was furious against Kaikeyi and angry against father. He found it impossible to give expression to his feelings; so, he followed the footsteps of Rama with arms folded, eyes on the ground, head bent low. Though he had lost a kingdom, and had to exile himself into the forest, Rama's face shone like the moon, behind thick dark clouds, unaffected by the blackest veil. The splendour of his countenance was unaffected; for, he took honour and dishonour with equal magnanimity. He behaved like a veteran Yogi, with no trace of agitation in thought, word and deed: he walked as if nothing had happened to cause him worry.

However, Sumantha guessed that some transformation had happened inside the palace. The guess soon grew into a certainty. When his eyes fell on Lakshmana, his heart suffered a shock. To add to his fears, Rama brushed aside the White umbrella that was held over him by the attendant. He ordered that the ceremonial whisks be not used for him. He declared that he does

not deserve any more the silver chariot. On hearing this, Sumantha lost strength of body and will. He was confirmed in his worst fears.

Rama did not speak a word to those around him or to the citizens he met; not that he was sad, no, he knew that others will become sad if they heard the news. For, if he spoke, he will have to speak out the truth; and, he will have to spread sadness through his own words. In spite of this, his new style of going, announced the unspoken news to onlookers.

Rama did not proceed direct to the apartments of Sita. On the other hand, he went to the palace of Kausalya, on foot. The palace was resplendent with flags and festoons, and external marks of jubilation. The women and other attendants of the palace got intimation of the approach of Rama and Lakshmana to the mansion and they got ready lamps on plates, and ranged them, selves in rows to welcome them. Old and trusted guards at the main entrance rose sharply when they espied the Brothers, and exclaimed, "Victory! Victory" "May it be Victory to you"! They bowed low and offered homage. When Rama entered the second square inside, Brahmins who had gathered there showered their blessings on, him. On entering the third square, the young maids in attendance on the queen rushed in, carrying the happy tidings that Rama and his younger brother were arriving, to offer reverence to the mother. They were themselves delighted at the sight of the Princes. From the outer door right up to the room where the Mother was, the maidens standing on both sides of the long passage waved ceremonial lamps as a sign of welcome, to ward off evil and welcome joy arid prosperity.

Queen Kausalya had observed vigil all night, in preparation for the holy day that had dawned. She was engaged since dawn in worship and other rites. Aged Brahmin priests were propitiating the God of Fire with Vedic hymns, when Rama was announced. The mother was overwhelmed with joy, since she could witness with her own eyes the Coronation of her son; she celebrated her joy by means of several rites; she gave away plentiful gifts. She fasted and kept vigil; Ananda was enough food for her, the Ananda she shared with all.

### **The Mother's He**

She ran forward to clasp Rama in her arms; she caressed the curls on his head; she led him by the hand into the shrine room where she was spending the morning She had no knowledge of the somersault that had happened. Innocent and simple hearted that she was, she wore the white sari of purity and with the sacred silk cord tied round her wrist, she was gratefully engaged in the worship of the Gods. Looking at the face of Rama, she noticed an added splendour illuminating it. At that, she could not contain within herself her Ananda. "Son!" she said, "your forefathers were all Royal Sages, Rajarishis. They were strong upholders of Right. They were super-souls, Mahatmas, each one. You shall be as long-lived as they, as renowned as they; your glory must reach the ends of all the quarters as their glory did. Son! Follow the ideals of Righteousness which were held high by this dynasty; do not neglect them, even in a fit of absence of mind. Hold on to them, without wavering in the least."

With these words, she placed a few grains of rice on his head, in token of blessings on the auspicious day. She placed a golden seat near hers, saying, "Son! You observed the ceremonial vigil last night, didn't you? And, you fasted yesterday, according to rule. You must be exhausted.

Sit here for a while, and eat a few fruits." So saying, she held forth a gold plate with fruits she had made ready for him to eat.

Rama watched the Ananda of the mother, and the Love she showered on Him. He wondered how he could communicate to her the events that had happened; he was unwilling to break the atmosphere of joy. For the sake of giving her satisfaction, he sat on the golden chair, touched with his fingers the contents of the plate and said, "Mother! From this moment, I should not touch gold. I should not sit on golden chairs. I am awaiting your blessings, for, I have to proceed to the Dandaka Forest. I came to you for permission to leave"

Kausalya could not understand a word of what he said. She could only say, "Son! Within a few minutes, you are to be crowned King, and you talk of the Dandaka Forest! I am at a loss to make out the sense of what you say." She thought her son was teasing her with a joke. She said, "Son! In this auspicious hour, you should not, even in fun, talk of things of bad omen. Give it up, my lovely gem!" She scooped with her fingers a little from a plate of rice, boiled in milk and sweetened with sugar, and placed it in Rama's mouth! Observing her love and her Ananda, the eyes of Lakshmana were spontaneously filled with tears, Kausalya noted it; she turned to him, and inquired, "Lakshmana! Why are you so sad?" she hurried towards him, and tried to caress him; but, Lakshmana could not suppress his grief any longer. He wept aloud, and sobbed. The Queen stood aghast; she did not know the cause. Rama's words and Lakshmana's grief confused her much.

Meanwhile Rama interceded with, "Mother! If you promise not to grieve, I shall tell you one thing," and he held her hands in his, very firmly. "This is something that will endow me and you, and our entire family and dynasty with imperishable glory. So, don't give room for any anxiety, doubt or distress. Agree to it with alacrity and affection. Does it not give you great joy that I obey father's command? He has resolved to crown my brother, Bharata: He has resolved to send me, in the habiliments of a hermit, into the Dandaka forest for a period of fourteen years. I have bowed to his command and come hereto take leave of you."

At this, Kausalya shrieked "Rama," and fell on the floor. What a turn of events is this? Is this tender child of mine to be sent into the dark jungle? What crime has my Rama done to deserve this? Can this be true? Or, is it meaningless jabber coming out of my own brain, since I had no sleep and no food?

While she was thus trying to explain to herself and consoling herself, the happenings at Kaikeyi's palace had, spread throughout the zenanas, and the noise of wailing and lamentation rose from maids and attendants everywhere. All faces streamed tears in great sorrow. Cries of "Rama! Do not leave us" were heard on all sides. The grief stricken groups hurried to the palace of Kausalya, who was overwhelmed with astonishment, sorrow and fear. She could not unravel the mystery of it all. She could not rise from the floor, for, she was burdened with anxiety and despair.

Nevertheless, she was longing to understand what had really happened to cause this agony in everyone. She drew Rama on to her lap, and, caressing his curly hair she asked, "Son!

What is this I hear? This news? Tell me clearly what took place. I can't bear this horrible suspension any longer"

Rama told her, "Honouring the two boons that father had promised Kaikeyi once upon a time, father granted these two wishes of hers."

**(To be continued)**

*You teachers are the real students; your pupils read for a few years, and enter some job or profession, and give up reading. They do not study later; but you have to study, for years, and years, and keep your knowledge up-to-date. Your lives are dedicated to the spread of knowledge among the children of this land. Do not neglect that mission; give up half-heartedness; engage in it as an act of worship to God who sits before you in the form of the curious, eager, innocent souls.*

—**Baba 12-8-72**

## **Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

An Encounter

### **My Background**

First, a brief account of my own back. ground. I am not a sceptic (Nastika). My convictions are in line with Advaita Vedanta; but a more or less theoretical doctrine does not satisfy me. I am a practising Hindu, and am convinced by my own experience that ritual rightly understood and conducted is efficacious as well as necessary, at least for certain types of mind. Over 46 years ago, I had a heated discussion with a good friend regarding the need for Sadhana, and the possibility of Siddhis, not merely in the sense of achievement but of supernatural powers as, for example, detailed in the Third Chapter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. My friend was hostile to the idea, but I argued for it with all the enthusiasm of a new convert. The years that have elapsed have fully confirmed my stand. This is the result of much brooding, and the accumulation of slight experiences into firm conviction.

But there is another side to my character. In the University, I had studied science and mathematics, and have maintained my interests in that direction in after life, and supplemented them with a considerable acquaintance with Western Philosophy, ancient as well as modern. I have great respect for the intellect, and am not prepared to sacrifice it in the name of spirituality. The prevailing notion is that there cannot be a peaceful coexistence of these; that one must cast the die either for the one or for the other. This is a real dilemma; but I have glimpses of a position which avoids the polarity and antagonism between the two. I cannot yet speak of it; I have hopes that one day, not far off, God willing, I may be able to do so.

### **Decades of Hearsay**

Now to come to the point. For decades I had been hearing of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and his miracles. Although I concede readily the possibility of miracles, I start with a strong disbelief in any specific instance. This was my attitude towards Baba. The very fact that large numbers of

people were drawn to him by his miracles, kept me away from him. I used to say that but for the miracles I should have gone to see Baba myself. My people and many friends have been going for Darshan every now and then, and have been telling me about their `experiences' of the miracles. I used to listen to them politely, but with the tongue in my cheek. That was my stand till about the end of April 1972. That a scientist of Dr. Bhagavantam's calibre or a scholar of the eminence of Professor Gokak, to mention only two names, should have `gone under' appeared to be illustrations of the weak spot found even in great minds, the proverbial Achilles' heel.

### **The Summer Course**

Towards the close of April, I got a letter in Professor Gokak's own hand, inviting me to deliver two or three lectures on the Shakti philosophy at the Summer Course on Spirituality and Indian Culture proposed to be held at Whitefield under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Education Foundation during May 1972. I readily agreed. The course was to be inaugurated by Mr. Tukol, Vice-chancellor of the Bangalore University. I got the invitation late on Sunday by Express Delivery post, and the function was to take place next morning. I was not minded to go, and thought it would be enough if I went on the days (25th and 27th May) fixed for my lectures. But at the last moment, I was persuaded by my wife to go. Has it not been said, Man proposes and wife disposes?

### **Myself at Whitefield**

Next morning found me at Whitefield, a reluctant horse taken to the water. About 300 students had come from all parts of India, each group with a teacher as conductor. We marched in procession to the gorgeous decorated pandal behind Baba's residence. A few of us including Mr. Tukol, G. P. Rajaratnam, ex-Justice Gopivallabha Iyengar and some others, about a dozen in all, were waiting in the lobby at the entrance to Baba's bungalow. Cool drinks were served and gratefully accepted: it was so hot. I turned round to place my empty glass on the windowsill behind. Suddenly there was a stir, and Baba was moving among the guests with rapid alert steps and quick all comprehending glance. He talked little, but had a gracious word for everybody, But his smile and the light in his eyes, at once full of love and of detachment, communicated something ineffable.

### **A Dream come True**

I had been taken by surprise, and impulsively I bent down to touch his feet in the traditional fashion. I had been cautioned at home not to bow in a careless and indifferent manner! But the caution was superfluous; something compelled my obeisance. Baba put his hands on both my shoulders, as if to lift me up. In a flash, I recollected what had happened a couple of months ago, but had been completely forgotten by me until that moment. One night I had dreamed that I was in a big assembly where Baba was present. I bent low and touched Baba's feet; and he lifted me up with his hands on my shoulders. I had narrated the dream-vision next morning to my people, adding that such a thing could never occur to me in real life. But strange to say, it did happen, almost to the letter. I had better say, I had a shock, perhaps a thrill. That first experience is still present in my mind; perhaps it will remain for all time.

### **The Thaw**

Baba was quite unlike my mental picture of him. He was slightly built, almost boyish in his figure and movements. The mop of hair so prominent in photo, graphs, did not strike one as

anything out of the way, but looked quite natural. One forgot all about it. He was neither ponderous nor self-conscious. There was an engaging affability about him which put one immediately at his ease. But there was, at the same time, something mysterious which prevented one from presuming on familiarity. Those who moved closest with him were also those whose reverence amounted almost to hush-hush. I was reminded of the Upanishadic statement about the power of Brahman: it is at once near and far.

About the inaugural function itself, I shall be brief. The pandal was beautifully decorated, and I learnt that every detail had been personally seen to by Baba himself. The audience exceeded all my anticipations. Two throne-like chairs of state had been placed on the high platform, one for Baba and the other for Mr. Tukol. There was the usual run of speeches in English. Baba had been listening with marked attention. Then he gave an inspiring discourse in Telugu, every sentence of which was interpreted in English by Dr. Bhagavantam. Thus there was an inevitable jerkiness, which impeded the marvellous flow of Baba's eloquence. The amazing thing was that Baba corrected Dr. Bhagavantam's choice of words occasionally with a gentle smile. After the address, Baba led the Bhajan with his resonant voice, and the larger part of the audience joined in with fervour. After the function was over, Baba signed to the gathering to stay a little longer, while he distributed slabs of ice-cream with his own hands to everyone in the audience. I returned home about noon, a thoughtful man, why had been obliged to revise all his preconceptions about Baba. For many days after, Baba was one of the major topics of conversation at home. There was a noticeable thaw in my attitude, about which, however, I was a bit shamefaced.

### **The Lecture and After**

My first lecture came off on the afternoon of 25th May. I had been asking friends, during the interval, as to what was their impression about the response of the audience, and whether Baba would be present during the lectures, and so on. Among such friends was Professor Nikam, former Vice-chancellor of the Mysore University. He said that the response was quite good, that Baba would usually be present during lectures, and move about in his characteristic manner among the audience and that his presence would invariably act like a tonic on the audience as well as the lecturer. Nikam's contacts with Baba were, like mine, quite recent; and he fully confirmed my own impressions.

I had arrived a little before 4 P. M. which was the time fixed for my lecture. Mr. R. R. Diwakar was still speaking. Baba was not present. When my time came, Professor Gokak introduced me with very kind words and I began. The sofa chair intended for Baba, which was close to where I stood, was empty, as I noticed with a sinking heart. But soon there was a flutter in the audience, who were all looking beyond me. I turned round and saw Baba himself was there, seated on a plain iron-folding chair on the verandah, surrounded by a small group. The situation was transformed all of a sudden.

After the lecture, we were invited to partake of refreshments. I submitted to Baba a copy of a small book of mine (Community and Communion) which had just been published. He looked through the contents and made some gracious remarks. Then he called me and the womenfolk who were with me, and asked us if we would accept Vibhuti. We said we would deem it a great favour. He then materialised the Vibhuti in his palm with the usual gesture and

gave it to each one of us with his blessings. We were told that there would be Bhajan followed by a discourse by Baba. We missed them with great regret as we had to be in Bangalore by nightfall.

On the way home, and till bedtime, we had only one topic: Baba's graciousness. Somehow, all the days that followed, Baba's picture was ever present before my mind's eye, and I would be thinking of him, without even intending it. It was a kind of obsession but a delightful one. For the first time, I agreed to listen to a gramophone record of Baba leading mass Bhajan, and was moved by it. Before, I had condemned it as too loud and banal; but now the charm of Baba's leading voice gripped me, and I thought better also of the devout crowd. There was no picture of Baba in my Puja room, and my daughter used to tease me by saying that she would surreptitiously install one there without my knowledge. But this time, I secured one myself and gave it a place of honour in my pantheon.

