

The world has heard the message of Sai and men and women of goodwill are rising to the occasion. There are now 541 Sai Centres in 54 countries.

Over the years I have had the good fortune to witness the greatest miracle of Puttaparthi. People come from great distances yearning for Bhagavan Baba's darshan. He offers a glance or a smile or perhaps a word of guidance for consolation. Suddenly three months later there is a Sai Centre in a country on the other side of the world filled with Sai devotees who may have never had the opportunity for his darshan. The greatest miracle of Puttaparthi is the translation of Bhagavan Baba's divine will into human action, into devotion and service to God, into a spontaneous outpouring of love and compassion.

We Sai devotees, share a common bond, our love for God in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We share a common goal, the realisation of our divine destiny. This common bond and goal unite us in a unique and magnificent way. We are virtually an army of invulnerable soldiers marching to a song of love that is being chanted by the Lord Himself.

How are we invulnerable? We serve our fellowmen without ego and with no desire for the fruits of our action. We serve selflessly. Selflessness confers invulnerability.

People in worldly organisations are vulnerable to the bitterness of defeat, the sorrow of failure, and the evils of jealousy and hatred. Our selflessness, our freedom from ego and attachment, renders us invulnerable to these malevolent forces. We are impervious to the slings and arrows of worldly misfortune. We can only be vanquished by our own doubts and lack of faith.

Sometimes some of us who have responsibilities within the Sai Organisation foolishly and pompously ponder the current state of affairs. We say to ourselves; Swami is Divine, how and when will he change the world? We become impatient and preoccupied. We fall into bad habits. Expedience replaces wisdom. Attachment and zeal for public recognition replaces selflessness. Then we do not see the effects that we desired and this gives rise to doubts.

Doubts and lack of faith are the only arrows that can pierce our shield. How can we have doubts? Bhagavan Baba's mission moves as inexorably forward as time itself.

### **An international oasis of spirituality**

Let us compare Bhagavan Baba to a Divine clock. The hour hand represents the changes that Bhagavan Baba is making in the world. Our human eyes cannot see the movement of the hour hand and yet our memories tell us that it has moved forward. When I first came to Prasanthi Nilayam twelve years ago there were only a few buildings and a handful of westerners. Now Prasanthi Nilayam is truly an international oasis of spirituality and every day many people from

moved forward. How can I doubt it?

The minute hand of the Divine clock represents those changes that Bhagavan Baba is effecting in each one of us. We cannot see the movement of the minute hand but we can remember. When I first came to Prasanthi Nilayam 12 years ago I was preoccupied with the acquisition of material wealth. I wanted leisure and pleasure. I was unable to love deeply. Now 12 years later my heart is filled with love for Swami that makes life worth living. I am dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and to the principles that he has given to mankind. The minute hand has indeed moved forward. How can I doubt it?

### **Follow his example**

Doubts and lack of faith are the only arrows that can pierce our shield. Our impatience to see improvement in the world and in ourselves can cause doubts. Another source of doubt and frustration is the great paradox that is present when the Lord takes human form. God lives, he walks among us, he touches us physically, emotionally and spiritually. In fact with his schedule he is the epitome of vitality. Never-the-less the institutions of our societies do not reflect the message that He has brought to the world. We don't know why this paradox exists but we do know what to do about it. We must base our lives on the principles set forth by Bhagavan Baba. We must follow the examples given by the life of Bhagavan Baba. We must become living examples of the teachings of Bhagavan Baba. If we do this as individuals and collectively as the Sai Organisation then:

*We will serve God in ourselves*

*We will serve God in our respective societies*

*We will serve God in the world.*

I will conclude my remarks by appealing to Bhagavan Baba on behalf of all Sai Organisation members:

*Dearest Lord,* In the organisation to which you have so graciously lent your name,

Let wisdom prevail over expedience.

Let selflessness prevail over attachment and ego

Grant us your Divine guidance so that we may

have confidence that the Sai Organisation

is indeed an instrument of your Divine will.

**—From the address of Dr. Michael Goldstein to the  
Active Workers' Conference on 21-11-1987**

The All-India Conference of Active Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations was held on November, 19, 20, 21, 1987, at Prasanthi Nilayam, when all delegates offered their respectful Pranams at the Lotus Feet and were beholden to Bhagavan for His Divine Messages. They rededicated themselves to serve as His worthy instruments.

Bhagavan directed every active worker to improve the quality of community seva through the practice of personal spiritual exercises based on the Divine Messages given during the Conference and further directed that the Organisation should concentrate all efforts of seva through the three wings: (a) Spiritual, (b) Educational and (c) Service.

In 1981 the World Council was formed, with Rules and Regulations adopted at the 3rd World Conference. These were again considered at the 4th World Conference in 1985. During this period of seven years, most of the countries have organised their centres and expanded their activities by forming a Central Council or a Coordinating Committee in each country and have fairly established the procedure to expand their activities under the three wings of the Sathya Sai Organisation. In India, the Organisation has spread in all States covering most of the districts.

In view of this, for better administration and supervision, the apex body, the World Council, is dissolved and in its place, in India, there will be an All-India President with four Central Coordinators—one each for a group of States—who are nominated to supervise and guide the activities of the three wings of the organisation. Mr. G. V. Sathyanarayana, Calcutta, has been nominated All India President.

For Overseas Countries, there will be Central Coordinators for each group of countries to supervise the activities of the organisation and liaise between the group of countries and the Founder President, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for guidance from time to time. These Central Coordinators will send their reports to the Central Office at Prasanthi Nilayam and send copies of the same to the International Chairman, Sri Indulal Shah, Dharmakshetra, Bombay.

The revised rules and regulations for India and Overseas countries will be communicated to the respective States and countries by 15th January 1988, with the names of the Central Coordinators for India and the Coordinators for Overseas countries.

## **"Science is Spiritual"**

*—Dr. Brian McCusker, University of Sydney*

Science is a spiritual movement. It is a spiritual movement inspired by Truth, rather than by Love. At least, that is how it appears at first sight. But love comes into Science as the love of

in Truth—this alone is entitled to be called by the holy word, Love. For that is the sweetest, the most charming, the most satisfying possession of man."

Science began with Galileo who first outlined the procedure of truth-finding that we call the scientific method. Soon after, an outstanding genius, Isaac Newton, appeared on the scene. Before he was twenty five he had founded modern physics, mathematics and astronomy. He then went on to what really interested him, alchemy and theology. He wrote over one million words on alchemy and not a word of that was published in his lifetime.

### **Science and scientism**

A very large part of the science that Newton had founded soon degenerated into scientism. That is, a large part of the spiritual movement became a religion—the term for a fossilised, or partly fossilised spiritual movement. This, up till recently, has been the fate of most spiritual movements. Nowadays advanced thinkers in the field understand why this is so. Like other religions, scientism has its churches or temples—but it calls them laboratories or institutes. It has its paid, professional priesthood. It calls them doctors, associate professors, professors, members, fellows or academicians rather than priests, bishops, archbishops and cardinals. It has its myths. Instead of Eve and the apple, it has Newton and the apple; instead of Eve and the serpent it has Kekule and the snakes; instead of St. Paul falling off his horse on the road to Damascus it has Archimedes jumping from his bath and running naked through the streets of Syracuse. And scientism, like any religion, has its dogmas. Instead of dogmas of the immaculate conception, the Trinity, the virgin birth, or the death and resurrection of Christ, or Adonis or Osiris, it has materialism, atomism, determinism, reductionism and atheism or agnosticism.

But Science is different. Science is a spiritual movement. True science has recently ruled out, by direct experiment in physical laboratories, "all local realistic theories of the universe." Materialism is one such theory. Again, as long ago as 1930, Werner Heisenberg, a Nobel laureate and one of the founders of quantum mechanics, pointed out that quantum mechanics ruled out atomism and determinism. More recently Ken Wilber has reached a deeper and truer understanding of Galileo's scientific method. He has shown, in his book *Eye to Eye*, that the scientific method can be applied equally well in the material realm, the mental realm and the spiritual realm.