### **Whitefield Again**

I could not attend the Valedictory function of the Summer Course. A week later however, I got a letter from Professor Gokak informing me that Baba had honoured some of the lecturers on the last day, and had left a Sari with him as a gift to my wife. He also said that Baba had gone to Puttaparthi and would be away for some days. I replied that I would come to Whitefield on Sunday (10th) afternoon and collect the Sari, and that after Baba returned I would come again and express my gratitude to him in person. It was an unexpected and pleasant surprise.

On Sunday afternoon, I went to Whitefield with my family. To our joy, we found that Baba had unexpectedly returned. I called on Professor Gokak and told him that now that Baba was back, we would love to have the gift from his own hands. He showed me the Sari, wrapped it up in a newspaper and took it with him. We went to Baba's residence close by. Baba was busy and moving about. When he saw me he smiled. A bit later he got a copy of Volume Three of the book *Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram* which had just been published, and gave it to me with his blessings, inscribed and autographed.

He then went into the big gathering assembled under the huge tree in the compound. He moved about saying a word of cheer to one and another, receiving letters of supplication and giving Darshan to all at close quarters. Then for half an hour he stood on the platform under the tree and led the Bhajan, and came back to the bungalow. I was anxiously looking forward to the hoped-for interview. There were also a number of other visitors waiting. For about an hour Baba was not available; he had gone to his apartments upstairs. After he came down, he spoke to some of the visitors and took his seat on one of the chairs ranged in opposing rows along the walls of the lobby. I was seated at some distance. He called me by name and motioned to me to sit by his side. He then gave a mini discourse to the small audience in Kannada. Although meant for all, in the main, he addressed it to me personally. It was full of homely insights and illustrations bearing on the spiritual life. His comparative lack of familiarity with Kannada seemed to add raciness and force to his idiom.

## **A Marvellous Day**

About a quarter past six, he got up and said he had been waiting for the Rahukalam to end. He called me and my family into an inner room. The only other person present was Mr. Nayar, Inspector General of Police, Calcutta, who had come all the way for Darshan. Baba produced Vibhuti and gave it to all of us. He addressed a few words to each individually including my grandson aged eight, except myself. The words somehow seemed to probe the inmost hopes and fears of each, although none of us had asked any question.

Afterwards, Baba asked my wife to spread out her joined hands, palms upward, and me to do similarly over hers. He said he would give his blessings now, as he had not been present at my *Shashtipurti*. He produced a lovely silk sari with gold lace border, a pant length, and a silk Kurta piece and placed them in our hands. With the familiar gesture, he materialized a light gold chain with a pendant carrying a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba on one side and of himself on the other. Unhooking the chain, Baba handed it to me and asked me to put it round my wife's neck. With moist eyes and trembling hands, I obeyed. Finally Baba produced Vibhuti, put his hand under my shirt, and applied it over my heart saying, "Believe me, I am always in here!" With our hearts full, we made *sashtangpranams* and were taking our leave, when Baba said, "If you have not come in a car, you may use mine to get back." We were overwhelmed by this over, flowing graciousness, but said, we had a car. A little later, we were waiting near the gate, when Baba passed out in his car. We bowed with deep reverence. With a divine smile, he put out his hand displaying *Abhaya-mudra*. That was the culmination of a marvellous and unforgettable day.

## **Coincidences?**

Friends somehow got to know about the incident, and questioned us about the details, and also wanted to see the gifts. Of course, we had to comply, much as we should have preferred to keep our experience a cherished secret, instead of giving publicity to it, which might have been misunderstood either way. Then one morning, a dear friend of mine whom I had confided in, phoned to me asking me to put down in writing whatever had happened. I was reluctant, but he said, "Don't you know, it is Baba himself speaking to you through me!" I replied, "Don't you know, Baba on his own showing, is in my heart. When he prompts me, I will comply. For the present I will wait." I also added that there was nothing special in my encounter, that hundreds had such experiences, and "what was the point in recounting mine, as if they were something unique?"

Then followed a series of what may be called coincidences, if indeed they were not something more. Another friend passed on to me a book entitled *Sai Baba - The Man of Miracles* by Howard Murphet, a visiting Australian who spent quite some time with Baba. The book makes wonderful reading and there is no ground to question either the author's sincerity or the authenticity of the events. I also came across many people who had contacts with Baba for long periods.

One of them is an old friend and colleague Mr. S. Raghavachar, who has been a Sai devotee for decades. He is eighty years old. He took me to his house, and showed me in his Puja room a big framed portrait of Baba from which Vibhuti has been streaming down continuously. There were nearly twenty other smaller pictures of Baba which had been left there by friends and

neighbours, from which also Vibhuti was dropping similarly. Such a phenomenon is quite common, and I have watched it elsewhere also.

### **The Human Side**

Apart from the miraculous, I heard many glowing accounts of Baba's very human side. He was tireless in his efforts to make the young delegates to the Summer Course happy during their month-long stay. He would go round when they were having meals and make enquiries about everyone's need and even serve them personally. At the close of each strenuous day he would be as fresh as when he started. The young people, boys and girls, were both to take leave of Baba when the Course ended. Many had tears in their eyes and said they were eager to come again as soon as possible. They have followed it up with letters after they reached their homes, showing that their impressions were lasting. The Course was a wonderful idea and proved a great success. Besides the input of information from five lectures a day for at least twenty-five days by eminent scholars, they led a communal life. It was a spiritual retreat, a discipline, free from the usual diversions and distractions like cinemas and restaurants. They enjoyed the change greatly. Such a Course will in all likelihood become an annual feature; Baba said so to me.

I may add one or two small incidents. On Sunday (June 18) evening there was a big gathering in Gandhi Bhavan here. The papers had merely announced that Professor Gokak would preside. My daughter told me at 5.30 p.m. that Baba would be coming there. But my enquiries by phone with those likely to know threw doubts on this. So I gave up my idea of going to the function: the fifth anniversary of the local Sathya Sai Seva Mandal. It was to commence at six. At about five minutes to six, I had a hunch and changed my mind. I went there with my daughter driving my car myself, some, thing I rarely do. Right enough, Baba came there, and gave a fifty minute discourse in Kannada, something unusual. After that he led the Bhajan. The big Hall was packed and the verandas all round as well as the compound were full. The audience might have numbered about 2000. Baba moved among those in the Hall. A state chair had been placed for him on the gaily decorated platform. But Baba did not occupy it. Instead he sat on the platform, with his feet on the floor. After the function ended, Baba left by a side door, accompanied by Air Vice-Marshal Mehra and Prof Gokak. It was then 8. 20 p.m. I was standing by the door respectfully. My breath was taken off when in an undertone he said to me in Kannada: "I am so happy that you came."

### **The Portrait**

One last happening. While we were at Whitefield my wife had seen in the meditation room in the bungalow an enlarged portrait of Baba with a gracious smile on his face. I had not particularly noticed it. She said she was keen on having a small copy of that picture, if possible. I said that perhaps it would come to us without any effort on our part. And so it did. On Thursday (22nd June) the friend (mentioned before) brought me a portrait of Baba and told me that an elderly friend of his, Dr. B. Setu Rao, had given it to him to be delivered to me with his respects. This was written on the back of the portrait. I handed it to my wife. She said it was the very picture she had wanted. She was greatly moved, all the more as the unexpected had happened on a Thursday, the day sacred to the Guru. We were impatient to get it framed before evening and set up in our Puja room. But that was not found feasible.

Neat morning we took the picture ourselves to the framer and asked him to deliver it to us without fail by 11 a.m.; and I asked my grandson to wait for it and bring it in time for the completion of the morning Puja. But the picture did not arrive in time. I halted the finale of the Puja and waited. At noon, the picture had not still come. So I proceeded with the Puja and got through the preliminaries. Being Friday, recorded Nagasvaram music was played. Just as I was lighting the Mangalarati, the picture arrived at long last. It was duly installed after decking with flowers. It was wonderful synchronization. The women folk said that it was significant that the picture arrived to the tunes of auspicious music (*Mangalavadya*). So indeed it looked.

### **Batteries Charged**

Now for a few concluding observations. I am writing this as prompted from within, although initiative came from a friend. I feel it is better to record things while they are still fresh in the mind. The memory, especially at my age, is notoriously fallible. As time passes, the impressions will inevitably get blurred and distorted. From a comparative standpoint, there is certainly nothing; extraordinary in my experiences. But to me they have meant a great deal; they have been an eye-opener. I have not a shadow of a doubt regarding their authenticity. But I feel that the transformation of the heart of an unbeliever is a greater miracle than any physical phenomena. I have always tried to live as in the presence of an inner witness (*Antahsakshi*). But it is indeed a blessing if the witness can be projected on to a visible embodied symbol. To me Baba is today the incarnation of such a witness.

Friends are asking, "So you too have been converted?" Their tones vary according to their temperaments, expressing surprise, irony, approval or disapproval, as the case may be. My own reaction is mixed. I do not like the word 'conversion'. Besides, it is not the right term to describe what has happened to me. There is no change in me except only in regard to my new and reverent appreciation of Baba's amazing personality. My outlook is the same as before, and I do not feel the need for any change in my *Sadhana*. My contact with Baba has only gained a new and very timely confidence, as ii run-down batteries have again been charged.

### **Sense of Presence**

I propose to go my own way. Let me make myself clear. I have a constant sense of Baba's presence with me. I have his own assurance for it. So far as I can judge now, the impression he has made on me promises to be lasting. I seek Baba's aid and support both in spiritual endeavours and in tiding over the contingencies of human life. But I believe that I can have access to them even when Baba is not physically present. That, I take it, is a measure of the firmness of my faith. Hence I do not feel any insistent urge to go for frequent Darshan; whenever I sense the inner call, I will assuredly go.

As regards methods, I confess that I have no particular bent for congregational devotion, although I appreciate its general importance. My own inclination is towards silence and meditation in solitude. Even as regards the Guru, I have learnt more from silent presence (*Sannidhya*) than from eloquent discourse. I believe in the need for complete surrender, but feel that it can and should go hand in hand with honest effort, whether for spiritual or temporal achievement.

The ultimate goal of all Indian spirituality is undoubtedly release (*Moksha*), and the penultimate means, which is almost identical with it, is *Jnana*. But the fact remains that the majority of us are not seekers for *Moksha* here and now. This fact must be squarely faced, and it must be realized that there is a valid gradation of intermediate stages, according to fitness, which have to be transcended only by living through them. They can neither be ignored nor evaded. The Gita is emphatic that everyone should be true to his own Dharma, and that it is futile and even damaging to strain to maintain a higher but uncongenial level of conduct.

### **Purushartha**

This Principle of varying fitness underlies the great doctrine of *Purushartha* which has been the mainstay of Indian spirituality in the past. It places before our eyes a rounded and practicable ideal which balances the four essential factors: *Dharma, Artha; Kama and Moksha*, in a dynamic equilibrium, which takes into account the person, time, place, and circumstance, a kind of spiritual '*homeostasis*'. It is a synthesis of the worldly and unworldly (*Iha and Para*).

Neglect of this fourfold objective, and the tendency to equate spirituality exclusively with *Moksha*, for one and all; have worked harm. The wholeness and wholesomeness of life, individual and social, have been impaired. Our integrity has been destroyed and our consciousness falsified. The result has been the widely prevalent moods of defeatism and escapism.

Today our leaders are seeking to reverse these trends. Under a misconception that it is religion which has been responsible for all our troubles, they are advocating single-minded devotion to science and technology in the interests of material welfare. Such '*secularism*' is in essence a refusal to ask questions which science cannot answer; and then, as a next step, to deny the existence of any such problems. In such a situation, we may well ask: "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?" The world-view on which secularism is based is wholly antagonistic to the very soul of our culture, as embodied, for example, in the concept of *Purushartha*.

By a strange irony, at the very time that we are being exhorted to make all out effort to catch up with the '*advanced*' countries, they are themselves coming to realize what a price has been paid for all the achievements of modern civilization. In a world proudly gone nuclear, the survival, of humanity itself is at stake. What with the population explosion and galloping pollution of the environment, our foundations are being undermined. They are in a panic about the '*planetary crisis*'; and technological progress seems to have reached a point of no return: "Needs must when the devil drives!" That is the dilemma. Hence the feeling of anxiety and utter insecurity throughout '*affluent society*', the sudden realization that life has become utterly meaningless; and the accompanying signs of revulsion and of many sided revolt against the current scheme of values.

Mahatma Gandhi had pleaded that we in India need not, and indeed should not, slavishly seek to copy the West. His ethics of truth and nonviolence were based on an abiding faith in the living presence and efficacy of God. Today we are parroting his words, but have conveniently forgotten his stress on reliance on the divine if our ethics are to be fruitful; for ethics can very well coexist with atheism and materialism.

## **Baba, the Beacon**

It is in such a predicament that Baba comes to us as a heaven-sent beacon of light, the proof and vindication of a universe in which prayer is answered, at every level of need and supplication. This is *Astikya* which is the starting point of all material and spiritual welfare. Such an outlook might be dubbed as superstitious by the exclusive votaries of science. But they do so at their loss and their peril. Science is certainly valid within its own limits. It is but one language for questioning nature. It needs to be supplemented by a more comprehensive mode of understanding. Otherwise its potentialities for destruction may overwhelm us and itself. It is a good servant but a bad master.

Baba is the very embodiment of that most comprehensive understanding which covers the whole of life, the physical, the mental including intellect and emotion, and the spiritual: what the Gita has termed *Adhibhutha*, *Adhidaiva*, and *Adhyatma*. Such knowledge prevails at sight, and does not require elaborate means. That is why hundreds and thousands of people crave only for his Darshan, as for example, during the recent Triumphal tour of Baba to the Delhi region.

Gandhiji's greatness is beyond question; but he made demands on ordinary men which were beyond their capacity: austerity, self-denial, and an impossible ethical standard. Baba makes no demands. He takes men as he finds them, and leads them on, step by step, like a doting mother teaching her Baby to walk. For the Baby the Mother's presence is all-sufficing. Baba's presence prevails. I can bear testimony to how "I came, I saw, and I was conquered!"

—K. Guru Dutt, I.A.S. (Retd)

## **The Unbelievable Prophecy**

Is it true? Can it be true? A boy calling himself Sai Baba! And consoling the dispirited, curing the ill, exorcising ghosts and teaching the old! I heard of this sixteen year old prodigy and entered Puttapparthi, with a woman, mad since two years, and her husband. That was in 1943.

At Bukkapatnam, people laughed at us; they thought all of us were mad to believe in the miraculous powers of that boy. Yet having come so far, we decided to complete the journey, instead of turning back. We engaged a bullock cart for twelve annas and came to the riverbed. I left them there and moved into the little haggard group of houses, along narrow tracks.