### **The scientific method**

The scientific method is as follows; suppose one person makes a statement about any one of the three major realms of consciousness. If another person disputes this statement then to apply the scientific method the first person gives the second a list of instructions to follow. The second person follows these instructions, experiences the result and finally reports his experience back to the first person. To take a simple example from the physical realm; suppose a person comes into a house and says, "It's raining outside." Some one in the room says, "It can't be." The first person then gives the second his list of instructions (a very short list in this case), he says, "Go outside and see for yourself." The second person follows these instructions and reports back to the first and to any one else interested.

To see how it could be used in the mental realm, suppose that the initial statement was: "The sum of the interior angles of any plane triangle is 180 degrees. "If any one demurs, then the list of instructions just takes him mentally through Euclid's proof. In the spiritual realm the statement might be one, say, concerning the effects of Kundalini arousal. In this case the instructions list would be appreciably longer and the process of putting them into practice might require much more time, but the principle of the method is the same. So, the scientific method can be applied equally well in each of the three realms. Scientists generally believe that it can only be applied in the physical realm. This, of course, is a quite unscientific belief.

### **Modern science**

Using this method, in all three realms, modern science has concluded that the universe is consciousness structured in three main realms, with several levels in each realm and many sub-levels in each main level. The investigation of these levels is in progress. There are very many areas of investigation and, at present, it is not clear how we can fit the findings from all of these areas into a single, coherent picture. In fact, it is possible that beings at the fifth level of consciousness, the mental-egoic level, do not have the necessary high level mode of cognition to do this, just as a dog, on the second level, does not have the necessary cognitive powers to understand a chess opening.

One important problem on which a start has been made is the problem of sorting out, in the spiritual realm, of the good from the bad, from the indifferent. Looking at recent history it is obvious that some 'gurus' have been disastrous for their followers, others not so. Criteria have been set up to enable people to distinguish the 'goodies' from the 'baddies'. This, of course, is not entirely original. When Christ was asked by his disciples how they could distinguish genuine prophets from the great mass of false prophets he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them; the good tree bringeth forth good fruit; the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Unfortunately, Christianity, the religion that degenerated out of Christ's spiritual movement, lost sight of this experimental testing. In a quite short time that religion, allegedly founded by the Prince of Peace, had produced the crusades, including the particularly infamous Albigensian crusade, the Spanish inquisition, the religious wars following the so called Reformation and so on. Other major religions are not noticeably different. Obviously, then, we need to get into the scientific testing of beings and institutions in the spiritual realm. This is one of the important tasks for the spiritual movement, Science, in the general realm of Spirituality.

*—From an address on the 62 birthday anniversary celebrations of Bhagavan Baba at Sydney*

### **Peace through Seva**

The Active Workers' Conference met on November 24th, in the Poornachandra Auditorium, when Sri Indulal Shah gave a resume of Bhagavan's addresses and the conclusions of the discussions among the delegates. Bhagavan then addressed the Conference.

### **Manifest love**

"I am in the light. I am the light. The light is in me. The light is me." The man who has realised this truth becomes one with the Brahman.

Man is perpetually engaged in the search for peace. The seeker of peace must search for it not in religion (matham) but in the mind (manam). The search for peace in the external is the cause of all the unrest in the world. Peace has to be established first within one's self. Then it has to be extended to the family. From the family, it has to spread to the village, the province, and the nation. What is happening today is the reverse of this process. Conflict and disorder are spreading from the individual to the family and right upto the nation.

You must become messengers of peace. You have to begin with yourselves. You can get peace only through service. An idle man is the devil's workshop. When one is busy at work, there will be no room for thoughts in the mind. Then there is peace of mind. A peaceful mind is the abode of love. Love is inherent in man, but like a seed that has to be nourished by manure and water, love in man has to be fostered by dedicated service ("Shraddha" and "Prema"). Love is a sacred quality. It is like nectar. A man who has tasted the immortal sweetness of Divine love will not desire anything else in the world. Life must become a constant manifestation of love. Today love is manifested in a constricted selfish manner. It needs to be expressed in service to society. It has to be offered to others and shared with them. Thereby love becomes a reciprocal, ever-widening experience.

Every individual has four constituents the body, the mind, the intelligence and the Atma. The body is the instrument for discharging one's duties (Dharma-sadhanam). The body can act only through the promptings of the mind. The sense organs are engaged in action. But it is the mind that enjoys the results of these actions. The mind, however, derives only momentary pleasure from the actions of the senses. For instance, when one is hungry, the mind is satisfied if the hunger is appeased for the moment by eating something. Beyond the mind is the Buddhi, the intelligence. The Buddhi, has the power of discrimination. It points out what is wholesome and what is undesirable or bad for the body. When the mind is guided by the Buddhi, it experiences genuine joy.

Every action that is done should be preceded by an enquiry as to whether it is proper or not and whether it will lead to good or bad results. When discrimination is not exercised the mind becomes blind as it were.

### **Acquire the atmic experience**

It is the Atma that animates the body, activates the mind and illumines the intelligence. The one who identifies himself with the body loses himself in carnal pleasures. The one who identifies himself with the mind experiences sensuous enjoyment. One who bases his life on the intelligence achieves intellectual fulfillment. Only the person who bases his life on the Atma can experience pure bliss (Ananda).

the Atmic vision, he recognises the One that pervades everything. This awareness cannot come through the study of scriptures.

The Sai Organisations should function on the basis that the in-dwelling Spirit in everyone is the same Atma. Names and forms may vary. Every one should develop this sense of oneness (non-duality) and render service to society in a spirit of humility. There should be no spirit of condescension.

The ancient sages started with regarding themselves as God's servants and reached the Divine through service. If you want to eliminate your ego, you have to consider yourself a "dasa-nu-dasa" (a servant of servants). This aspiration was expressed by Ramadas (Gopanna) in the song: "Dasanudasudanuavalenura" "I must become a servant of your servants and do service to your servants, Oh Rama! Not I alone, but my wife and children should also render service at all times."

### **The path of bhakti**

This is the path of devotion. Sankaracharya, who was the authentic exponent of Advaita (non-dualism), composed the *Bhaja Govindam* to emphasise the greatness of Bhakti marga (the path of devotion) which is based on dualism. The unique merit of Bhakti has been expounded by Narada in his Bhakti Sutras. It is the path of love.

Through love, we must develop the spirit of sacrifice (Tyaga) and proceed to Yoga (mergence in the Divine). When you give up what has to be given up, when you know what ought to be known, and reach what should be your destination, you will experience the bliss of Brahman. Attachment to worldly things has to be given up. The basic truths of life are to be known. The goal is unity with the Divine. In that lies the bliss of immortality.

Every Sai sadhaka and sevak has to make the Atma the basis of all activity. He should regard himself as the embodiment of the Divine and realise that the Atma is present in every one. One should have the feeling that whatever joy or sorrow others experience is equally his. Only then can one render service, conferring joy on others.

### **Talk and action**

Today very few are fulfilling their functions properly. There is too much talk and too little of action. Every one should cultivate the feeling that primarily he is a servant, and a "worker". There is no demand on any one to exert himself beyond his capacity. Nor should any one in the organisation think of leaving it because the rules of the organisation are too strict. You should realise that there is no greater and more sacred path to the Divine than service. It is a golden opportunity for you in this birth. Here is the means to sanctify your life by service in the Sai Organisation. There is no use in sitting alone in meditation with closed eyes, or in going on pilgrimages. You must realise the Omnipresent Divine through service.

### **Sai Krishna and Arjunas**

of Arjuna is Partha, the son of Prithu (the earth). All of you are children of the earth. As Partha said you should not flee from the battlefield. Krishna called upon Arjuna to do his duty, remembering always the name of the Lord ("Maam anusmara Yudhyacha"). Likewise, all of you while carrying on your respective duties, should keep in mind the name of the Lord. Only then you will justify the appellation "Arjuna", meaning purity. Engage yourselves in service with a pure heart.