I peeped into a Brahmin house (Karnam Subbamma's house); the verandah was full of groundnut heaps. Inside I found a charming young boy, with a bright, intelligent face, talking with the labourers. I accosted him and asked, "I heard there is a boy in this village who has become Sai Baba; it seems he cures madness. Which is his house, can you tell me?"

The boy looked at me very lovingly and replied. "Poor fellow! The mad woman you brought with you is giving terrible trouble to her husband in the river! Go and take bath; and bring them also after their bath is over. I shall then show you the boy you are after." While returning from the river, the woman ran wildly hither and thither and it was a job to bring her to

the Brahmin house. Sai Baba (for, it was none other than He) told me, "I'll call you one by one" and took me in, first. He created Vibhuti and applied it to my forehead. Then, He called in the couple. They had bought some bananas at Bukkapatnam for Sai Baba. He gave the woman to eat one banana out of the number. He also gave them both the materialised Vibhuti.

It was six in the evening, by then. Coming out on the road, the wife told her husband "Well; what about our meal? Get some rice from the shop; and ask for vessels. I shall cook food for us, pretty quick." The husband was overjoyed; her madness had gone!

But, Baba called us in and we sat with Him, for the night meal. Baba mixed all the items served by Subbamma into tolerably big balls, and he gave one for each of us. It was tasty beyond words!

That night, we slept in the verandah of that house. We were disturbed often, by the howling of packs of jackals, and the braying of donkeys. At about three, some woman shrieked, "I am dying"; she was stung by a scorpion! A few minutes later, some one cried, "Kill; Kill " and many ran in that direction. It was a cobra, this time.

Early morning, we touched Baba's feet and stood before Him. "No sleep? Too many snakes, in this place. This is a very holy place; but, under a curse! Sai will save it" He said, And he added, "The Sai Pravesh (Advent) will make it the Prasanthi Pradesh (Region). Upon that hill, I shall have a grind Bhavan. By that time, hundreds, (why hundreds?) thousands, (why thousands?) lakhs, All India will be here. The whole world will come and wait for Sai Darshan." I said, on hearing this, "What? I cannot believe this will happen." He laughed and said, "You will have to believe it when you will be standing at a great distance, trying to catch a glimpse of me!"

Now, in 1972, I stand at a great distance and yearn for Sai Darshan; I now believe in the Prophecy He made in 1943.

—Pujari Lakshmiah, Madras

## Become Arjunas

Let but man remind himself of the Glory and Majesty of God that are evident in every star in the sky, every cell in his body or every atom of every element in the Universe ...he will be transformed into a humble honest devoted compassionate individual. He will be charged with Love towards all beings, and Love being the first step in the pilgrimage to God, he will be blessed by Grace.

God, too, incarnates in human form, in order to demonstrate that man is a spark of the Divine Flame. Man cannot comprehend the Formless, Attributeless Absolute nor can he fill himself with Power, Wisdom and Love, by the contemplation of such a Principle. But, when the Attributeless assumes Attributes, and the Absolute becomes the Relative, man can adore, accept and attain. This is the benefit that the Avatar confers; it is this that is called the Dharma-sthapanā, of man in his own Dharma, or essential quality, or real Reality.

Consider the Krishna Avatar! The very name Krishna is derived from a root that means three things: culture, that is to say; the process of Preparing the land and sowing seeds and growing crops; Attraction, drawing near, winning the heart; and, the Supreme God-head, the Paramatma, the Embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda. What Krishna came for, is to draw souls near, transform them into the Divine and grant them the Grace of merging with Him, the Sat-Chit-Ananda itself.

His sweet prattle while a baby, his melodious flute while a boy, his Gita (Song) on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra—all were means by which he attracted the simple, the sophisticated, the illiterate, the learned the seers the sages, the kings and warriors to His Presence. When he inspired and instructed them, they were equipped with a new vision which revealed to them the Truth which makes man free. And, as a reward for steadiness of Faith and self-less Activity, He vouchsafes the Awareness of The Universal Eternal Absolute Itself.

The cowherds of Brindavan, men and women, were so saturated with the bliss of the Divine that moved among them that, they cried out, "Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!" instead of "Milk! Butter! Curds!" though those were the articles they were going round the streets to sell! Krishna had imprinted His Image on their hearts inseparably. He was the very breath of their existence. In fact there is nothing outside or beyond God. When man forgets it, or ignores it, God manifests Himself to warn and guide.

When you pay some attention to the role that the Avatars have fulfilled, you can see that in the Krita Yuga, they rescued the Vedas, in the Treta Yuga, they sustained Dharma, in the Dwapara Yuga, they supported the Right to Property, or Dhana. We can say that the honour of Scripture was in danger in the Krita Yuga, the honour of Woman in the Treta Yuga and the honour of Wealth in the Dwapara Yuga. Now, all three are in mortal danger, and the Avatar has to cleanse the mind of man for, it is there that the danger originates.

The transmutation that is essential in the mind of man at the present time can be easily achieved, by means of the recital of the Name, the contemplation of the Name, and fixing the mind on the Glory of God that the name summarises and evokes. Dhyana on the Form that is denoted by the

fame accompanied by the Japa of the Name yields the best results—Japasahita—Dhyanam, as it can be called. Dhyana also leads to the surrender to God of the fruits of one's actions, and so, it ensures inner Peace.

Bhagavantham quoted in his speech just now the last sloka of the Bhagavadgita, “Yathra Yogeswarah Krishna Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah”. The sloka is taken to mean, "Where there is Krishna, the Supreme Yogi, and where also there is Arjuna, the Supreme Bowman, there Victory is assured." That, of course, is the outer meaning; but there is another and more significant meaning, too. So far as Krishna is concerned, there is no sense in saying, "Where Krishna is"; He is everywhere. Now about Arjuna, the Bowman. Arjuna means, Pure, Unblemished, White. The bow is the symbol of fearlessness, determination, adventuresomeness. When you make yourself pure and brave, Krishna will manifest in you and you achieve Victory in the spiritual Battle. That is the Message of the Gita, so beautifully given in the very last verse.

On this Janmashtami Day, pray that you may earn Purity and Faith. For, it is only when you are Arjuna, that you get Vijaya, the Realisation of the Reality.

—From the Divine Discourse—31-8-72

## **Bhajan Bliss**

In Baba's words, Bhajan is "singing prayers to God, praising His Glory and Compassion and pleading that He may fill you with His Grace." "It has to be a thrilling experience; it must leave the participants full of pure energy and elevated enthusiasms; the mind must gush Ananda all through the entire being; after Bhajan, you spread joy and purity all around you; even during Bhajan, you vibrate Love and Faith." "Bhajan has to invite active participation and must grant all, sweet experience. It must arouse pictures of the Glory and Grandeur of Godhead, in the minds of both singer and listener. It should take all nearer to God. I'm pleased only when your heart vibrates with Love and Compassion, with Adoration and Ananda. I am not pleased with the mechanical repetition of Kirtan or Bhajan."

Baba has declared that this ideal is seldom kept in mind by us. He has said, " Now, Bhajan has no spring of yearning to feed it with Ananda. I find most of the songs are sung in a wailing tone I do not derive Ananda when you sing in dull, sleepy, weak strains; it has become often a medium for people to exhibit their talents, to parade their skill in composing songs: they sing these in group sittings, as if they are only "rehearsed" there! The others are not able to follow; so, they allow their minds to wander."

I have had some opportunity to attend (and at times to `lead') Bhajans at a number of places here in India and at home, in America. I must say that for some, if not a vast majority of the participants, Bhajan tends towards Tamas and not Tapas. Perhaps, some observations as to how to fulfill further Baba's compassionate desire to make it more a Tapas than an exercise in Tamas, and to bring us closer to God through it, may not be unwelcome. I venture to group my suggestions, under 4 headings.

## **The Participants**

An experience intended and competent to bring one closer to God by arousing Divine feelings of gratitude, loss of ego, sense of unity and bliss, should not be taken lightly by sincere Sadhakas. The Sadhaka should bring himself to the Bhajan as he would to dhyana, darshan, or seva—with Satwic attitudes of humility, open-heartedness, and devotion, dominant in him. Eating lightly or little a few hours before kirtan might perhaps help; avoid ego-arousing emotional situations; read Baba's Divine Words for a few minutes, so as to put to rest for a while worldly desires and anxieties.

If one does come to Bhajan in a worried restless state, one must exercise self-control, so that one's asanthi does not become so evident that it disturbs others. The disquiet of restless eyes and superficial tongues preceding or even during Bhajan should not be. They are productive only of the opposite of Religious Experience.

Several practical steps might be taken to facilitate the proper atmosphere for Bhajan, by the organisers. Dim light, with well-illuminated photographs of Bhagavan within sight of all participants (a large photograph where Baba's frontal gaze can be concentrated upon is very helpful to the efforts at calm and prayerful equanimity) quiet religious music may be played as a preliminary. People should be greeted with brotherly smiles by all whose eyes they happen to meet. Religious instruments like harmoniums, drums etc, should be tuned before people gather for Bhajan, or at least in another room. Incense that is burnt should be pleasant and mild in fragrance.

## **The Songs**

Baba has often said that the songs chosen by the 'leaders' should be of a sweet, simple melody, with wording easy to grasp and follow. But, how often do we find the opposite, even at large Public Gatherings! A clue to how we might test the appropriateness of a particular song can be found in Baba's story of Rama Das, who threw all his musical compositions into the Godavari, so that Rama could save those which He approved; almost the whole lot sank in the depths! only 108 floated and were rescued. They alone had risen from the heart. The rest smacked of cleverness; artificiality, punditry, pedantry!

Baba creates and sings for our benefit and education many sweet songs, at the end of His Discourses. But, if we devotees cannot always have Baba's direct guidance on compositions on the various Aspects and Forms of the Divine, then, what better guide can we have than the hearts and voices of Bhaktas when they are truly listened to? If a truly good Bhajan leader (deep Bhakti, fine voice, sense of tune and rhythm) sings well, and the repeated response to the same song is cold, mechanical, dull and weak, that composition can well be dropped. As Baba said to us once, "In Divine matters, do not compromise".

## **The Singing**

Not only should the words of a song heighten the religious feeling, by touching the inner springs of reverence, awe and gratitude, they should also be sufficiently simple to be easily sung and quickly learned. If Bhajan 'leaders' wish to sing their rather complicated songs, because they are very beautiful, at Public Gatherings where there are new visitors, I may venture a suggestion: Ensure that the songs are well known to at least a large number of regular devotees in the area.

Let these Samiti members or Associate members or Bhajan singers scatter themselves among the audience, throughout the place; let them not sit in one central core area. When a complicated Bhajan is sung, these must have the courage to follow the lines loudly and clearly, so that those around will quickly pick up the tunes and words. You would be surprised at the good results! It is not right that these new visitors should be denied the Bliss of Sai Bhajan; nor is it right that beloved Baba should walk giving Darshan amidst silent lines of people.

The tune of the song must be able to arouse ecstatic response. Very often, as the song rises into a higher pitch and volume, it does not carry the participants with it, but forces them to follow, as of duty only. The result is a drain on one's energy, a feeling of strain, rather than Ananda. Let us test all new songs among ourselves before forcing them on others.

It is obvious that a Bhajan leader has the responsibility to learn a tune perfectly before venturing to sing the leading song in it. As one travels to various parts of India and the West, one notices variations in the tunes, many variations being detrimental to the meaning and spirit of the songs. It is best to adhere to the tunes and rhythms adopted at Prasanthi Nilayam, and, of course, by Bhagavan Himself.

Now, about rhythm: Very often the drums are beaten too enthusiastically, making it difficult to hear the leader. This is especially the case in small rooms. Again, many Bhajan leaders after they step up the tempo, fail to continue singing at the same speed, but, again slow down. This leads to disharmony between the singing and the rhythmic clapping, which in turn, leads to outer-consciousness. The stumbling block, often, seems to be those words which are sung relatively long.

### **The Effect**

Baba has said, "Bhajan is done during a certain length of time. When that period lapses, we relapse into the routine of envy scandal and faction. We indulge in self-praise, and condemnation of others. It does not elevate." Baba has asked, "When you rise from Dhyana or Bhajan, do you see every one in a clearer light, as endowed with Divinity? Do you talk less? Do you love more? Do you seek to serve others more earnestly?" "These are the signs of success," Baba declares.

Yes. What we are and what we do after Bhajan is more important than what we are and do, in that brief period of group chanting. None should condone loud or superficial talk, there or elsewhere. At the Bhajan place, business or social events should not be raised or discussed; no insincere questions and talk should emerge. We are our own guides and guards in these matters. Satsang must be for Work consecrated into Worship.

As we go home after a Bhajan sessions, we must contemplate on Ourselves more deeply and more honestly. We might even impose upon ourselves a few new disciplines, based on the results of that contemplation.

The elevating Divine experience of Bhajan Bliss fills us with Peace, Love and Joy. When we arrive home, the heart that vibrates with Ananda and Universal Love affects every one near and dear to us. Nearness to God is a wonderful experience. That is what Bhajan confers, every

time. Let us accumulate these experiences, and use the chance to strengthen our resolve to achieve and attain the Divine. May Baba bless us all in this Spiritual Effort.

—A Humble Bee

### **In the Garden**

In the garden of my soul  
His Light walks, among  
the dark and troubled valleys,  
He soothes the stormy  
winds of anger, of anxiety,  
with the very whisper of His Being.

Oh! that one day I might come,  
to ever have His name  
upon my lips; His Calm  
to fill my every second.

Baba, Baba, Help me perfect  
myself so that I may  
help the ones I love;  
Baba, Baba, through my love  
for you, may I teach  
others of Your constant  
Gifts of Joy and Peace  
so that they too may see  
Your Light, feel Your Being.

—Elaine Scott, Phoenix, Arizona, U S A

### **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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#### **Kausalya Doubts**

Rama told Kausalya that the first of her boons was, "Bharata is to be crowned" and the second was, "I should be sent to the Dandaka Forest for fourteen years"

When Rama related these facts and thus vouchsafed for their truth, Kausalya exclaimed, "Rama! Did Kaikeyi really demand such boons? Did not Kaikeyi have unbounded love and affection towards you? I feel that she would not have wished for these things any day. Let that rest. Even if she has, I am sure it must be only to test the king! For this simple thing, why should there be so much confusion and anxiety?"

Accept that she asked for the boons; will your father ever agree to grant them? I refuse to believe this. Will your father, who cannot tolerate your absence from his presence for a single moment, send you away into the forest for fourteen years? This is plunging me into more confusion.

Seeing his mother disbelieving the truth of the incidents that actually took place, Rama held both her hands in his, again; he pleaded, "Mother! Believe my words! Father already promised to grant her whichever two boons she desired; afterwards, when she asked for these two, he had no inclination to break his plighted word, to take back the promise he had solemnly granted. Nor could his mind agree to order me into the forest and, be without me. So, he is suffering great mental distress. I cannot bear the sight of his affliction. I am just returning from that place. He is stricken unconscious; he is in terrible agony. This is the exact truth.