Krishna used Arjuna as an instrument to stage His cosmic play. Today this Sai Krishna is directing His play with so many thousands of Arjunas (cheers). "Nimita Matram Bhava, Savyasachin!" ("Be only my instrument, Oh Arjuna"). You are only instruments. Do not arrogate to yourself any authority or power and claim credit for any achievement. All your name and fame are due to your association with Sai Organisations and the use of the Sai label. Without the Sai imprimatur, where will you be? It is the Sai name that has conferred on you distinction and recognition. Therefore, bear in mind the name Sai and carry on your work.

Since the 60th birthday celebrations I have been emphasising spiritual sadhana and the Advaitic approach. We have passed the stages of Karma-kanda (Action) and Upasana (worship) and must now enter on the stage of Jnana. Henceforth you should concentrate on the Advaitic approach.

### **The Sai phenomenon**

At this conference, certain changes have been discussed. They are not related to any individual or to any lapses on your part. They are related to the situation prevailing in the world today. The world is looking at the Sai movement with a myriad eyes. They are asking: "What is this Sai? Wherever we go, whether to a bazaar or a jungle, we see Sai photos and the Sai name being invoked." Many are astonished at this phenomenon and are trying to examine it either out of curiosity or envy. In a situation like this, there should be no room for any one to point the finger of criticism or derision at our organisation. Every one according to his status or position, should get on with his work. In future, instead of some being officers and others the rank and file, all can be treated as equals, as "brothers" or fellow workers. Mutual love has to be promoted. We have to demonstrate to the world the unity that underlies the diversity. All should work together in harmony, act together, move together, grow together and share the common knowledge and experience with all. There should be no place for cynics, defeatists and doubting Thomases in the Sai Organisation. They will ruin the organisation. We want people who will completely identify themselves with the organisation.

### **Role of women**

For much that has been achieved by the Sai Organisations, the credit goes to the women workers. They have done good service. (Swami asked why they were not cheering. Then they cheered). There should be all the three wings in the women's section also—spiritual, educational and service. I desire that they should also engage themselves in all three activities. In the women's organisations, instead of competition for office, there should be concentration on duties. There should be no room for bossism. All are sevaks in the Sai fold. Why should there be differences or distinctions amongst them?



There is one other matter. Hitherto we have had a World Council. It served its purpose, but now Sai centres have grown on a large scale in overseas countries. The World Council will cease from today. It will be appropriate if in each overseas country there is a Committee looking after the working of Sai centres according to the conditions and requirements of those countries. The Overseas organisations should supply information to our office in Prasanthi Nilayam about their activities.

The purpose of introducing these and other changes is only to provide encouragement and guidance to Sai Organisations which are growing by leaps and bounds.

You know the ground you have traversed. You must now look ahead towards the future. I desire that you should all conduct yourselves as brothers and sisters in the Sai Organisation and set an example to the world.

The direct individual relationship between each of you and myself will remain always. If our relations can be strengthened through the organisations, I shall feel happier. Hoping that the proposed changes will in no way diminish your enthusiasm and that you will go on with your activities with redoubled vigour and enthusiasm, in an exemplary manner, I bless you all.

### **How far is Vaikuntha?**

*Provided your intellect is sharp and free from prejudices and predilections, the reality will reveal itself to you in a flash, for it is quite a simple thing. Only, it must be capable of seeing the problem in its basic essence, apart from all the jumble of irrelevancies. Once a very learned Pundit was holding forth in a pedantic manner the story of Gajendra-moksha from the Bhagavata, before the Maharaja in his Durbar Hall, before a large gathering of courtiers. He described how the Lord, on hearing the agonised call for succour from the elephant held by the jaws of the monstrous crocodile, hurried from Heaven (Vaikuntha) without stopping even to collect His insignia and weapons, without even intimating to His Consort where He was bound on what mission. Suddenly the Maharaja interrupted him with the question. "Tell me, Pundit, how far is this Vaikuntha?" The learned Pundit did not know the distance; he was non-plussed. Nor did any of the other scholars in the Palace know.*

*But the servant who was fanning the King from behind the throne offered to furnish the answer, if his impertinence would be pardoned. The Pundit was shocked at this effrontery, but the Maharaja allowed him to speak. "Your Majesty! Vaikuntha is as far as the cry of the elephant could be heard," he said. Yes, when the anguish of a devotee's heart is expressed as a groan or a sigh, the Lord is as far only as that sound could reach.*

**—Baba**  
*"From Chinna Katha"*

"Neti, Neti" in Sanskrit, generally rendered in English as "Not this, Not this," is a familiar formula in Vedantic metaphysics to determine the nature of the Absolute (Brahman). Traditionally it means the process of rejecting, one by one, all the twenty four Cosmic principles or elements constituting the phenomenal universe as unreal, leading eventually to the acceptance of the Formless, Attributeless, Unmanifest Supreme Being (Nirguna Brahman) as the only ultimate Reality.

However, the unique interpretation given by Bhagavan Baba has revolutionised this traditional concept. Says Swami: "The traditional meaning given to this Vedantic formula of 'Neti, Neti' as 'Not this, Not this', is not a correct one. Brahman may be likened to an expanding balloon. It is infinite and indivisible. Hence the correct and appropriate meaning of 'Neti' is 'Not this alone'—which means there is much more to It (Brahman) than is perceived or conceived by man."

It may be seen that the traditional meaning restricts itself to only the unmanifest aspect of divinity, which is beyond the comprehension of the common run of mankind. It neglects the worldly life and confines itself to the single Purushartha (human goal) of 'Moksha' (liberation) for oneself. On the contrary, Swami's interpretation enlarges the scope of the formula so as to encompass both the manifest and unmanifest aspects of Godhead. Thus it brings spiritual practice within the reach of all people, caters to individual salvation as well as the welfare of society and pays attention to all the four Purusharthas of Dharma (righteousness), Artha (proper acquisition and use of wealth), Kama (fulfillment of legitimate desires) and Moksha (liberation). Moreover, contrary to the traditional meaning, Swami's new meaning satisfies the three well-known tests of validity, namely, scriptural validity (Shabda Pramana), logical validity (Yukti Pramana) and empirical validity (Anubhava Pramana), as briefly indicated below.

The scriptural validity is borne out by such declarations as: "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma" (All this is verily Brahman), "Isaavasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyaam jagat" (The whole universe consisting of movable and immovable things is filled with the Omnipresent Lord), "Eko-Aham bahusyaam" (The one 'I' has become many), etc. As for logical validity, the old meaning is fallacious in that it suggests some things to be rejected as non-God whereas everything is God and there is no second thing other than God according to the Upanishadic dicta: "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma." One important reason advanced by the upholders of the traditional meaning is that all manifested things are to be rejected as unreal, because they are subject to individual *death* (Laya) / destruction from time to time, and eventually to cosmic dissolution (Pralaya). Swami, however, points out that Laya and Pralaya do not mean utter annihilation or irrevocable extinction, but only a change from the gross (manifest) state to the subtle (unmanifest) state, just like sugar becoming invisible when dissolved in water. Physical science too confirms this truth through its "Law of Indestructibility of Matter." The Gita has also

Viddhyanaadi ubhauvapi XIII. 20). Regarding empirical validity, there are authentic records of several saints and sages of the ancient, medieval and modern times, who have actually realised that Vishwa (universe) is not different from Vishweshwara (the Lord of the universe) and that Loka (world) is not apart from Lokeshwara (the ruler of the world). In our own time, Bhagavan Baba has unequivocally declared that He is the Nirakara (formless God) who has incarnated as Narakara (God in human form).

### **Jagat and jiva**

Baba's interpretation of 'Neti, Neti' has profound practical implications for spiritual aspirants. It discountenances the tendency to run away from the world as illusory and resorting to seclusion and solitude in pursuit of liberation. "Jagat (world) is the bridge between Jiva (embodied soul) and Deva (God). As such how can the Jiva reach Deva, rejecting the Jagat?" asks Swami pointedly. Further, this interpretation obliterates the long-cherished distinction between the secular and the sacred. It transforms everything and every activity into a manifestation of the divine. For instance, soon after his retirement from Mysore University, Prof. Kasturi was offered a job in the All India Radio, Bangalore. When he expressed his desire to stay at Swami's Lotus Feet to do "Swami's work" in preference to the work in the All India Radio, Swami told him, "Why do you make such a distinction? That is also Swami's work. God has endowed you with certain talents which should be used for the benefit of society through your work in the All India Radio." So Prof. Kasturi was obliged to accept his radio assignment. Here is an instance of practical application of Swami's interpretation of "Neti, Neti"—"Not this alone." Staying at Prasanthi Nilayam to do Swami's service is God's work, but service in All India Radio also is God's work. It is an object lesson for all mankind to consider 'duty as God and work as worship.' To plough the land (as Balaram did) or to tend cattle (as Krishna did) is no less sacred than to sit in seclusion, doing Japa and meditation or Bhajan and rituals. True spirituality does not lie in abandoning or neglecting one's worldly duties but in the divinisation of all activities. In the final analysis, what is to be negated / rejected is not the world but the false notion that the world is apart from God, while in fact it is a part of God. Purusha and Prakriti are the two legs of the same Divine Being, according to Baba.

It is in this context that an eminent Indian scientist has urged us to develop what he calls the "binocular vision", to see clearly that science and spirituality are the complementary parts of one Integral Reality. As Einstein has aptly put it, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."

In conclusion, we should remember and practise Swami's teaching that we have to realise the Dehi (soul) through Deha (body) only, we have to rescind the effects of Karma (action) through Karma only (disinterested, selfless action); we have to reach the Lokeshwara (Lord of the world) through the Loka (world) only by love and service) we have to attain the Nirguna Brahman (the Attributeless Absolute) through Saguna Brahman (the Divine with attributes) only, to start with.

## "Love God, Fear Sin, Serve Society"

*"Active Workers engaged in service should realise that there is nothing greater than service to society and should seek to promote love of God, fear of sin and righteousness in society as the highest values to be cherished by all," observed Bhagavan Baba, in His valedictory address to the Sathya Sai Active Workers' Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam on Nov. 21. Addressing the active workers again on November 24th Bhagavan explained the changes that were being made in the organisational set-up and called on all Sai Workers to regard themselves as instruments of "Sai Krishna" and carry on their service activities in a spirit of selfless dedication and with the feeling of love for all as embodiments of the Divine.*

*In the course of His discourse on November 21, in the Poornachandra Auditorium, which was filled with over 12,000 delegates from all parts of India. Bhagavan said:*

The body is the vesture which the mind has assumed for its functioning and growth. The thoughts and experiences of many previous lives are imprinted on the mind. When the mind is filled with good thoughts, there is nothing beyond its reach. Thoughts give rise to actions. Actions produce habits. Habits mould one's character. And character decides one's destiny—for good or ill. Hence thoughts are the basis for all one's misfortunes or enjoyments. There is no greater blessing than having good thoughts. Association with good persons promotes good thoughts.

Thoughts help to strengthen one's will power, which is the basis for acquiring other qualities like discrimination, intelligence, determination, eloquence and enquiry. However, this will power, which is in everyone, gets weakened by the limitless growth of desires. With a weak will man cannot enjoy peace or bliss. It is evident from every one's experience that persons who are addicted to smoking or drink, develop their will power when they reduce their consumption of cigarettes etc.

### **The three maxims**

It is a great pity that people are sacrificing the most precious things in life for the sake of trivial and transient pleasures. In the pursuit of the trivial, men involve themselves in sinful activities. They forget the Divine. There is no escape from the consequences of sinful deeds. Hence everyone should have fear of sin. Equally, there should be love of God. When these two are present, one will become a truly moral person in society. All "active workers" should therefore bear in mind these three things: Love of God (Daiva Preeti), fear of sin (Papa Bheeti), and social morality (Sangha Neeti). When one observes these three, he will be practising all other human values. Fear of sin will result in non-violence and peace. Love of God will promote adherence to truth and expression of love for all beings. Social morality will be Righteousness itself (Dharma).

There is no meaning in repeating parrot-like the words Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. One must strive to experience divinity. All the chaos and conflict prevailing in the world today are due to the absence of the fear of sin and love of God. Human values are disappearing from society. Evil thoughts and bad intentions are ruining the lives of people. These should be totally eschewed. Sai workers should not indulge in slanderous gossip or talk ill about others. They should see the Divine in every one and feel that when they speak ill of others, they are demeaning themselves.

### **Love and service**

Active workers engaged in service should realise that there is nothing greater than service and seek to promote love of God, fear of sin, and Righteousness in society as the highest values to be cherished by all. Indeed, if there is love of God, automatically there will be fear of sin and when these two are there, morality follows as a natural sequence. Social morality (Sangha Neeti) is like a beacon for mankind. Everyone should develop love of God and take up service. Love and Service (Prema and Seva) are like two eyes for a human being or the two wings for a bird. One who has no love for his fellowmen is like a blind man. There should be no pretence in manifesting love. It should be based on the conviction that the Divine is present in every one. When love is sincere, one will experience real peace and joy.

### **Bhagavan's example**

Regard Me as an illustration of this truth. I have love for all, even for those who are bad. I have greater love for those who deride Me and I draw them nearer to me. I derive great joy from this. Hence my life is my message. With me, it is always sacrifice and giving (Tyaga), not enjoyment (Bhoga). Sacrifice itself is enjoyment for me. All active workers should excel in sacrifice and dedication.

Those who wish to serve society in the true spirit and experience the joy there from should go into society with dedication. They must undertake service activities according to their capacity and competence and should not over-stretch themselves. They should not get involved in fund-raising. Money is the cause of many differences and conflicts. Concentrate on service. There will be no lack of funds for any good cause. There are enough persons in the Sai Organisations with resources. There is none poorer than the person who will not use his money for good purposes. Such men are a pitiable lot.

### **Sevaks all**

Sai Organisations are growing from day to day. There would be no room for factions and differences within the organisations if all members developed devotion, dedication, tolerance and the spirit of sacrifice and considered themselves only as sevaks. There is no place in the Sai Organisations for bossism. Whether they are office-bearers or others, all are equally sevaks engaged in service. This organisation is intended for those who are wedded to dedicated and selfless service. Those who are not active in service should be kept out. It is better to have ten genuine active sevaks than a large number of office-bearers who take the credit for what others have done. You should not be concerned about the wealth, position, name or distinction of any

talk or criticism of others should have no place in the organisation. And those who are puffed up with self-conceit should be eliminated. Only those who have humility to regard themselves as "servants of servants" can become true servant of God.

There are some who are connected with several organisations, either as office-bearers or members, and cannot serve fully any one of them. Those who wish to have connections with other organisations may keep out of the Sai Organisation. It is a bad trait to be associated with any organisation merely for the sake of name or prestige. It is better to be connected with only one organisation and render effective service through it.

All that has so far been achieved by Sai Organisations is due to the unostentatious work of the "active workers." I am well aware of your dedication and sacrifice in rendering service. I am quite content with such workers.

There should be no differences among Sai workers on grounds of creed, caste, community or nation. All religions are the same for them. The Divine is omnipresent. It cannot be confined to a picture or idol in a small shrine. You must dedicate yourselves to service with love, looking upon the Divine as the embodiment of love.

## **Grace**

Night was in horrid hurry, I didn't know why!  
I fain would have slept, an hour or two more,  
Since my fevered brain played lovely lurid dreams.  
Night rolled her dark-blue carpet, diamond strewn,  
And dome and floor and in-between were inky black  
'Twas the darkest hour of fear and pang and death  
I drew the eyelids down but couldn't plug the howl  
The grunt and groan, the shriek of hurt and hate

I felt my lids were leaping up, to a welcome touch of warmth;  
They tingled in bright delight, the breeze upon the brow,  
A golden carpet, tasselled gems, unrolling majesty.  
Plumaged minstrels perch on every twig of tree  
Each baby blade of green wore sapphire on the ear

The Sun! The Sun! I kneel and fold my palms  
The Light that bathes me, the thrill that wraps me,  
The Warmth that full-fills me are not from that Orb;  
They are gifts of Grace to us, the sloths that sleep  
And prattle and preach, ambulating hazily all the while.