I am not so cruel as to cause such anxiety in you, over a light laughable matter, believe me. I have to go to prove the worth of father's promise. I have come, accepting father's order; I have come to you for your permission."

With these words, Rama fell at the feet of his mother. Kausalya lifted him up tenderly. She said, "Rama! What strange behaviour is this? However barbarian a person may be, will he demand these horrible boons? Can ever any human being think of sending you, who is to be crowned in a few minutes, into the forest and for fourteen years? Am I to suffer, throughout my life? I got a son, after wading through many a vow, and ritual. Looking on your lovely face, I lost all memory of those years of sorrow. I have no other desire I ask for no other boon; enough for me, if my son is with me, near me. Have I become unfit for even a little gift?"

### **Mother's Agony**

Did I deliver a child only to throw it in to the forest? Will any mother agree to send her son into the jungle? Alas, what sin have I committed in the past? In which of my previous lives have I kept apart a mother from her son? Since the day when you were initiated into Vedic studies, I was deriving happiness every moment, at the thought that the day of your Coronation is drawing near. Have those my sweet dreams come to naught? Have all my hopes been dashed to the ground and broken to pieces? Have all the vows, vigils, rites and rituals, I so scrupulously observed and performed for ensuring your joy and happiness gone to waste?

O! What a big sinner have I become? Why has my heart not broken on hearing this news? Perhaps, I have to hear and bear many more heart breaking news! Death does not help me to overcome these. My heart beats, in spite of this shock. Alas, even death has to await the allotted moment. He comes; but seeing me, leaves me alive, postponing the moment of my release. Yama too has no mercy towards me. I am pronounced undeserving of even the realm of Death.

O Rama! That this calamity should happen to us!" she lamented, and fell on the floor in a faint. On coming to, she rolled on the floor, pressing her heart with the palm of her hand. Rama could not bear to look on the scene. The wailing of the maids, who gathered around, broke upon his ears like a blast. Rama did not utter a single word to any one there. He sat near his mother, and stroked her forehead, caressing her hair and consoling her. He brushed away the dust with which her clothes were covered.

### **No Swerving**

Like a tall well-set rock stuck deep in the sea, Rama sat unmoved; unhurt by the blows of the surging billows around. He was above and beyond the blows, of grief and the blandishments of joy. He was filled with as much enthusiasm now when he had to leave for the forest for fourteen years, as he had a few moments ago, to proceed to the Durbar Hall to be crowned as the Ruler of the great empire!

Kausalya too knew that Rama would never swerve from his path of duty. She was aware that Rama would never break his plighted word and that he will not stray a hair's breadth from the line laid down by his father. She was certain that her lamentations will not induce him to turn back, and that he would proceed to the forest, without fail. So, she gave up all attempts to persuade him to give up his resolution she reprimanded her heart and hardened it.

"Son! Of what use is it to blame others, when one is destined to meet these tragic developments. No. It is sheer waste of words. Everything is for our own good. No one can say no to the decisions of the Divine. I have had no happiness in this Ayodhya, in this palace, in this zenana, any day. I never experienced it. I can be happy only where my Rama is. So, I shall come with you, take me" she said. And, she attempted to rise on her feet. The maids held her and seated her leaning against the wall; they spoke softly and sweetly, to bring her round.

### **Lakshmana Lashes Out**

Lakshmana was watching the anguish of Kausalya and listening to her words. He could not control his emotions. He was bursting with anger at the turn of events. He held his hands tight over his chest, and said, "O Revered Mother! I shall never accept this. What! Is Rama to leave the kingdom and betake himself to the forest, yielding to the prattle of a mere woman? I cannot tolerate it.

Father has become too old; his mind is very unsteady as a result. Moreover, he is still entangled in sensual pursuits, and he has become a slave of the enticements of Kaikeyi; he is uxorious and so without any sense of discrimination about the consequences of his actions. He is liable to issue any kind of order in his infatuation. Orders of such type should not be obeyed. The king is in a state of feeble mindedness, unable to distinguish the real from the unreal, the momentary from the momentous.

When such rulers give orders they can well be disobeyed. Consider what crime did Rama commit, that he should be sent into exile into the forest! Even the cruelest enemy of Rama (if he has any), or even the most hardhearted barbarian suffering punishment for his crimes, cannot point his finger at the slightest slur on his behaviour or action. No king on earth has the authority

to drive into the forest as an exile, a person of such unquestioned innocence, purity of intentions, and holy sanctity.

Rama is steady in his straightforward path; he is the master of his senses; he honours and treats with respect enemies of every type. Will any father drive such a son into the jungle. Moreover the king is most attached to Dharma; he is a hero full of sacred ideals; he is an adherent of the best in all faiths. Can such a king lay down this command?

Judging from this, it is certain that Dasaratha is either insane or enslaved by the God of Love. Any command from a person who is either of these is unworthy of consideration. The words of a king who behaves like a lunatic or a mere child need not be honoured at all. Forgetting the dictates of political morality, giving up the path of worldly wisdom, throwing to the winds the demands of paternal affection, he has become mad, giving free vent to his fancies and desires. Can his command be treated as such? I won't agree that it should be respected."

### **His Bow Ever Ready**

Lakshmana turned towards Rama, and clasping his hands in reverential pose, he said, "Rama! Pardon me! Assume the rulership of the realm before news of this spreads and becomes known to all. I shall be by your side, armed with my bow. Whoever in Ayodhya stands up against you will have to meet the strength of this bow first. Of course, there is no such; either in Ayodhya or any other place. But, if any opposition develops, this great City will become a desert with no human inhabitant. My sharp arrows will see to that.

Why repeat a thousand things? If Bharata opposes, or any one on his behalf, I shall destroy him, root and branch. I will not care. Even Dasaratha, if he advances as a supporter of Kaikeyi in his struggle. I shall capture him, and shut him up in prison."

### **Rams Reprimands**

While Lakshmana was proceeding in this strain, Rama looked at him sternly, intercepting the flow of his feelings and admonished him thus: "Lakshmana! Your words are crossing bounds! No one can deny me what I wish for. None can change the march of my will. My exile in the forest cannot be avoided. You are talking like this, prompted by your love towards me and the desire to prevent your separation from me. Forbear! Forbearance saves one against all anxiety and fear. Be patient. Don't get agitated.

Do not entertain ideas of hatred against either father or brother Bharata. They are pure, holy persons. Kaikeyi too is highly venerable. She is to be honoured and worshipped. The boons she asked are also blameless. She loved me, caressed me, fondled me, nursed me, played with me, derived joy from me, more than her own son, Bharata. When such a mother today prays for boons from father, which are quite contrary to the ways of the world, sure, there must be some hidden significance in the affair. This must be the Divine Plan, not mere human tactics. Be quiet, give up your fears and hatreds. We shall find out what happens next." Rama advised him.

At this, Lakshmana fell at the feet of Rama, and said, "Rama! On what basis, under what authority is Bharata to be given the Crown that ought to be yours? Which other son has the right

which the eldest has not? You are obeying this absurd, unjust order because of our father; but I will not approve it, whatever you may say in justification.

Then, turning to Kausalya, Lakshmana continued: Revered Mother! To tell you the truth, I am devoted to Rama. I speak this on oath—I cannot exist even a single moment apart from Rama. If Rama has no desire for the kingdom and if, it happens that he moves into the forest, I too will follow him. I will walk on his footsteps, all the time he lives there. I will be the shade for him. If he but orders so, I shall jump most joyously into the blazing fire. I shall heed only his orders, not of any one else. Mother! I cannot bear the sight of, your sorrow. He is your son; he is my very breath. He is my Ramachandra. How can anyone be away from his own life-breath?

### **Bow to The Inevitable**

Listening to the words of Lakshmana, Kausalya was a little comforted. She stroked the head of Lakshmana saying, "Your love gives me much consolation. Your words give me great strength. Brothers of your kind are rare indeed! The world considers the mother who have borne such children as really venerable and holy; but, we are afflicted with the feeling that we are great sinners, to have such cause for grief. Rama will not desist from his resolve. Exile is inevitable for him. I want only this now: take me also with you, she wailed.

**(To be continued)**

### **Sai Ram 'Effect'**

Come, brothers mine, hark unto this miracle dear  
In the 'Home of Peace', when harts do pray.  
A single word lightens and softens, it digs, it builds!

Sairam, they shout; mammoth weights glide up.  
Sairam, they sing; lovely domes do bloom.  
Sairam, they call; such trucks do move fast.  
Sairam, they gasp; monster boulders split.  
Sairam, they pray; brick climbs on brick.  
Sairam, they mutter; steel becomes butter.

Sairam they mumble; there's no grumble or jumble.  
Sairam, they pull; rooted trees are felled.  
Sairam, they croon; hills of sand are heaped.  
Sairam, they whisper; idol is formed in mould.  
Sairam, they drag; tons yield to slender hands.

O, the power encased in God's sweet Name!  
Come see it, and learn it, at the Home of Peace,  
Where one tiny man, with Sairam on tongue  
Does get transformed into Heroes Ten!

—ED.

## **The Full Moon**

Bharat is predominantly the land of spiritual endeavour, and so, it is here that the Master-Pupil relationship has been most elaborated and demarcated. Here, even Incarnations like Rama, and Krishna have conformed to the norms, and exemplified themselves as ideal pupils, revering their spiritual Masters. The Master or Guru is the teacher of genuine Jnana; he is the Guide to the Science of Eternal Liberation. He leads one on the path of Victory over man's worst enemies, his own impulses, emotions, passions, and desires. When Moha suffers Kshaya, man attains Moksha; that is to say, when Delusion is destroyed, Deliverance is at hand.

The Path cannot be discerned by the physical eye; it will be revealed only to the inner eye, illumined by the Light of God. The Guru has trodden that Path; he knows the ups and downs, the twists and turns. He holds the pupil by the hand, but, the pupil must walk himself, be sustained by his own yearning to reach the Goal.

The outer eye fills with information about the objective world, but, liberation consists in getting rid of the inner shackles, the inner parasites. The true Guru helps us to discover these and cure the inner malady. Progress lies in a series of questions being presented before the intelligence and a series of answers being discovered therefore. First, the question, DEHAM? (Am I this Body?) And the answer, NAAHAM. (Not I). Then, the query, KOHAM? (Who then am I?) The answer is revealed as SOHAM (I am He). Turning this answer over and over in the mind it falls apart into two questions, Who is He and Who am I? At last it is plain that there is no He distinct from the I and no I distinct from the He; He and I are One. Sa and Aham, He and I become merged in OM, for OM represents the One and ONLY Entity.

This Full Moon Day is to be set apart for resolving on this voyage of discovery! That is why it Is Called Guru Purnima, the Full Moon of the Guru. The Guru has to be himself above desire and delusion and able to impart the real Reality; but, most of the so-called Gurus indulge in robbing either the wealth or the individuality of their pupils and followers. What should be offered to the Guru is neither one's possessions or personality, but, one's pains and problems. The Guru must help the pupil to realise that he is Divine, as Divine as every object around him, the whole Universe is His manifestation, is He and His.

The seen is inferior to the seer; the eye is seen by the mind, the mind is perceived by the intellect is objectified by the Atman. By means of Sadhana, the mind is to be clearly grasped as but an object perceived by the Atman.

Arjuna described the mind as fickle, fraught with danger and fixed inexorably in its failings. But, when I told a questioner from Delhi this morning that it is very easy to bring it under control, he doubted his capacity to follow the needed discipline! There is a class of bees which can bore holes in the hardest wood; one such bee bored through the iron muscle of Karna, the hero of the Mahabharata! Still, the same bee is trapped by the Lotus Flower. Shall I tell you how? The bee enters the lotus bloom to drink the nectar, and even while it is filling itself with that intoxicating sweetness, the sun sets and the petals draw together and the bloom becomes bud

again. The bee is imprisoned. It has neither the will nor the strength to bore its way through to freedom and the vastness of outer space. The intoxication produced by the nectar did it. So, too, let your mind taste the nectar of the Lotus Feet of the Lord; it gets caught, it gets lost in that Bliss. It is no more a problem for you.

The Full Moon teaches you the lesson of purity, of joy, of spreading cool comfort and consolation around. You can derive equally valuable lessons from all other phenomena of Nature too. Look at the tree. It provides shade, it offers fruits, to the very foe who chops off its branches with the axe. But, man inflicts injuries on the very person who does him good; he is ungrateful to the very God who has granted all these boons.

Again look at the sea. There are many lessons you can learn by watching it, and ruminating over the grandeur. The sea is unaffected by the evaporation that happens daily and the input of flood-waters; it is not affected by loss or gain. It does not rejoice or get dejected. The sea does not tolerate any flotsam and jetsam; it urges them onwards to the shore by means of its waves so that it can continue pure. The sea is seemingly agitates on the surface; but deep down, in the inner consciousness, it is calm without a trace of anxiety or agitation. Man should be like the sea ...ever detached, ever vigilant, and ever calm.

He should be, like the Full Moon, filling the sky with joyous Light, spreading Peace and Joy. That is the Message of this Guru Poornima.

—Divine Discourse from Baba 28-7-72

## **The Royal Road** (Message for Seva Dal)

Man is incapable of creating flowers; flowers are God's creations. To offer to God, the flowers created by Him, is common, but not praiseworthy. On the other hand, man should offer the flowers grown by him in his own heart—thoughts, feelings, emotions that are beautiful and fragrant. These are the 'heart-flowers'; which can be offered with devotion, love and humility. This is the highest worship. These flowers are pure, because they have grown on the pure soil of the mind. When they are placed at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme, He is pleased, and confers Grace.

Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita, "Bhakthas te athiva me priya": Those devoted to Me are exceedingly dear and near to Me. Man takes immense trouble to gather flowers blooming on hills, forests, lakes and gardens. But, he does not offer himself, his heart and mind, his actions and thoughts, at the Holy Feet. In the precious garden of his heart, he should grow the pure flowers of truth, Non-Violence, Compassion and Detachment. A beautiful garland strung out of these, should then be offered to God.

This is the true worship. Through this, you can advance in Self-Realisation and attain a high stage in the spiritual field; ultimately, the goal of Mukti or Liberation can also be reached. Young women and men should add to the ceremonially prescribed form of worship, this form of

worship also. That is to say, they must keep the body, mind and heart ever pure, unsullied by vice or sin. Blessed are the pure in heart, for God resides therein, and illumines the path.

The Sadhaka must move from Dvaita (the Dual Concept) to Vasishta-advaita (the Concept of qualified Non-duality) and progressively arrive at Advaita (Non-dualism or Monism). All the great seers and sages have trod these stages in all lands.

Do not forget that God is the in-dweller in the hearts of all. You serve God, the God that dwells in you when you serve other creatures. Similarly, when you inflict injury on another, remember that the other person too is an embodiment of the Divine. The same God who is in you is in him also. Your motto should be to salute all creatures with respect, not to look down upon any creature. The contempt you show to others is contempt to God. Do not, therefore, harbour hatred or violence in your heart. Love all; revere all.