[The above poem was found among the papers left by Prof. Kasturi. It reveals, even amidst the pain he was going through in his last illness, his faith in Bhagavan's grace and his boundless appreciation of the glories of Nature. -Ed.]

## Grace at Brindavan

*It was in the month of December  
And for a fortnight! remember  
That Trayee Brindavan gloried  
As Bhagavan at Kadugodi tarried.*

*By Bhagavan's boundless love and grace,  
Devotees all were given a place,  
For talks divine and bhajans sweet,  
On some days at His Lotus Feet.*

*Sweet was Mother Saraswati's smile,  
As women of different rank and file,  
From countries and nations world-wide,  
Sat silently by the Statue's side.*

*What joy Shepherd and sheep to see  
In the Mandap beneath the Tree,  
Where Lord Krishna kept watch smiling  
sweet,  
As everyone silently took his seat!*

*At half-past four we received a call  
That Kalyan Mandap will house us all,  
And from that moment to the end,  
Discipline was a bosom friend.*

*In ten minutes the Mandap was full  
Without any push or pull,  
And patiently our eager eyes  
Waited for the day's surprise.*

*The Shepherd came at five o'clock*

*Into the fold to see His flock;  
To greet the Lord, Silence was first; T  
hen rushed all eyes to quench their thirst.*

*Intently He surveyed the crowd;  
Talked to a few, but not aloud;  
Then slowly He walked down the aisle  
And spoke to me for a little while.*

*"Twinkle, Twinkle," asked Atma's King,  
"Any personal experiences, to sing?"  
As He held my hand, with Divine Love  
Of a million mothers and above.*

*The Lord returned and sat on His Chair;  
For Bhajan-singing He has a flair;  
'Ganesha Charanam' set the tone,  
In dedication to Him Alone.*

*Then He called a priest who gave a talk  
While Peace reigned over His flock;  
Next I was called to do my part  
And I offered the blossoms of my heart.*

*Bhagavan Baba's Discourse came next,  
Protection of Dharma was His Text.  
His warm and life-sustaining Gift  
Gave the devotees a Spiritual Lift.*

*The Rector of Whitefield College,  
With good bilingual knowledge,  
Translated Bhagavan's Speech,*

*The climax was His Bhajan-song  
That held us spell-bound for long;  
Arathi-singing according to trend  
Brought our day to a happy end.*

*Two days later in the darshan line,  
A few minutes after the hour nine,*

*"The day before your songs were good."  
A blossom from His Hand Divine  
Fell into the hands of mine  
In the language of fragrance, that Rose  
Said, "In Baba you will find repose."*

**—Chandrabhan Singh**

## **Lord of Compassion**

*I watched You as You walked among the poor, O Sathya Sai,  
Poor of spirit or body, Lord of Compassion,  
You made no distinction;  
I saw the Christ of Galilee in your Eyes,  
The gentle bend of Your Head  
As You recognized Your Self in every man.*

*Not polite and distant caring that the world extends  
But the mercy of a God that sees no one as too lowly  
Not missing a day and all of the night  
You feed us like a shepherd with the bread of Your Wisdom  
In written words and spoken  
Your smile, a token of the Love that flows in constant giving*

*From Your Heart and from Your Hand,  
"Greater Love than this no man hath,"  
Jesus laid down His earthly Life  
And You have lifted it up.*

*The world we see depends upon our vision,  
Death to the eyes of the flesh means life to the eyes of the spirit,  
When the ego dies, the spirit rises  
"Cut the 'I' feeling clean across" Sai Baba says,  
"And let the ego die on the Cross to endow on you Eternity."*

*Finally, in this lifetime,  
We have come home to the Father,  
To an everlasting Easter Morn,  
To the darshan of Sathya Sai.*



## **A Memorable Christmas**

Christmas 1987 will be long remembered by the several thousand lucky souls who were at Prasanthi Nilayam this December. It was a specially memorable time for the hundreds of overseas devotees who organized a most impressive and spiritually uplifting programme to mark the occasion. And while Bhagavan's Grace was present in abundance, the magnificent unity and concerted efforts of the overseas devotees contributed much to the day's success.

Preparations for the celebration started two days earlier. Word came that all overseas devotees were to gather and be seated separately for the afternoon Darshan on December 23. Bubbling with anticipation, all came early and were quickly seated in a quiet and orderly manner. Baba soon appeared! And before one had time to savour that first sweet taste of Darshan, Bhagavan had set in motion the distribution of ice cream to each and every one of the beaming overseas devotees.

The next afternoon, Christmas Eve, found the members of the overseas choir seated adjacent to the Ganesha circle in front of the Mandir. A gentle but steady rain could not in the least dampen the enthusiasm and resolve of either the performers or those -who would merely watch and listen. When Baba came out, His scintillating radiance was in striking contrast to the backdrop of an inclement sky. The choir began with "Ganesha Charanam" and continued with several of the most beautiful and well-known Christmas carols. Bhagavan, seated during the performance in a chair placed on the Mandir verandah steps, appeared highly pleased. When they had finished, He directed them to sing four Indian bhajans, which they did with zest and devotion.

At 4:30 a. m. on Christmas morning, all the overseas devotees were lined up with candles in hand ready to do a special Nagarsankirtan of Christmas carols in a candlelight procession. The ladies' section began promptly at 5: 15 from the Ganesha Mandir, followed shortly thereafter by the gents.

Coming into the Mandir grounds, they filed closely on both sides of the circle, and were immediately rewarded with Bhagavan Baba's appearance on the balcony. The entire gathering of devotees was thrilled when Swami came out of the silver door and gave His benediction with raised hands. Again the sound of Christmas carols went up, conveying joy to everyone including the thousands of Indian devotees who had gathered in the background to wish their overseas brothers and sisters: "Holy Christmas."

After some 18 minutes of melodious singing, Arati was done. A half hour later everyone had re-assembled for regular Darshan. But regular it was not to be. Musically talented students from the Sathya Sai Institute had with them their instruments, including a trumpet, various keyboard

electrifying and elevating the gathering of devotees to unprecedented heights of ecstasy. Though the Christmas songs performed were familiar ones, they were each given a very special beat that stirred the hearts of all present. Given special rhythmic treatment were some standard carols, along with the Negro Spiritual, "Precious Lord Take My Hand," "Go Tell It On The Mountain," and the calypso favourite, "Mary's Boy-child Jesus Christ was Born on Christmas Day." More enjoyable music has rarely, if ever, been heard. The morning celebrations concluded appropriately with the distribution of Bhagavan's prasadam (Mysore-pak) to everyone.

In the afternoon an unprecedented gathering of Overseas and Indian devotees assembled in the Poornachandra Auditorium to listen to Bhagavan's Christmas message.

Mr. William Harvey, American journalist, speaking on the uniqueness of the Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, said that in contrast to the way Christmas was celebrated in Western countries, it was an entirely auspicious and holy celebration in Prasanthi Nilayam. Describing Bhagavan Baba as "Our Divine Mother and Father," Mr. Harvey said that Bhagavan had "shown us our divinity." "No words can express our gratitude, love and adoration for you," he concluded.

Mr. Alvin Drucker presented to Bhagavan the typescript of a book containing the English rendering of Bhagavan's discourses on the Bhakti Yoga canto of the Bhagavad Gita delivered in 1984.

Mr. Chandrabhan Singh (South Africa) recited some of the poems in English he had composed on Bhagavan. One of the poems had the refrain: "You are the Shining Sun; You and I are one."

Mr. Viswanath Singh (Canada) and Mr. Howard Murphet (Australia) spoke on the significance of Christmas and the relevance of Christ's message and Bhagavan Baba's Divine mission to the world today.

Bhagavan then addressed the gathering. (Swami's discourse appears elsewhere).

Following Bhagavan's discourse, there was a beautiful children's play, "The Kingdom of Love," by overseas children. The drama depicted the struggle within all of us to overcome bad qualities and to realise the Divinity within. The main character, "Much Afraid", is gradually led by the Shepherd to leave behind her relatives of Envy, Bitterness, Pride and Gloom, in order to reach the realm of Love. After the play, Bhagavan went up to the stage to congratulate the child actors, pose with them for a picture and give Padanamaskar to all of them.

—W.H.

The most touching darshan I have ever witnessed took place this Christmas Eve, in the late afternoon. Thousands of devotees from all over the world had gathered to spend Christmas with Bhagavan Baba. The weather had been threatening rain all day and by darshan time there was a steady drizzle.

I gazed across the darshan line and saw a sea of people sitting in the rain. There was absolute silence; no one stirred. They all sat, soaking in the rain, as water dripped from their heads to their faces. Each one was determined to have Swami's darshan.

Their love seemed to touch the heart of Swami. He came out on the verandah, looking at all these apparently "God-Crazy" people sitting in the rain. Bhagavan moved from beneath the sheltered verandah, walking ever so slowly in the rain, giving us darshan, and letting us know by His action that He is always experiencing every thing in life with us. Not once but twice He walked past—showing us that for each deed we do for Him, He blesses us twice.

The wet crowd all dispersed after darshan, and re-appeared in clean clothing for bhajans. The rain had stopped in the interval. The Overseas Devotees' Christmas Choir sat in front of the Mandir prepared to sing carols during the allotted Bhajan time. All the overseas devotees sat together next to the choir. Swami filled the verandah with all the boy students and placed His red chair amongst the children, at the western edge of the verandah facing the choir.

It began to rain. The more it rained, the stronger the voice of the choir determined to go on with the programme. Swami swayed and tapped with His hands to the rhythm of the songs. He seemed to enjoy us all sitting in the rain at His Divine Lotus Feet.

When the choir finished their programme, Swami signalled us to continue by singing Bhajans. After arati, one person said, "We have had a complete Baptism!"

In between darshan and bhajans my eyes fell on this quote of His: "When I sprinkle your face with rain and wash the earth, the first smell of clean rain, I am cleansing you—THINK OF ME!"

**—R. B.**

## **Baba's Beacon in Brisbane**

**—Iris Murphet**

"This is exactly what Swami wants us to do. I have not seen anything like this concept anywhere in the world," said Dr. John Hislop, when he visited the Sunshine Welfare and Remedial Association (SWARA) in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. He was making the visit

brilliantly successful National Residential Sai Conference at Adelaide during Easter, 1987.

SWARA, the unique Sai Seva Centre, is run by the O'Brien twins, Dorothy and Moyia, who along with their mother, Ruth, now 87, are ardent devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Both the twins are trained professional occupational therapists, who worked for years in that capacity for official organisations before starting SWARA. Back in 1975 Dorothy felt the need for a place where handicapped people would not have to leave as they do at the end of their treatment in official institutions. It would be a centre to which they could come daily-five days a week-and be treated as 'clients' rather than patients.

The doctor who had been working with Dorothy at a Government Centre sympathised with the twins' scheme and donated 200 dollars towards launching SWARA.

Miraculously, it seemed, the spacious site necessary for such an ambitious welfare project became available in a central position in Brisbane. A tumbled-down cottage, on derelict acres belonging to the State Railway Department, fell into their hands at a nominal rent. This seemed like Divine Grace. It gave encouragement and presented a challenge.

They met the challenge with hard work, courage and faith. Gradually they beautified the derelict site with gardens and trees, and erected buildings to cater for their unique and varied occupational therapy work. This has been achieved by the twins, many dedicated helpers, the clients themselves, and some outside community support.

Starting with two brain-damaged clients and no staff, SWARA now meets the needs of some 150 people ranging in age from 14 to 83. Among them are victims of drug-abuse, alcoholism, accidents, illness and birth defects. Some with brain damage have been rejected by other welfare institutions as being too difficult to treat. But none are rejected by SWARA. The recipe for success and happy living there is Divine Love, Service and useful work to build individual self-respect.

A walk around the buildings where work skills are being learned and practised by the disabled clients, reveals to the visitor an army of happy people busily engaged in such occupations as repairing old furniture, making toys, and simple useful items, such as clothes-line pegs that can be used as office clips. Many things they make are sold at their own street stalls or their Thrift Shop. Some of the clients improve to the level where they can join the country's work force. Others, even though they have reached such a level, love SWARA so much that they prefer to remain there as volunteer helpers. Every client who takes an active part in SWARA work receives a pay packet at the end of the week. This gives to each the dignity of being like a normal worker, and is a psychological aid towards cure. Also, a wholesome vegetarian lunch and morning and afternoon tea are provided for all daily, free of charge.

who donate their time (or part of it) free. Dorothy O'Brien, who is head of SWARA, takes no salary herself. For her philanthropic work she has received official honours, such as the British Empire Medal and the Advance Australia Award.

SWARA accepts very little financial help from the government because it wants to remain free from bureaucratic interference. The funds SWARA needs come as donations from well-wishers. "When money is needed, it always arrives in time by Swami's Grace," says Moyia, who is a constant visitor to Puttaparthi.

Other aspects of the Sai Movement in Brisbane have close links with SWARA. For instance, Brisbane Sai Centre holds bhajans, study and seva activities in the big hall there. This is also used for the Australian National Sai Council meetings when they take place in Queensland. In addition, the Brisbane Sai Group provides vegetarian barbecues in the gardens at SWARA for the clients. And once a month, on Sundays, when SWARA is resting, the Sai Group conducts a happy function where the elderly and underprivileged enjoy social interaction and are provided with nutritional support and joy for all. Beyond question Bhagavan Baba pours His Divine Blessings on SWARA which provides such a unique opportunity for many people to put Love into action in the form of constructive service to those in need. This, as John Hislop said, is just what Swami wants.

After a visit to Swami in India in 1980, Dorothy O'Brien sat down and wrote him a letter. Below are some extracts from it:

"You told me that 20 years previously I had hoped to be married but had decided no, that my work with disabled people was more important. You then placed my most treasured possession—the ring with the blue-green stone which you materialised on the third finger of my left hand, and in that way you dedicated my life to my work.

"You inspired me with the uplifting advice that mine was the simple life of loving and serving and You said, 'Love, love, love and touch, touch, touch.'

"You asked me how I helped the disabled people and when I said, 'I try to love and understand them,'

“You said, 'Oh, to understand them is difficult but to love them is easy.'

"Beloved Baba, I will always remember the wonderful moments with You and I ask Your continued Love and Blessings for SWARA.—Dorothy."

*Detachment alone can give happiness. Tyaga is the real Yoga. Three evil qualities have to be renounced before man can rise to his real role. Anger which smothers wisdom (Jnana), Lust which pollutes the deed (Karma) and Greed, which destroys one's love for God and man.*

*self-directed, if it helps to inflate the ego, it is a sin. There are four types of persons. Those who confess their own faults and mention the excellences of others are the highest type; those who highlight their own excellences and also the excellences in others are the middling type; those who speak of their own excellences and decry the faults of others are worse; those who parade their own faults as excellences and deride the excellences in others as faults are the worst. The last type is nowadays most rampant.*

—Baba

**CHRISTMAS SANDESH:**

### **Divinity through Love**

*Men and women of many faiths  
From the four corners of the world  
Have gathered here with love and humility  
Unmindful of comfort or discomfort,  
Enduring numerous travails,  
All for the sake of Baba's grace*

*Dispelling rampant atheism  
And instilling faith in God  
Sai's all-embracing love  
Is transforming mankind  
And leading then; to the Divine.*

### *Embodiments of Divine Love*

Although physically there are no basic differences among human beings, many differences can be seen in their practices, their thoughts and feelings. Every nation is an aggregation of human beings. Differences in the life-styles of human communities in the various nations are quite, significant, though the natural environment over the globe as a whole is not so varied. This is a significant characteristic of the human predicament.