Try to make every one happy; see that no one is rendered unhappy by you. Sathya Sai Seva Dal Members should pass one test: the test of Loving Service. That alone grants happiness to the one who serves and the one served. That alone brings you and the Organisation joy and satisfaction. Otherwise, your life is a failure, your membership is a show and the Organisation gets a bad name through you. With love, compassion, patience and a pure heart, gird up your loins for Service to all God's creatures. Be prepared for all types of service; welcome all chances for service. There is nothing mean or small in the eyes of God.

Practise the high ideals of the organization. Direct your thoughts to noble and sacred things; be full of Ananda. Keep out bad thoughts and ideas from the mind. This is the Royal Road, to the Presence of Sai.

—Baba

## **Dasara Delight**

### **The First Day**

The Dasara Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam began with the Hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag, by Bhagavan, at 7-30 A.M. on 8th October. The Nilayam itself had been reshaped by additions to the frontage providing more shaded space for the lines of devotees who generally seek personal interviews with Bhagavan. A beautiful frontage with a jutting Porch from which Bhagavan gives Darshan to the gathering of devotees standing on the spacious quadrangle below. And three Sikharas, with golden kalashas as finials, transforming the building into what it really is, since it was inaugurated, a Temple where The Avatar of the Age, has established Himself.

Dr. Gokak described the Flag as the Flag of Harmony, of Perfection, of the Regeneration and Reconstruction of Humanity. The Reconstruction of the Prasanthi Nilayam is symbolic of the Process that Bhagavan has initiated in Human Affairs, he said.

Bhagavan announced that He is the Source, Sustenance and Goal of all the Worlds, the Splendour of the Eternity of Time and the Expanse of Space, the Vishnu, the Krishna in each heart. "This Dasara will mark a new Chapter in the career of Prasanthi Nilayam; Divinity is its Core and every one here has to yearn for Divinity and strive to reveal the Divinity that is their Reality, through unremitting Sadhana. The facilities being provided for worry-free living in quiet surroundings must ensure greater concentration in spiritual Sadhana," He said.

### **The Flats**

Later, Bhagavan proceeded to the New Residential Blocks, built for devotees in the Township, along with the allottees of the Flats. He was preceded by the Nadaswaram Band and Vedic Pundits reciting hymns. Altogether 70 flats were inaugurated that morning, Sai Krishna entering every Flat and giving immense Ananda to the allottees, the 70th person getting as much Grace and joy as the very first one! It was a Festival of the Supreme Ananda, which only Bhagavan could confer.

This is how one person writes: "My heart throbbed fast, when Swami smiled at us, and my father handed him the scissors to cut the ribbon, tied across the door! Upon entering the room, He stood in front of the Altar, hands gently folded at the back. Then, within a fraction of a second, He moved towards a plain iron-folding chair and sat on it with a loud thud. He did not mind sitting on a rusty iron chair; perhaps, He wanted me to know that. Next, He let us all touch His Lotus Feet and gave us His Blessings, which gave me serenity and peace of mind. He opened the Prasad Plate, picked up a small toffee. He took the glass of water, touched it with His Lips and, believe me, when we drank it later, after He left, the water had turned as sweet as Ambrosia! Then He asked us to do the Arati and sing the Arati song! This was indeed a great privilege. O, how touching, how loving, how heart-easing were His words, and His Looks when He stayed in the room. I am too happy; my thoughts are all of Him; my mind is at peace. I can write no more, as my eyes are filled with tears of love and gratitude"

Baba was received at the door of each flat with traditional ceremonial, current in each cultural region of India and thus, the Flow of Grace assumed an atmosphere of festive grandeur. For example, at the entrance to the Calcutta Flats, there was ululation and the blowing of conches.

At noon, about ten thousand poor people were fed sumptuously. Baba referred to them as "Persons who come to the Nilayam for my Darshan, this day, every year!" That is the measure of His Love and Compassion. Bhagavan Himself served them sweets. Saris were given to the maimed among them (Women) through the Rajamata of the Sirohi and through Sri Bhavaraju Sathanarayana, the aged Engineer, in over-all charge of the Building Construction at Prasanthi Nilayam, to the Men. Thousands were filled with Ananda by these Gifts of Grace.

In the evening, the Annual Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital was celebrated in the Divine Presence, with Dr. Nallainathan, of Colombo, Sri Lanka, as Chairman. Dr N Jayalakshmi Presented the Annual Report of the Hospital. Dr Nallainathan spoke of the 5 Kosas and the 3 Bodies of man, and of the efficacy of Dhyana and Yoga in curing physical and mental illness. Bhagavan emphasised the role of Sadhana in granting equanimity and balance, and maintaining health as a means for self-realisation.

The 2nd All India Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal Conference was inaugurated by Bhagavan on the morning of the 9th October in sparkling cheerful Sunlight. More than 3000 members had gathered, from; all the States of India, from towns as far apart as Kohima and Koyna; Dehradua and Dindigul. Many of them had come days earlier, so that they could share in the arduous but pleasant task of carrying and spreading sand, of passing from hand to hand pans of cement concrete for constructing the terraces, cleaning the premises, painting the buildings, felling trees, and doing the thousand odd jobs that the demolition of old buildings and the raising of new ones involved. The State Presidents and District Presidents of the Organisation, as well as many others interested in the regeneration of Youth under the guidance of Bhagavan also attended the Conference. Sri Nakul Sen, Lt. Governor of Goa, presided. He exhorted every member to take to heart the Message of Sai, contained in the Gita, Chapter 2, in verses 11 to 15, and 45 to 48, and elaborated that Message with all its practical implications.

Then, Dr. V. K. Gokak's New Book—"Narahari, Prophet of New India"—a novel based on Ashram Life in India, the story culminating in the fulfilling Personality of Baba, was placed by him at the Lotus Feet of Baba, with the words, "This is a little jasmine, of which You Yourself are the Fragrance."

Dr K.K. Mistry, Convenor, announced the formation of 4 committees of the Conference to prepare recommendations for its consideration on 1. Definition of Seva Dal, as distinct from Volunteer. 2. Organisational Problems. 3. Scope of Activities and 4. Fixation of Uniform Dress, Scarf and Badge.

Bhagavan referred to the fear that overcame most minds at the downpour of rain which threatened to delay the Inauguration, and said, "My Sankalpa is Vajra Sankalpa", "My Will cuts through the toughest obstacle." Taking the word dal, which meant a petal, He said, "Every petal is attached to the stalk of the flower, that attachment gives it food, fragrance, charm, and

usefulness. So too, each dal or squad should be attached firmly and lovingly, drawing inspiration, instruction and Grace from Me."

Sri Ramakrishna had a vision, while in Dhyana, of Mother Kali, in which she had a boy with her, whom She described to him as 'your son'! Ramakrishna was astounded at the implications of her statement; he shed tears of contrition, and pleaded for an explanation. Kali told him that the boy was his 'spiritual son,' and that there was no imputation that he was his physical father. Years passed. Rakhali, who became revered as Swami Brahmananda, was brought by his kinsmen into his presence. Ramakrishna embraced him with extreme affection—behaviour that was beyond the ken of people around him. Rakhali too was surprised; but, the secret was revealed to Brahmananda just a few minutes—8 minutes, to be exact—before Ramakrishna drew his last breath. The Paramahansa called Brahmananda to his bedside, and whispered into his ear, the story of the vision and the message that Kali gave: "You are my Prema-Putra, she said," whispered Ramakrishna!

Let me tell you this: "Ramakrishna had one Prema-putra; for me, all of you are my Prema-Putras; only, you have to so conduct yourselves that you justify and deserve that status."

The Four Committees then set to work to deliberate on the problems set before them by the Conference. They presented their reports to the Conference on the 10th, at the Morning Sessions. Bhagavan advised that the Seva Dal members too be consulted on the value and usefulness of the several proposals made. This Gesture of Grace sent a thrill through the Hall for, Baba did not want to impose any rule on the Seva Dal which the members had not themselves accepted as worth while.

At the Evening Sessions, Bhagavan elaborated on the final proposals which had received His gracious approval and blessings. He said that the very purpose of establishing the Seva Dal was to provide a means of wiping out the ego and granting youth a vision of the Divine, inherent in all beings. He said: "The first qualification for membership of the Seva Dal is faith in Sathya Sai. Without that faith, how can you observe the directions laid down? Faith is necessary to avoid negligence, and to escape the odium of going against them. They must be aware of the teachings and message, the basic principles of the Way of Life that is being laid down. The Conveners of the Seva Dal must be so well conversant with them that they can speak about them, when they address gatherings in the villages.

Of course, their talk will be appreciated and followed in action by the listeners, only if they themselves observe the rules they prescribe and the regulations they lay down as good for others. In many places, instead of being Leaders, the Conveners have become Pleaders, skilled in disputation and argumentative pugilism. Do yourself and, advise others to do thus wise; do not advise and direct, yourself doing the opposite! Nowadays, the entire world is wallowing in hypocrisy. Such people have no place in the Sathya Sai Organisation. The sooner they quit the better.

Now, about the Age Restrictions for membership of Seva Dal. The present rules have to stand, because, then only will there be a community of outlook and possibility of mutual correction. If a sixty year old member points out same mistake in a young man and asks him to correct it, the young man might retort that he has no understanding of the situation and background or that it

is easy enough for age to admonish youth. If a person of the same age-group warns or advises or admonishes, it will go home more deeply."

Comradeship can be firm only when both persons are bound by similar joys and sorrows. Rama and the Monkey Ruler Sugriva became comrades, in spite of this fundamental difference, because both were living in exile from their legitimate kingdoms, both lost their rightful heritage through machinations on behalf of their brothers, both had their wives removed from their side by force. A Dal can be strong as one unit only when members are bound by common aspirations, hopes and ideals, resulting in the sharing of common joys and pains.

Moreover, the Seva Dal is established for the resurgence of spiritual yearning in the Youth, the re-dedication of Youth for their own uplift and for the uplift of Sanathana Dharma. Now, youth is unaware of the means of attaining equanimity, peace and contentment. They are carried away by sudden stories of emotion, and they injure all the cherished ideals of culture by outbursts of passion. They have lost reverence for age, and respect for parents and teachers; they have no knowledge of the deeper springs of delight and the purer streams of activity. They are in no mood to listen to advice from any quarter. They are amenable at present only to the Love of Sathya Sai. That is because, Sathya Sai directs them to follow what He actually practises and does. Sathya Sai joins them in activities, which He advises them to share in. That is the bond between them and me.

Some other changes in the rules have also to be made. Hitherto, Seva Dal units were allowed only in towns with a population of a hundred thousand or more. But, hereafter, they can be formed in every village and town. For, the ideals of the Dal are very necessary for folk everywhere. The illiterate, the diseased and the distressed everywhere have to be given proper help and direction. The spiritual disciplines of Bhajan and Namasmarana will yield a rich harvest of peace and joy, in all places.

We shall have, hereafter, District Conveners and State Conveners of Seva Dal, who will foster, develop and supervise the units of the area under their charge. These persons must be themselves attached deeply to the Seva Dal ideal and discipline and must be able to spare the time and resources necessary for organising and supervising the units.

As regards the uniform, personally I shall be pleased if you wrap your hearts in Love, and wear on your eyes the vision of equal Compassion! Wear dress that will not scare people away from you, by its outlandish or bizarre nature. Exotic Lungis, foxes and dogs on the shirt, drainage pipe pants, side burns, splashes of colour that keep people off these have to be avoided. When you attend District Meets of Seva Dal or State Meets or such Conferences, wear pure white full-arm shirts over banians; and white pants, not too narrow or tubular. Dress must not show off the physique; it must reveal that you are one with the people, eager and ready to be of service to them, simple and sincere at heart, pure and unattached in intentions.

Some attempt was made to distinguish between Seva Dal Member and Volunteer. This is the distinction: Seva Dal members have a regular course of instruction and a definite code of discipline. They are dedicated for service and equipped for the same, at all times and on all

occasions. They seek out opportunities of service. Volunteers, on the other hand, help during special functions, like mass feeding, conferences and gatherings.

One other important point: I expect Seva Dal members to practise Seva, at home, ere they attempt to be useful to people outside. My Grace will not be available to you, when you leave your sick parents uncared for, and run about to serve people who are sick in hospitals or elsewhere. Serve the mother and father, earn their gratitude, give them joy—I shall bless you amply. The Sadhana of Service starts at Home, and has to spread from there to Society.

The guidelines for Seva Dal are: Utilise physical strength, mental and intellectual power, for the service of fellow- beings in distress; do not misuse the life-span for sensual gratification or personal aggrandizement; eschew egoism, pomp, cynicism; cultivate Love and Reverence; save your Selves, and promote peace and joy in Society, the Nation and the World."

After the Discourse, the Members were given, light refreshments and fruit-juice by Bhagavan Himself.

The 12th October was the day of Inauguration of the Seven day Vedapurusha. Yajna. This year, the Yajna was planned on a more elaborate scale, with Five Sacrificial Altars, instead of one and ritual worship of the Navagrahas, Durga and the presiding Deities of the Sacrificial Fires. The Recital of Veda, the Worship of the Sun through ceremonial prostration, and the Reading of the Sacred Epics were also part of the Yajna.

His Excellency Sri Mohanlal Sukhadia, Governor of Mysore State, inaugurated the Yajna mantapa. Bhagavan moved into the Mantapa, in procession, with the Governor, walking along the multicoloured Path of Floral Petals laid by devoted hands. The richly caparisoned Elephant Sai Geetha, led the way; Nadaswaram Band, and the Sathya Sai Collage Band played thrilling devotional music. Pundits, Vedic Reciters and the Students of the Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala declaimed Vedic Hymns. Devotees from all the States of India and from many countries Overseas stood in serried ranks to feast their eyes on the inspiring scene, scattering flowers and shouting Jai.

Sri Mohanlal Sukhadia said, "I need hardly speak of the enormous influence Baba has, over the people in India and outside. I have myself seen hundreds of people from the affluent and advanced countries of the West who come to Him with devotion. In India, many prominent educationists and leaders in other walks of life are His staunch devotees. All this shows the great faith which people repose in Him, for the fulfillment of their spiritual needs.

Today, Baba provides as it were a bridge between our contemporary lives and the best of our ancient tradition. It is significant that He has chosen now to have a Yajna performed in accordance with ancient Vedic rites. When a person of His Greatness organises a Yagna, it would quicken our understanding of the sources of spirituality.

One cannot imagine a more propitious circumstance under which the full significance of the Yagna is realisable. It is indeed our good fortune to participate in it. I hope that we would all derive the full spiritual benefit that a situation like this promises."

Bhagavan in His Inaugural Discourse revealed that the great epic Mahabharata (meaning also the Great Land of Bharat) is also named JAYA, a word which from the right end reads YAJA, meaning 'Perform Yajna', 'Sacrifice.'