Truth is one. It is beyond mind and speech. It transcends the categories of time and space. Innumerable seekers have pursued different paths to recognise this Truth. There are notable differences among the seekers of Truth. These differences do not affect the nature of the universe. On the contrary, these differences must be, viewed as different stages in the understanding of the Cosmic process. It is the existence of these differences that has prompted the continuous search for a unifying principle.

The six schools of Indian Metaphysics (the Shaddarshanas) have been offered to us by the great seekers of the past. Little attention is being paid today to these sacred teachings. Although the spiritual paths indicated by these different Darshanas appear to be different, their goal is common and the ultimate Truth proclaimed by them is one and the same. Because of the differences among the various sects and communities in the country and the growth of materialism among the people, the tenets of the six Darshanas are not being seriously pursued. The materialist doctrine has gripped the world so much that the greatness of Indian metaphysics is not being appreciated. Even the climate for a proper consideration of this philosophy does not seem to exist.

### **Matter and consciousness**

The materialist doctrine proceeds on the assumption that consciousness (Chaitanyam) is a product of sensory experiences and that the evolution of Consciousness is dependent on and is based on the evolution of matter. Inanimate matter is the basis for the materialist doctrine. Matter is finite. The Vedic doctrine repudiates the view that consciousness can arise out of physical senses which are limited by their origin in matter which is finite and limited. In total opposition to this materialistic doctrine, the spiritual (Adhyatmic) view was projected to demonstrate the falsity of the concept of the primacy of matter over consciousness.

For the spiritual view, the basis is the Spirit (Atma). The Atma is infinite. The Vedantic doctrine proclaimed the infinite nature of the Self and pointed out that matter is both inert and finite. The Shruti declares: "Tripaadasyaamrutam divi" Consciousness constitutes three-fourths and one-fourth is inert matter. Thus, it is consciousness that animates matter and not matter that gives rise to consciousness. This is the essence of the spiritual concept. "Oordhva moolam Adhah-sakha", says the Gita. ("The roots are high up, the branches—of the Cosmic tree—are below") This is further confirmation of the view that the material universe has emanated from the Universal Consciousness.

It is consciousness (Chaitanyam) that activates matter (Jada) and not matter that gives rise to consciousness. Modern technology has produced fantastic devices, harnessed new sources of energy, and turned out spacecraft for exploring the moon and other planets in outer space. But can all these instruments operate by themselves? No. Behind them lies human ingenuity and intelligence. Greater than all the machines is man.

### **Man and nature**

Man is consciousness incarnate. It is this consciousness that makes the machines move and it is indisputably clear that inert matter cannot create consciousness. Man is the highest object in creation. Man should not be a creature of instincts like the animals, which are subject to Nature, but should become a master of Nature. He should progress from the human (Nara) to the Divine (Narayana) and be able to rule over Nature. An intelligent human being should not regard himself as bound by worldly attachments (Samsara). It is not the world that binds man. It has neither eyes to see nor hands to grasp. Man is a prisoner of his own thoughts and desires. In his attachment to the ephemeral and the perishable, man forgets his inherent divinity and does not

power of the Divine.

### **Divinity in the cosmos**

The Cosmos is a projection of the Eternal, Infinite Reality (Brahman) and is not separate from the Brahman. "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat" The universe is permeated by the Divine. When this truth is recognised, it will be obvious that all that one perceives or experiences is a manifestation of the Divine. Every tree is a wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpavriksha). Every place of work is a shrine of the Divine. Many imagine that they are engaged in spiritual exercises to realise this sense of Oneness with the Divine. Various spiritual exercises or different forms of worship may give some feeling of personal satisfaction, but will not result in God-realisation. God needs nothing from anyone. God does not seek offerings, nor is pleased by them. The Divine is not different from you. It is your likes and dislikes which separate you from God. When you get rid of desires and aversions, you will realise your inherent divinity. All the spiritual exercises one does or rituals one observes in offering worship can serve only to purify the mind and eliminate the ego. Mankind should strive for the ideal of human unity by recognising the divinity that is present in every human being.

### **Sins and repentance**

There is an age-old practice among Christians to pray to God for forgiving their sins. In the churches, it is the practice for devotees to confess their sins, make cash offerings, and obtain absolution from the pontiff or the priests. The belief in redemption through repentance and offerings to the Divine is prevalent in India also. These practices are based on misconceptions about the Divine. There should be an earnest enquiry into the nature of the Divine and people should try to get rid of superstitious beliefs which have no basis in Truth.

It should be noted that the spirit of enquiry was prevalent among the ancient Greeks centuries before Christ. Socrates was a great teacher who promoted the spirit of enquiry among the youth of Athens. Socrates was so much wedded to the pursuit of truth that he preferred death in his home city to making good his escape with the help of his disciples. He set no value on life, property or possessions.

### **Jesus and the rich man**

Jesus also set no value on wealth or position. Once a rich man came to Jesus when he was in the house of Martha and Mary. The rich man told Jesus that despite all his wealth and possessions he was not having peace of mind. He was harassed by many worries and appealed to Jesus to show him a way out. Jesus told him: "There is a simple way, but will you follow it? You have been accumulating riches and your worries have grown with them. What are you going to do with all this wealth, which some day you will have to leave behind? Distribute it among the poor and the needy and your worries will go. Accumulate instead the wealth of God's grace through love of your fellowmen."

This is the message that has to be understood today. What people should seek is the earning of God's love. All other forms of wealth, including the wealth of scholarship, are valueless.



By chastising the rich and ministering to the poor and the diseased, Jesus taught his disciples a new way of life based on faith in God. Starting his ministry as a Messenger of God, Jesus finally declared: "My Father and I are one." St. Paul, who was in the beginning an inveterate critic of Jesus, became the first propagator of the Christian faith after having a vision of Christ in a dream in which Jesus told him: "Every man is a spark of the Divine. When you hate me, you are hating yourself and hating God." Paul had to face many ordeals in propagating Christ's message. The early Christians were subject to persecution by the Roman rulers. In course of time, the Christian faith established itself in Rome, which became the seat of the Catholic Church.

### **"God is within you"**

Christ declared that God can be realised only through love. Once a high priest in Jerusalem called Jesus and asked him: "Are you King of the Jews?" Jesus replied: "I do not say so." The priest told Jesus: "You are leading the people astray by your wrong teachings. You are telling them that everyone can enter Heaven only through you." Jesus said that he had been telling the people to seek the Kingdom of Heaven. The priest asked: "Where is that Kingdom?" Jesus replied: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, within everybody. When this is my teaching, how can I be accused of claiming that the Kingdom of Heaven can be attained only through me?" How did Jesus get the courage to speak in this fashion? It was because he was proclaiming, the truth. Truth is born of love, which comes from faith in God.

*Where there is confidence, there is Love.  
Where there is Love, there is Peace.  
Where there is Peace, there is Truth.  
Where there is Truth, there is Bliss.  
Where there is Bliss, there is God.*

This is the way to develop faith in God.

### **The trinity in man**

In Bharat, there is the belief that Divinity exists in the three forms of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. No one has seen these deities in their different forms. These forms have been conceived to develop faith in certain ways.

The Trinity is symbolically present in everyone. The heart has been equated with Easwara. This means that the heart symbolises the Atmic principle in man. This refers not to the physical heart but the spiritual heart. The heart represents divinity as well as the Love principle. The Atma is unbounded and hence Love also has no limit. Men in their narrow mindedness may set limits to their love, but love as a Divine quality is infinite.