Therefore, He said, the Land of Bharat is itself a vast Altar of Sacrifice, a Sub-Continent dedicated to the Divine Virtue of Detachment and Renunciation which is the basic principle of any Yajna. Baba deprecated the cheap cynicism which condemns Religion as the seed-bed of faction and rivalry; He declared that Religion was ever the staunchest supporter of Truth, Tolerance and Renunciation of Worldly Pleasures, that religion always encouraged and rewarded the elimination of vice and violence, the purification of the impulses and the sublimation of the emotions. Religion held out the prospect before man of evolving himself into God, becoming Narayana, just as religion revealed to man that Narayana (God) Himself has often come in human form to save and elevate Nara (Man). The Omnipresent Divine Principle can be concretised and experienced through certain disciplines, Baba assured the thousands who listened to Him with avid interest. Fire is latent in the match-stick; it can be aroused, made patent and utilised for creating heat and light, by striking against the very box that contains it. So too, by subjecting the senses, the mind, the intelligence, that are all available in the human body to movement in certain determined channels, it is possible to obtain Light and Heat, to know and to overcome.

"The heart of man is the sacrificial fire altar; the pangs of desire are the tongues of flame; the evil that is in man is the offering into the fire; the treasure of unruffled Ananda is the gain. This is the real Yajna you have to do, every day of your life. This is but a reminder, a symbol, a prompting. The Veda, purusha is in you; dedicate all acts words and thoughts to Him. That is the real Yajna," He pointed out.

On the evening of the 11th, the Annual Sessions of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha was held in the spacious New Auditorium, in the Divine Presence. Brahmasri Gandikota Subrahmanya Sastry, the doyen of Vedic Pundits and a Member of the Central Executive of that Sabha spoke on the significance of the various rites that were included in the Veda purushayajna. Referring to the word with which Bhagavan generally addresses Public gatherings, "Divyatmaswarupulara!" "O ye, embodiments of the Divine Atma," the Pundit said that Baba was revealing thereby that each one of us has Him as the very core of our being; that He is the Veda Purusha, the Embodiment of the Supreme Wisdom that encompasses all knowledge. The Vedapurusha Yajna will ensure His Grace and will endow us with the Fruit of that Grace, namely, Liberation Itself, through the Light of that Supreme Wisdom.

Bhagavan then summarised in His own simple way the entire complex of Vedic Literature, comprising the Samhita, the Aranyaka, the Brahmana, and the Upanishads. He analysed the Upasana section of the Vedas into Four Groups, each emphasising one type of worship of the Divine: the worship of the Basic Principle as such, the worship of Divinity symbolised as endowed with limbs, the worship of the Divine in a form fully distinct and distinguishable from the rest, and the worship of the Divine, through several predetermined stages, leading to the final consummation of Realisation.

From the 12th to the 17th, Bhagavan gave Darshan at the Yajna Mantap in the mornings; He blessed the hymn-reciters, the various participants in the various rituals, the officiating priests, and showered Grace on the thousands gathered to witness the Yajna, moving among them, allaying fear and alleviating distress.

On the 12th evening, at the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Sessions of the jnana Sapthaha, Br. Sri N. Krishnamoorthy Sastry read and explained the Gopika Gita from the Srimad Bhagavata. Bhagavan said that the Love of the Gopis for Krishna, and the pangs of separation they felt for Him which are pictured in the Gopika Gita, are aspects of the highest Austerity that they underwent for the Realisation of the Reality that was Krishna, the Krishna who is the Inner Motivator of all the Universe.

On the 13th, at the evening gathering, Br. Sri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastry spoke on the potency of the mystic formulae called Mantras, into which Sadhakas are initiated by those who have mastered the Science. Br. Sri Kolluru Somasekhara Sastry spoke on The Supreme Person whose limbs are the Four Varnas or the Four Groups of Activities that sustain the world. Bhagavan elaborated on the contents of the Purva-Mimamsa and the Uttara-Mimamsa texts in Vedic Literature, and pointed out that while the one extolled Karma or Dedicated Activity the other fed the springs of Wisdom, (Jnana). Through dedicated activity, the consciousness is cleansed and the Light of Wisdom is clarified, so that man perceives the Universe too, to be as real as God, for it is but His Manifestation, His Glory.

On the 14th, Br. Sri Jammalamadaka Madhavarama Sarma and Br. Sri Pidaparathi Krishnamurthy Sastry spoke on "Surrender to the Divine" and "The Path of Devotion as laid down by Sandilya and Narada," respectively. Bhagavan took up the same note and dwelt on the Life and Message of Sri Ramanuja, the exponent of Visishtadvaita, which Bhagavan preferred to translate as "Non-duality of the Differenced".

On the 15th, Br. Sri Gandikota Subrahmanya Sastry gave a clear exposition of the various expiatory and purificatory rites enjoined on each individual by Scripture. Br. Sri Jandhyala Papayya Sastry while discoursing on Poetry and the Emotion of Devotion, quoted extensively from Sanskrit and Telugu poets to elaborate the varieties of Spiritual Experience. Bhagavan spoke on three types of individuals: Some have their lives fulfilled with the acquisition of Divine Love and Grace; some move on along limits laid down by the sages and regulations laid down by society; they are moral, good, and happy; others are carried fast by the current of affairs, helpless to save themselves from calamity.

On the 16th, Br. Sri Madhavarama Sarma spoke of Bhagavan as the Maha-Jagadguru, the Great World Teacher, and His Advent as the only Hope for the Liberation of Humanity. Sri Indulal H. Shah announced the establishment of the Sri Sathya Sai Research Institute, and its First Publication, a Book on the Saints and Sages of India. Dr Gokak explained the aims of the Institute as Research into the educational process of transmitting the universal message of Bhagavan to the children of the Bal Vikas, the boys and girls of the Pre Seva Dal Units, and the youth who are members of the Seva Dal and students of the Sri Sathya Sai Colleges. Bhagavan spoke on the need to revive the constructive ideals of Indian Culture, to enable the children of this land to draw strength and courage from the recognition of their own Inner Divinity.

On the 17th, the Valedictory Day of the Vedapurusha Yajna, Bhagavan proceeded to the Auditorium, in a colourful procession, heralded by drummers from Kerala, pipers from Tamil Nadu, conch blowers from Mysore and the Orchestral Band from the Sathya Sai College. The Vedas were recited by Pundits. Wearing a gold thread shawl over His silken Robe and a many coloured floral garland, Baba gave darshan that morning as the Lord Incarnate, visualised by the Rishis and Kavis. For the Final Offering into the Sacrificial Fire. Bhagavan created by a wave of His Hand the precious gems. Then, while performing the Abhishekha rite for the Shirdi Form, He created a Head Ornament in gemset gold. The continuous stream of Vibhuti created by Him covered the Idol and showered precious stones around. Then, Baba sprinkled the Holy Water consecrated by Vedic Hymns on the thousands who had filled, to overflowing, the huge Auditorium Hall.

That evening, Col. Joga Rao gave the gathering, information about the Prasanthi Nilayam Development Project, and the cooperation the Project received from the Rajamata of Nawanagar, Sri P. R. Kamani, Sri. S. Jalan, Sri S. Tarapore and others. He acknowledged that the architect, designer, engineer and inspirer of every item of work was Bhagavan Himself.

Sri Karunyananda of Rajahmundry then spoke on the efficacy of the meditation on the Name of the Lord, Sai Ram. Bhagavan made it clear that Prasanthi Nilayam stands for the unity of the Goal, which Sadhana everywhere by whomsoever done under the direction of all scriptures ultimately leads to. He called upon the Sathya Sai Organisation to dwell always on this unity, and ignore all influences that harp upon diversity. He appreciated the efforts of Col. Joga Rao, Sri Bhavaraju Sathyanarayana, the 82 year old Engineer and their young assistants, who toiled hard on the Project to erect the residential flats, to redesign the Nilayam and to bring the Auditorium to its Present shape.

He spoke of the sincere devotion of the late P. R. Kamani and his interest specially is the erection of the Auditorium. Poonamchand Kamani had a mind that was humble and full of love towards all. Baba named the Auditorium, "Poornachandra," so that that name may inspire all who gather in it to acquire minds that are pure, compassionate and tolerant. The Full Moon is the Presiding Deity of the Mind and the Mind can be cool pure through Its grace.

On the 18th, at 11 A.M., Bhagavan gave Saris to each of the Women members and dhotis to the men members of the Seva Dal, about 3000 in all. He then addressed them on their duties and responsibilities. He said "Like the tree that does not inquire into the caste or creed or age or character of the person who seeks its shade and its fruits, you too must serve those in distress without inquiring into their antecedents or associations. Their distress is the only qualification that must be honoured, Inquire into your readiness, your skill and your resources. Baba exhorted the doctors among the Seva Dal Units to treat patients gently, speak to them softly, and serve them quickly and efficiently, to the best of their knowledge.

In the evening, Bhagavan presided over a Kavi Sammelan when Vidwan. B. Thirumalachar, Br. Sri. J. Madhavarama Sarma, Br. Sri J. Papayya Sastry, Dr V K Gokak, N Kasturi. Br. Sri. D. Pichayya Sastry, Sri Amarendra Prof. S. R. Kulkarni read the poems composed by them: the languages included Sanskrit, English, Telugu and Kannada. Bhagavan graciously wrapped

shawls over the shoulders of the poets. He then discoursed on the standards that poets must uphold if they desire to contribute to human welfare and peace.

The Jhoola Festival was held the same night, Bhagavan appearing resplendent on the Jhoola, enjoying the Burrakatha performance by the members of the Hyderabad Seva Dal.

The entertainment items during Dasara included music recitals from the famous Bengali singers Jothika Roy, Pratima Banerji and Supriti Ghosh. The children of Vasanth Gayana School Bombay, and of the Bal Vikas, Alleppey gave fine music recitals. There were dramas enacted by the Balavikas Children from Madras (Jayadev), Guntur (Sakku Bai), besides Gita Recitations, Dance Recitals, and expositions of Narayaneeyam slokas by other Bal Vikas children.

On Vijayadashami Night, the Kottakkal Vaidyashala Kathakali Troupe, with its cast of renowned artistes, put on boards two scenes from Santhanagopalam and Kiratharjuneeyam.

Throughout Dasara, there was an Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts of Bal Vikas Children from all parts of India, which attracted appreciative attention from thousands of visitors. The Exhibition also contained charts drawings and pictures illustrating Bhagavan's Teachings.

—(Ed)

### **Drawn By His Grace**

Interest in Bhagavan is growing so fast in the United States, that when i mentioned in my various talks that i will be going to Bhagavan in October, i was quite surprised to find that 50 people were eager to join me! Some of them had already been at His Feet and were anxious to be there again; others have had visions of Bhagavan or seen Him in their dreams and were irresistibly drawn by His Grace. Now they are here, it is difficult to put into words the experiences of every one, but, even grownup men, who had seen much in their lives, confess they experience such great bliss when they are with Bhagavan, that tears of joy flow down their cheeks—a rare occurrence for an American.

For me, personally, although this is my 13th journey to Bhagavan since 1966, every time the ecstatic joy is ever fresh, and supremely blissful.

—Indra Devi, Tecate, Mexico

### **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Ramchandra looked at Lakshmana, and said, "Brother! I know the extent of the Love you bear towards me. I am not unaware, of your heroism, your ability and your glory. Kausalya, the

Mother, is suffering great grief, since she is unable to understand the true facts and the value of self-control.

Besides, since I am the child born of her loins, this grief is but natural. But, consider; for all values of life, righteous conduct, Dharma, is the very root. And, Dharma is secure on the foundation of Truth. It cannot stand firm on any other base.

Sathya and Dharma are interchangeable ideals. One cannot exist without the other. Truth is Goodness; Goodness is Truth . I am now achieving both Sathya and Dharma; by respecting and acting in accordance with, the command of Father. No one dedicated to the good life shall break the word plighted to the mother, the father or the esteemed Preceptor, the Guru. No, he cannot. Therefore, I shall not overstep the orders of Father. That is certain.

It was not Kaikeyi that ordered me; she only communicated to me the command of Father. And, she did so in his very presence; so, one has to bow his head in reverence to it. If it wasn't father's command, when Kaikeyi was telling me that it was, he could have declared that it wasn't, couldn't he? He didn't; he was simply bewailing and groaning; for this reason, it is as authentic as his own command.

So. I shall not deviate from my resolution. There is no possibility of my going back on it. Do not allow your reason to slide into the terror-creating Kshatriya mentality. Give up violence and cruelty and adopt my stand.”

Rama stroked the back of Lakshmana, who was weighed down by anger and sorrow and spoke soft loving words to assuage his grief.

Then, turning to his mother, Kausalya, he said, "Do not obstruct my resolve and cause breach of my vow. Whatever may happen to whom, or which, my exile in the forest cannot be cancelled. Send me with your Love, bless the avow, the resolve." Then he fell on her feet and prayed for permission to leave. The mother was shaken by the agony that was torturing her; she swallowed her anger at the turn of events; she placed her hands on the back of Rama, and wept aloud. Seeing her plight, Rama too was unable to restrain his emotions. He held her feet and said, "Mother! My word is supreme Truth, Param-sathya. No hardship will happen to me while in the forest.

I will spend these fourteen years with the largest measure of happiness and joy. I shall come back afterwards and fall at these Feet again. I shall fulfill all your hopes about me. Mother! It is Dasaratha's Command! It is a Command which not only I, but, you, Lakshmana, Sumitra and Bharata too have to bear on the head and carry out to the very letter. This is the ancient law, the Sanathana Dharma.

Mother! I shall make another appeal, pardon me. The arrangements made by you and others for crowning me, shall be used by you, with equal joy and enthusiasm, for the Coronation of Bharata. Father has entrusted the forest region to me. It is best; it is in accordance with the highest Dharma that each should do his duty as allotted to him. Trying to avoid one's duty, pronouncing it as hard to accomplish, is not befitting the son. Mother as you are, do not entertain

any idea of difference between Rama and Bharata. What you have to do is to bless both, asking each to carry on to a successful end, the responsibilities entrusted to them.”

Kausalya listened to these words of Rama; she could not bear the grief that descended on her. She fell on the ground and groaned in great mental pain. "O, my son! Father brought you up physically, and helped you grow and was happy to see you tall and strong. So, he deserves reverence and obedience. Am I too not worthy of reverence? And, obedience? Again, consider this! The wife is the husband's half. The husband is the wife's right half. Thus, when each is the half of the other, I am half of Dasaratha, am I not? That is why, I know, I am named the Ardhangi (Half the Body) of Dasaratha. When you say now that you have been commanded by Dasaratha, it is only the command of half of him. It did not originate from all of him. It will become fully authoritative, only when this half too agrees. If that agreement is not there, you must decide that it is not valid as a command.

The command of the mother is supreme. You know the meaning and significance of Dharma in all its varied aspects; so, you must be aware of this too. Without the mother's acceptance, no duty can be binding, and nothing deserves the name Dharma. More than the father's command, the mother's is to be followed. That is the more important duty. For, it is the mother who nourished you into childhood and boyhood, not the father! Had the mother not borne it for nine months, there would be no child at all! You are now throwing that mother into the flames of grief, and proclaiming, "O it is my father's command, I must obey it at all costs." I shall not accept that conduct as correct. It is not fit that you behave so. No treasure is richer to the mother than the son. And, for mothers such as I the son is all. When the son looks askance at me, and considers the father's order as superior, of what benefit is it for me to secure even heaven and the chance to drink Divine Nectar there? I shall rather suffer in hell. O, I shall deem it heaven if my son is with me or if I am able to be with my son.

Rama! What can I do here at this place? I have not deserved to taste a moment's happiness, throughout my life! From birth, I was bound by the limitations imposed by mother and father; then, caught in anxiety about what kind of husband one would get, and what his character and behaviour would be, I was at last wedded to your father. For years, the agony of childlessness afflicted me. Then, I had to suffer from conflict with the other wives of your father. I have no relief from that battle, from that day to this.

As a result of, I do not know the merit of which vow I observed in which previous life, I secured you as son. And, now, separation from you is happening to me, in this manner. When have I been happy? My life has become a vast ocean of grief; I am struggling in it, unable to swim. I am sunk in it without any hope of being saved. But, I had you as a branch which I could hold to save myself. If you now deny me that, what will happen to me? Consider this carefully.

As a consequence of my absence away from him, your father will not suffer any feeling of loss. He has his source of Ananda in Kaikeyi; none else is needed by him. Therefore, instead of hanging on here, and broiling in agony and finally, giving up life, I prefer looking on at the charming face of my dear son ever. Though I may not have food and drink in the forest, I shall sustain myself on that joy."

Though Rama felt that there was some validity in her assessment of the situation, he was forced by the obligation to obey the wishes 'of his father, and his promise that he would not fail in that duty. Meanwhile, Lakshmana intervened, and said, "Brother! Mother's words are the highest Truth. The mother deserves even more reverence than the father. The scripture has laid down, "Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava," thus placing the mother first, and the father in the second position. It says, "Let the mother be your God, and then it says, Let the father be your God." It is not proper for you to stick so firmly to your resolution and cause you much grief to mother."

Rama turned to him and intercepted his words. "Lakshmana! You are supporting the statements of a mother who is suffering from the clouding effect of attachment to progeny. Consider the order of the Father, which concerns the welfare of the empire, the world in its entirety and the human community. You have not understood the inner implication and meaning of that order. Only Dharma can ensure the other three goals of man—Wealth, Happiness and Liberation. There is no need to doubt this or argue about its correctness.

So too, if any activity will injure Dharma, Artha and Kama (Righteous Conduct, Affluence, and Mental Happiness). When activity is merely devoted to the earning of riches, the world hates the individual. When it is devoted entirely to the selfish fulfillment of one's desire, the world condemns it as contemptuous! Therefore, Activity has to be in conformity with Dharma.

Lakshmana! This is not all. Dasaratha Maharaja is our Father, Preceptor and Monarch. He might give us a command, either through desire for something, or through anger against somebody or something; or through attachment with and love towards some one—that is not our concern! We have only to obey that command, there is no justification for discarding it. A son who delights in sin might act against the command; but, I am not such a son. Whatever Father commands, I will bow down my head in reverential homage.

Regarding this, you might have a bit of doubt. When a father, a fool, blinded by lust, devoid of the power or intelligence to discriminate between the momentary and the eternal, intent only on his own goal of selfish aggrandizement, and putting his trust on the stratagems of others, inflicts injuries on his own son, then you might ask, should the son put his trust in him and obey him? Without fail he ought to! Though he maybe a fool, or a cruel tyrant, are you not his son? When that is so, your status is ever lower and his is ever higher. This settles all duties and rights.

The son, who believes that a person is his father, can at best try to clarify to him and explain according to his light points that appear to him confused or complicated in what the father speaks about, that is all. He should not refuse to obey, dismissing it as foolish or absurd.

Moreover, consider this too. Dasaratha Maharaja is a very talented person, a great warrior and heroic fighter, a pillar of righteousness. And, he is struggling in agony to keep plighted troth! He wasn't deluded by Kaikeyi, or blinded by lust! No. He was moved by the supreme need to abide by his promise, a promise he had solemnly made to her.

Besides, even yesterday, he told her that he would grant her the boons, whatever they be, even if the grant involved injury to his own life! Father is in misery, because, he sees no escape from the

consequences of that assertion; his heart does not agree to send me into the forest. I can never assent to the view that he is overcome by lust.

Lakshmana! Dasaratha Maharaja is a stalwart supporter of Dharma, more stalwart than his predecessors on the throne. His fame has echoed and re-echoed from every corner of the three worlds. Will it not be a bad example to humanity if his Queen, the Anointed Queen, leaves him and accompanies her son, deserting the husband while he is alive? Life is short; its span is limited. To lose one's reputation forever by thus resorting to unrighteous acts is not good, either for me or for you.

Then, turning towards the Mother, he pleaded pathetically, "Mother!" and before he could continue, Kausalya was struck into stiffness by sorrow. She realised that her efforts to change the stand that Rama had taken were fruitless. She found that she could not escape the obligation to give him leave to go, with her blessings. She felt that the more she lamented, the more Rama was pained.

—(To be continued)

## The Auditorium

*Poorna Chandra—He named It  
Lovely the name. Lovely, the Hall  
Raised for Sai Ram!  
Heaven, enclosed by song  
And chant of hymns,  
Raised by hardy sinews  
Tingling to the touch of Lotus feet,  
Raised with prayer care,  
The largest of its kind!  
Floor of Chitravati sands  
Spread, squirrel by squirrel,  
As Rama's bridge!  
Flanked by columns of myth and lore;  
Each pillar a prop of upright heart!  
Majesty in steel, cemented in Love!  
The sky itself caged in cosmic charm!  
Yogah Karmasu Kousalam!  
Roofed by second firmament,  
So infinitely grand!  
The Auditorium calls, all seekers,  
To Sai Path.  
'Tis a dream come true!  
The dreamer, dream and dreamed, all three  
Merged in the One, who named It so—  
The Name He loved,*

*The Name, that means the Mind,  
Which dreams such dreams.*

**—ED**

## Darshan

Some days He shows a shifty gaze  
That meets no one's eye;  
(Why?)  
Like a crafty gambler, playing it sly,  
Or a maid, elusive and shy  
Who, with a sigh,  
Hovers  
Flirting with a hundred lovers  
Gathered on her lawn to try.

But, when it pleases,  
He quits; He teases,  
And, often, pausing to conduct the Universe,  
Tuning to the Cosmic Rhythm,  
Calm  
With an upturned palm,  
He looks on us  
Sincere as Jesus  
Sweetly re-assuring as a Psalm.  
A new mood seizes.

He swings His arm  
To do a trick  
For some one sick.  
Is He being slick?

Or could it be for some of us  
To see His Love?  
He has to make it thick?

(Do I dare stare? He won't care!)  
Though His dream is my reality  
He walks my dreams,  
His fingers writing breezes in the air,  
And wearing woven sunlight, as a halo in His hair

—Paul (Ram Ram)

## He Knocks at our Door

Our car stopped in front of a house at Pinner. The name board "Om Sai" welcomed us. We pressed the calling bell. An elderly lady opened the door, and said, "Come in, Manian! Cone,

Lalitha!" We entered the drawing room, heavily carpeted and artistically kept. There was the fragrance of incense in the air. In a few minutes, the master was seen descending the stairs, with his genial voice, and beaming smile. "Come, Come," he was saying, invitingly. We knew it was Mr. Sitaram. "I was yearning since years to meet you. This is Sai Baba's House. He has a room for Himself, here. Come up and see," he said.

We went up the steps. There, we saw a portrait of Sathya Sai Baba, tastefully decorated; it thrilled us to the core. "Has he visited this place?" I enquired, Mrs. Sitaram entered the shrine, with the words, "He is here! If we delay the evening Arati a few minutes any day, He knocks the door to alert us!" I looked at her in amazement. "Yes! Every evening we have Arati at 5-30. If we are unfortunately engrossed elsewhere, He knocks and reminds. We wont find any one inside the shrine! Pardon us. Krishna, I would say, and wave the Arati singing the Arati song—Why? You find it hard to believe, do your Well, You are the very person who brought Baba to us!"

"How is that? Me, bringing Baba to you?" I wondered. It was Sitaram who spoke now: "Yes, Mr. Manian! You opened our eyes and hearts, so that He may enter. That has made our lives worthwhile. We have every week Bhajan Sessions in this house. Many brothers and sisters, British and Indian, join us those days. His Grace, His Divine Miracles have won them over to Faith in God. "If it is your will that I should marry this man who has proposed to me, let that flower on your picture fall into my hand," prayed a girl; and, it fell right into tier palm! Direct answers to prayer are a daily act of Grace here. Why, the fact that I did not know of Him while in India, but, only later, when I came here—that itself is a miracle. Isn't it?

"Just a little doubt," "How did I bring Him to you?" I interceded. He said, "Some years ago, you had published in the Anandavikatan of Madras a review of the Tamil version of the biography of Baba. That drew me to Him. I am now conveying my gratitude to you." I said I had not gone to Him, as yet. "Try, as soon as you reach home," he advised. After lunch, during which they told me many incidents revealing Baba's constant Presence with them and others in Britain as elsewhere, I drove back to London. We sat silent arid stunned. "Could it be true? How could it be untrue?" We were tossed on the waves of exhilaration and expectation.

Jack who was at the wheel of the taxi interrupted the stream of thought. "Sir! Was that the name of the gentleman? Om Sai?" I told him of Sai and the Grace and Glory of Sai as related by Sitaram. Jack advised me when I finished, "Ah, what a wonderful land is India! Its greatness rests on the eternal truths discovered and treasured in the ancient past. Do not, for humanity's sake, discard the treasure in the pursuit of what is called progress and development." I took leave of him at the airport, where I boarded the plane to Paris.

**—From "The Heart Speaks" by Manian, Anandavikatan, Madras**

## OO Gentle Presence

What drew us to Baba was the fact that Roshan, my daughter, had polio twelve years ago. Since then, philosophy has been an old subject to us, but, the wealth of its treasures fell into place by His Grace, as soon as we saw Him, a year ago. We did not need any one to tell us who He was. The kindness and Grace of Baba have now drawn all my family to Him and we are enjoying the blessings that come with learning and studying, and the understanding of His Will. I now have to give expression to this testament of Faith:

*OLord Sathya Sai,  
Narayana.  
Thou who are the Creator of the Universe  
The Absolute,  
The Supreme Motivator,  
The Giver of all Life,  
The Creator of all that exists or seems to exist—  
“O Gentle Presence, Peace and joy and Power,”  
Grant us through Thy Grace  
This knowledge:  
That Thou are the In-dweller  
The Flame that resides in the heart of each man;  
Thus shall we know that all men are really one  
For in them, is seen only Thyself.*

*Give us the wisdom to know  
That whatever strength we possess,  
Whatever courage may be ours,  
Whatever lore or compassion we give or receive,  
Whatever discipline or obedience zee may practise,  
Whatever peace we may enjoy  
Are but the expressions of Thyself made manifest through man.  
This is the complete surrender of "self"  
That we lay at Thy Lotus Feet,*

*Yet, one thing more do we seek of our Lord.  
The Grace that will guide us  
To go forward—  
Ever obeying the call of His word.  
Whatever our form; wherever our task,  
Grant, O Lord Narayana  
What we may always be conscious of Thee,  
Knowing that the Absolute Reality is but Thyself.*

**—Rhoda M. Parekh**

## **Rama Katha Rasa Vahini**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Meanwhile, Lakshmana was greatly moved; his eyes turned red; he lost all awareness of the body—where he was and amidst whom; his lips became dry; his tongue was tied; he had a fixed stare; he bowed his head and looked towards the ground; tears flowed without let or hindrance. Rama watched him, and felt that it will not be proper to leave him in that state.

Besides, Lakshmana might do something with himself, as soon as he was left alone; he might do some injury to others too. And, "those acts must be deemed to have happened on account of me," he thought. So, Rama decided to quieten Lakshmana and addressed him, "Brother!" "The fumes of anger are as intense to the Horde of sins. Suppress them. You might be distressed at the thought that Ramachandra has been so grossly insulted and dishonoured. But, Sathya and Dharma, the path of Truth and Righteousness, heed no honour and dishonour; it does not crave for one or stray away from the other. Be brave. Fill your heart with courage. Remain here and serve Father; use your days thus for the fulfillment of the highest purpose of Life."

When his, elder brother blessed him thus, Lakshmana was startled into speech. "Brother!" he cried, "When Rama, my very breath, is proceeding to the forest, whom am I to serve here, with this inert material physical object called body? This Lakshmana has no desire to serve any one except Rama. You value your Dharma, your sense of duty; I too have my sense of duty, and I value it equally. Therefore, I shall come behind you. I have no need to await any one's order. I am not included in the person bound by the boons claimed by Kaikeyi. Even if I am involved with them, I shall not pay heed to her commands, or to the directives of her henchmen. No one other than Rama has the authority to command me or issue directives about my movements or conduct. So, here and now, I too shall don the hermit's habiliment of bark, tie up my hair into matted locks, and ready myself to follow you."

With these words, Lakshmana divested himself of the jewels and regal paraphernalia he had burdened himself with, while proceeding to the Coronation Hall; he threw the jewels and silken robes to the ground in disgust. Thy ear-ornaments, the neck-laces fell in the far corners of the room. He was fit and fretting to accompany his brother.

Rama's heart softened at the sight of the spontaneous devotion and dedicated detachment of Lakshmana. He went close to him, and placing his hand upon his shoulder, spoke softly, "Brother! My joy has no bounds, since I have such a brother as you! This is my great good fortune. By your coming with me, mother Kausalya too will gain some peace of mind. She is very much agitated, by fear and doubt about how I will spend my fourteen years in the forest, and whether I will be able to return after the period of exile is over, back to Ayodhya City. So, tell mother to be free from doubt and fear. Go and soothen her fears.

While we spend the hours like this, Father must be suffering more and more anxiety. Kaikeyi will have, welling up in her, the doubt that I may not leave at all! Therefore, I shall now go to

Sita and inform her, and thence, I shall go to the palace of Kaikeyi, to prostrate before father. Meanwhile, you will go to your mother Sumitra, and receive her consent to join me."

With these words, Rama went round Kausalya one full circle, and fell flat at her feet in reverence. At that, the maids and attendants, as well as the other inmates of the zenana, set up a loud wail, as if the Deluge had come upon them on a sudden. But, Kausalya bravely drew Rama towards her when he stood up, awaiting her blessings. She embraced him, and caressed his hair, and with her hands on his shoulder, she said, "Son! Rama! You are the staunchest adherent of Dharma. You are a resolute hero. You can have no cause to fear life in the forest. You have resolved on the exile in the forest; it has now become impossible for me, to dissuade you from that decision. May it be well with you. Fulfill your ideal, your yearning, to respect the wish of your father! Repay the debt that one owes to one's father, by acting according to his command. As for me, I wish only for one thing: return happy, to Ayodhya. I shall be happy, on that day, at least.

Rama! The force of destiny is indeed inscrutable. Its decrees cannot be reshaped by even the most powerful. The Dharma for whose sake you are now leaving us will certainly guard you and guide you while in exile. Rama! How nice it would be if at this very moment the fourteen years have rolled by, and I am seeing you on your return, rather than when you are about to leave! Alas! Pardon my madness! Son! How shall I convey to you my blessings? Shall I say, let the fourteen years pass by, as fourteen days—no, no, as fourteen winks of the eye! Come safe, come soon. And, be crowned Emperor. O, jewel of Raghu dynasty! O my dearest son!

The Goddess of Dharma will surely shelter you during the years of exile, for it is to propitiate Her that you are entering the forest. She is the strongest and most steadfast of Guardians. I shall be propitiating the Gods here these fourteen years end praying that no harm comes to you. The service you have offered to your mother, your father and your preceptor will confer on you long life, health and happiness. Your loyalty to Truth will grant you impregnable courage. The mountains, the river, the bushes, the anthills, the beasts and birds—these will approach you in affection, cater to your needs, and fill you with joy. The sun, the moon, and other heavenly bodies will ward off evil and protect you.

Even the demonic Rakshasas of the forest intent on heinous acts of cruelty will be drawn towards you in, love, for, your heart is full of cool comforting love, and they will surrender at your feet, accepting you as Master."

Blessing Rama thus, Kausalya gulped down with effort the sorrow that was overwhelming her, and put on a brave face indicating contentment and joy. She smelt the crown of Rama's head, and held him hard and close in loving embrace. She kissed his cheeks; her lips quivered, when she spoke the parting words, "Rama! Return safe, proceed in joy."

Rama knew the depth of the affection that the mother was bestowing on him. He touched the mother's feet many times in reverential gratitude, and said, "Mother! You should not grieve; you should not reduce sleep or food, do not injure your health. Remember me, all moments, with a calm contented heart. Your thoughts will be reflected in my safety and prosperity. When you grieve here, how can I be happy there? When you wish that I should be happy there, you have to

be happy here. And, with a full heart, you must be blessing me from here." Praying thus, he moved out of the place, averse to leave her thus, but, yet, anxious to do his duty.

Rama stepped on the royal road, and started walking along bare-footed, amidst the concourse of citizens who had filled it. People were petrified at the sight of that resplendent symbol of virtue. The citizens had heard rumours floating over the streets, telling them that Rama was leaving for the forest; they were unable to believe it as true; they prayed it might be false. But, when they saw him tramp bare-footed, their hearts sank; the exaltation they experienced at the news of the Coronation dived into the depths of misery. Faces that bloomed in joy suddenly faded and drooped, wan and lifeless. Rama did not raise his head or look into any of the faces around him. He proceeded to the apartments of Sita.

Sita was watching the entrance door, for, she was anxious to learn what had happened at the palace of Kaikeyi, and why Rama had not come as yet, though the auspicious hour fixed for the Coronation was fast approaching. She had finished the rites of Vigil and Fast, and held in readiness the plate of sandal paste, flowers, grain and other prescribed articles so that there would be no delay caused by her tardiness, to accompany her Lord to the Coronation Hall. Her heart was beating fast in expectancy of Rama's arrival. And, all the maids and attendants around her were overcome with the ecstasy of the coming hour of triumph. Lovely maidens were ready with sparkling lamps for the ceremony of waving them, before Rama as he entered.

Into the Hall, decorated with unprecedented charm, suddenly Rama stepped in, unheralded, with bowed head, and on bare feet. Every one was shocked. Sita moved forward towards her Lord; she could scarce believe her eyes. Was it true? Her body shivered like a leaf in the wind. She bit her lips; and swallowed her surprise. "Lord! What is the meaning of all this? Why are you thus? You said, this day is the day dedicated to Brihaspati, the Preceptor of the Gods; you said, it is a very auspicious day, the star is Pushya, and you are to be crowned this day as the Yuvaraja of this Empire. How is it that they do not hold over your divinely beautiful self the White Umbrella of Imperium, with the brilliance of sunlit sea spray, and with its hundred ribs of gemset gold? Where are the resplendent whisks with their feather-pure sheen that appear like Moons? They should be where you are. Why are they, not accompanying you today?"

Why are the minstrels at the court silent, without singing your praise, as you proceed to the Darbar Hall? O, Lord! How is it that the Masters of Vedic Lore, the Brahmins, have not anointed you with consecrated honey and curds? And, the Ministers, the Vassal Kings, and the Leaders of the various communities in the State are not walking behind you, as usage requires! The Royal elephant Sathrunjaya, tramping the ground like a mountain peak on the move, making people mistake it for a dark blue cloud flowing over the road, he must come first, announcing your arrival, shouldn't he?"

While Sita was raining questions like these, Rama could not decide how to answer them; it was not a matter that could be clarified quickly in a few words; so, Rama entered an inner Hall, and drawing Sita nearer, he said, "Sita! Revered Father has willed and resolved at this very auspicious hour to send me to the forest; therefore, it has become urgent to honour his command"

Sita heard these words, but, she could not believe that they could be true. She was told only the command, and not the background thereof. So, she queried, "Lord! What crime did you commit to deserve this punishment, this exile into the forest? Dasaratha is the embodiment of justice, a Dharmatma. He will never issue an order of this nature without legitimate reasons! What's the real purpose, the inner significance, of this order to live in the forest?"

Rama smiled at her question, and replied, "Sita! Long ago, it seems father had promised to grant mother Kaikeyi, two boons; but, that promise had not been fulfilled so far. She too had not demanded them, until now. This day, she asked for them both. They were, first: Bharata must be crowned as Yuvaraja, and second: I should move into the forest, and live there with matted hair and vestments of bark for fourteen years. Father is supremely righteous. He never acts against the plighted word. Therefore, he bowed his head to Dharma and acceded. I felt I should see you before leaving and I have come. Sita! You have taken birth in a greatly revered family. You know and value all the moral codes and goals. Janaka Maharaja, Master of the inner Mysteries of the highest morality, is your father. You too walk steadily on the path of Dharma. I have to leave for the forest this very day. Dasaratha Maharaja has given this empire, inherited by him from countless generations, to Bharata; from now on, he is the Lord over this realm. Immediately after being crowned, he will come to you for your blessings and for prostrating before you.

Do not extol me before my brother; nor should you exhibit any trace of sorrow or displeasure at my being sent to the forest. Don't slight him or look down upon him. Kings appreciate only those who adore them and serve them. So, do not praise me or decry him. He is my brother and your brother-in-law; but, that is only with reference to physical kinship; with reference to kingship, Bharata is your monarch, and mine. Give him the honour due. Do not cause any displeasure or distress to him by your words or deeds. Fair one! Follow the directives of not only Bharata, but, also of old father, Dasaratha. Serve also mother Kausalya who is suffering unspeakable agony because I am leaving her. Take all appropriate measures to keep grief away from her. The other two mothers, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, them too you must obey and please. Sita! Bharata, Shatrughna are to me as dear and close as my very breath. Treat them as your own brothers, or, lovingly foster them as your sons. O, charming damsel! Do not leave this place and go to Mithila City, for the reason I am not here. Remain in Ayodhya itself; and, comfort mother and father, serving them in suitable ways to remove the sorrow in their hearts. With love and care, confer comfort, courage and contentment on them."

**(To be continued)**

*To give is to receive. The seed released returns a harvest. Only what is released is ours. We are owner only of what we can freely give. What we cannot release is not owned—but, owns, we then do not possess, but, are possessed, by that with which we cannot part. —Baba*

## **The Birthday**

Believing that the Body is All, and that there is no entity embodied in it—this is Mistake No. 1. Ignoring or forgetting that there can be no wave without the Ocean, no body without the Atma, is Mistake No. 2. The Atma has no modification or mood. It is the individualised embodiment that undergoes modifications and is caught in moods. Once you know that you are in essence the Atma, you too will be unaffected.

Another characteristic of the individual is that he cannot be alone, separate from the rest. Like a drop of oil on water, he spreads; he reaches out and far. `I' seeks other `I's and seeks to become We. Life is a march from I to We. But, it usually strays from I to They. And does not reach the Goal, We.

Intellect alone can direct man in the path of discrimination, between the true path and false, the proper step and the improper. This is the reason why man has been praying since ages, through the Gayatri hymn: “Illumine me, prompt my intelligence, so that I may walk aright.”

The reasoning power of man is shaped, not only by the education he receives now, but, more by the impact of past lives and the import of future events. If the power is used for self-aggrandizement, it feeds delusion; if it is used in service for others, it will promote the Revelation of Reality. Reason must examine the vagaries of the mind and make patent the Divinity, that resides and shines in every individual.

Give away `Love' to all; give up the Ego; display Heroism in service; with compassion to follow men, feel your intimate Kinship with them. Visualise the Atma that illumines all; derive unending Bliss there from.

All who have come embodied are Avatars that is to say, Advents of the Divine, Manifestations of God. What, then, is the special feature of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ? Why do you celebrate their Birthdays with such reverential enthusiasm? The speciality is this: they are Aware; you are unaware of the Atma which is the Truth. Awareness confers Grace, Glory, Majesty, Might, Splendour, Awareness confers Liberation from bounds, from time space and causation, from sleep, dream and wakefulness. For you, sleep is fiction, dream is fantasy and wakefulness a many—directional storm. Avatars are ever alert, aware, alight.

The wise man is he who keeps his reason sharp and clear, and sees things as they really are. He listens to the advice;

Life is a Challenge Meet It!  
Life is Love; Share It!  
Life is a Dream! Realise It!  
Life is a Game! Play It!

This is the real Pilgrim's Progress. This is the Lion's March across the Forest, fearless, masterful and victorious. The roar of the lion makes all the denizens scamper in panic; so too, the Halo of Wisdom scatters the dark brood of fear and doubt.

Life sweeps along like a wild typhoon; the allotted years do melt like snow before the sun; but, man wastes the precious chance, and strays into folly and frivolity. The yearning of the human soul, "From untruth lead me into Truth; from darkness lead me into Light; from death, lead me into Immortality, " this is unrealised! Of what use is it to honour the Avatar and hold the day when the Avatar took human form as sacred? The Message of the Avatar must be born, must become alive, must grow in you, your heart—that is the Birthday, you have to celebrate. Celebrate the Birthday in your own village. You need not travel long distances to where I physically am! Plant the seeds of Love in your hearts, let them grow into trees of Service and shower the sweet fruits of Ananda. Share the Ananda with all. That is the proper way to celebrate the Birthday.

I have been telling you that My Life is My Message. I am exhorting you in the Upanishadic way, Revere the Mother as Divine, Revere the Father as Divine, Revere the Teacher as Divine, Revere the Guest as Divine." Now I am proceeding to the place where their bodies are entombed, to offer, as I have advised you to do, gratitude and respect, to the parents. After that, the Prasanthi Flag will be hoisted on the Mandir. Hoist it on the shrines of your hearts, shrines where God is installed and realised in actual Presence, every moment of your lives.

—Frown Baba's Discourse 23-11-72

## **The Three Bodies**

Man is engaged in ceaseless search for happiness; but, he is incapable of defining what exactly is the essential component of happiness. So, he flits from one objective gain to another, ever discontented with himself, ever bothered by disappointment. He tries to possess, to accumulate, to acquire more and more of external junk, which cloud his vision and dulls his appetite for gains of lasting value. When can a man say, I am fully happy; I need no more? What is the nature of joy or comfort that external objects can give? Man does not pause to inquire. He is unaware that he himself is the embodiment of the highest and the most lasting happiness or bliss or Ananda. That flaw has led him into disaster and die-ease.

Before seeking happiness through the senses, the mind and the intellect, man has to examine whether he is a bundle of senses, or a mind playing with them or an intellect that rationalises the mental cravings. The body is the gross body; the water which it is intended to contain and carry is the subtle body; the reality of the potter who shaped it and willed it is the causal body. The three bodies which each has are called respectively Sthula (Gross) Sukshma (Subtle) and Karana (Causal). The physical and vital sheaths are Sthula, mental and the intellectual sheaths are the Subtle, and the Blissful or Anandamaya sheath is the Causal body of man. Behind the Ananda is the spring of Ananda, the Atma.

There are three stages of wisdom correlated to those three bodies: Jnana, Su-Jnana and Vijnana. Knowledge that is gained by the analysis-of the objective world and the similarities of the behaviour of its components is Jnana. When this knowledge is further studied and practised to subserve the best interests of the individual and society, it becomes Su-Jnana, or beneficial wisdom. The intentions and urges that arise from the purified consciousness saturated with the Divine qualities emanating from the sage is Vijnana, the Highest Wisdom. It is to be noted that the word Vijnana is often misused to indicate mere jnana, or co-ordinated information, analysed information about sense perceptions arising out of contact with the material objective world. Bharatiya Culture uses the word for the Supreme Wisdom, which denotes the seer, the saint.

Intelligence, Intellect, Intuition—these three govern the thoughts and actions of man. One leads to another. This is the significance of the prayer with which, Gandhi awakened the urge of liberation in this vast country, liberation not only from alien rule but also from alien tendencies and trends of thought. He caused the reverberation all over the land from a million throats of the prayer, "Sab ko Sanmathi de, Bhagavan." "O Lord! Grant every one the equipment of beneficent intelligence." Once that is assured, progress is certain.

Once the intelligence is purified and dedicated to spiritual effort, there should be no slipping back, whatever the obstacle, whatever the temptation. Hanuman, charged with the mission of discovering the place where Ravana had confined Sita, decided that he should take a leap over the sea towards Lanka to search for her in that island fortress. While he was propelled across the miles by the Name of Ram that he carried in his heart and on his tongue a mountain immersed at the bottom of the sea felt a strong urge to do him some little service, for, he was the Instrument of God, and engaged in an exhausting adventure! Its name was Mynaka. It rose above the waters and called upon Hanuman to rest awhile on its crest, and refresh himself with the fruits upon the trees that grew thereon. Hanuman declined to delay his landing in Lanka; he was engaged in a Divine Mission, which brooked no rest, no delay, no dallying. He turned a deaf ear to the importunities of Mynaka, and sped forward to fulfill the command of the Lord.

Ponder over this incident: Consider the compassion and the eagerness to serve which the `inert' massive mountain felt! Consider the steadfastness, the undeviating faith, the single pointed loyalty of the monkey, Hanuman! Do they not teach invaluable lessons to man—lessons of a heart that melts at suffering, a head that refuses to swerve from the path of duty?

The whole duty of man is to engage himself in good acts with the gross body, scatter good thoughts and good influences around him with his subtle body, and earn self-realisation and Bliss through his causal body.

—Baba: Discourse: 23-11-72