The mind has emanated from the heart. It is all-pervading. "Manomoolam idam jagat" "The mind is the basis of the Cosmos." The mind symbolises Vishnu. The word Vishnu means that which pervades everything in the universe. As the mind has emanated from the heart, the Vishnu

man, the Aham (or ego) has arisen from the mind and Brahma is symbolic of Aham. This is the esoteric interpretation of the Trinity. It means that the Trinity is present in everyone. The heart is Easwara, the mind is Vishnu and the "I" is Brahma. When you regard the ego as Brahma, your thoughts and actions will not go astray. The mind will be a means of liberation, when it is rid of the impurities residing in it. All spiritual exercises are designed only to cleanse the mind. When the mind becomes pure, the divine is experienced spontaneously.

### **"You are the divine"**

The Divine is not separate from you. You are the Divine. This conviction must grow in you. In the beginning you regard yourself as a mere human being. Then, you reach the stage when you recognise your potential divinity. Finally you reach the stage when you realise your divinity. These three stages could be noticed in the career of Jesus. At the outset, he declared: "I am a Messenger of God." Then, he said: "I am the Son of God." Finally he affirmed: "I and my Father are One." Through this process, Christ achieved oneness with the Divine.

You must embark on the journey to unity with the Divine from now itself. Time waits for no one. Concentrate all your efforts on the realisation of God. The primary requisite is the elimination of the ego. Without getting rid of the ego, the bliss of divinity cannot be experienced. Ostentatious worship is of no use. Wealth, power and position are of no avail in the spiritual quest. They cannot confer peace or remove the fear that haunts man all the time. Only the man of faith is completely free from fear. Hence, develop faith in God and lead a God directed life. You may pursue your studies or avocations without giving up your faith in God. What is happening now is that men are forgetting God in the pursuit of wealth. They are seeking "annam" (food) instead of the Atma. When the Atma is realised all other things will be got without any great effort.

The man who has realised the Self has redeemed his life. That man is blest who is conscious of his faults. The one who sees the good in others is equally blest. Show love towards all.

### **Three maxims**

People from, many countries have gathered here today. Where-for have they come here? They are not wanting in wealth. They do not lack comforts. They enjoy many things in their countries. But they do not experience real bliss, which can come only from spiritual realisation. And it is for this they have come. You have to turn your minds towards the Atma. The Atma is infinite. You have to get rid of the ideas of "mine" and "thine." Regard yourselves as the children of one God, who is the universal protector. Bear in mind three things: Love of God, fear of sin, observance of social morality.

One who has no love of God, easily commits sin and loses all moral values. Love of God promotes fear of sin and makes one lead a moral life. These triune principles are like the Divine Trinity. They will promote purity in thought, word and deed (Trikarana Shuddhi). Whatever is done with such purity will be conducive to God-realisation. Above all, cultivate love. There is nothing greater than love. Love is common to everyone on earth. It knows no distinctions of

brought you all here. Strengthen that love. Love is God. Live in love. You may choose any form of worship or pursue any spiritual path you like. Whatever delights your heart will please God. Follow the dictates of your conscience, fill your hearts with love and immerse yourselves in the bliss of the Divine.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho*" and an English song, "*Love is my form, Truth is my Breath, Peace is my food, My Life is my Message.*"

Starting from the first day of the New Year, January has been an eventful month at Prasanthi Nilayam for the Sathya Sai educational institutions and the devotees.

On New Year Day, devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam were given, by the grace of Bhagavan, a taste of the variety of musical talent available among the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute. After witnessing a contest in vocal music among the students of the Institute a few days earlier, held at the Institute Auditorium, Swami suggested that the competition in instrumental music might be held in the Poornachandra Auditorium in the presence of all devotees. Bhagavan thereby provided for the devotees not only an enjoyable and varied cultural programme, but also made them aware of the range and proficiency of the Institute students in handling musical instruments, both Indian and Western. The participants in the evening programme demonstrated with ease their mastery of different instruments, including the veena, flute, tabla, mridangam, violin, accordion, mandolin, and a variety of western percussion and wind instruments including the trumpet.

The audience was highly appreciative of the intense practice which accounted for the skill and proficiency of each of the participants. Bhagavan congratulated them and took photographs with them.

Then came, a week later, the eagerly awaited Annual Sports Festival spread over three days from January 11 to 13.

The inauguration of the Festival by Bhagavan was a memorable experience for the thousands of men and women devotees who had gathered from early in the morning at the Hill View Stadium and occupied vantage positions in the galleries on Vidyagiri.

It was a delightfully cool morning. Bhagavan's arrival at the Stadium on the stroke of seven, preceded by four pilot riders on motorcycles, was heralded by a 21-gun salute, which reverberated from the hill. On alighting from his car, Bhagavan was received by the Vice Chancellor and others. The Institute band struck a marching tune, while a big group of students in colourful Punjabi costumes performed the Bhangra dance as Bhagavan proceeded towards the Santhi Vedika. A group of flag-bearing students in shining uniforms provided a guard of honour for the Chancellor as he went up to the dais. Some of the Sadhus, who had come for the Dharma Prachar Parishad anniversary, had expressed a wish to stay on for witnessing the sports festival. They were seated on the dais and watched the morning's programme with intense interest and enjoyment.

### **The grand rally**

After Swami had taken his seat, the march past of all the students from the three campuses of the Institute (Anantapur, Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam) and of the children of the Primary and Secondary School at Prasanthi Nilayam started. The rally was led by the tiny tots of the

respective flag-leader, went past Bhagavan, the flag was dipped in homage and all eyes were turned towards Bhagavan. Each team had been named after one of the five basic values—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. After the Primary School, the girl students of the Anantapur College and the B. Ed., Course in Brindavan marched past with remarkable discipline. Students of the Secondary School and students from the Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses came at the end of the rally. Altogether it was an impressive rally of over one thousand two hundred students.

At the end of the march past, a religious touch was given to the Sports Festival by students from the Brindavan campus, who presented a typical rural temple procession in Tamil Nadu in which the local deity is taken in procession to the accompaniment of Vedic chants, Nadaswaram music and "dummy horse" dances.

Bhagavan then unfurled the Institute flag and released two pigeons symbolising Peace and Love. Swami formally inaugurated the Sports Festival by lighting the "Olympic" torch, which was carried in relays to the top of Vidyagiri where the "Olympic" flame was lighted. Four students in bright red uniforms stood guard over the flame. It was thrilling to watch the four young men guarding the flame at the top of Vidyagiri, while a few feet below them the tall figure of Jesus and the fine figure of Lord Siva appeared to shed their benediction on everyone in the vast stadium.

After the captains of the various participating teams had taken the "Olympic" oath, the participants in the rally dispersed in good order.

### **Gymnastic displays**

For the next two hours, Bhagavan and the large gathering in the Stadium witnessed with interest an enjoyable programme of gymnastic displays by the students of the participating institutions.

The children of the Primary School (from age 5 to 12) presented a variety of drill and pyramidal formations and a "dwarf dance", which was as skilful as, it was amusing. The stick drill by boys and the pyramid drill by the girls showed how well they had been trained in their respective fields.

The girl students from Anantapur presented a variety of floor exercises in which virtually all the students of the college were participants. There was, also a display of stick fighting.

Students of the Higher Secondary School and senior students from the Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses gave a display of gymnastic exercises on parallel bars and some physical feats.

The girl students from the Faculty of Education, Brindavan, presented a formation of the Sarva Dharma symbol.

The morning's programme concluded with an exciting basket ball match in which the players moved on roller skates. The game called for great skill in maintaining one's balance while moving quickly from one side to another with the ball to drop it in the basket.

Bhagavan spent altogether over three hours taking keen interest in every event and giving Padanamaskar to the participants after the conclusion of every item in the programme.

During the next two days various sports and athletic events were held in the Hill View Stadium for different sections of students. These included cricket, football, volley ball, basket ball, ball badminton, tennis and table tennis.

Bhagavan distributed prizes and certificates to the winners in various events on the 14th (to students of the Institute), the 16th (to students of the Secondary School) and the 17th (to the children of the Primary School and girl students of the Secondary School).

Swami went to Anantapur on Jan. 21st to distribute the prizes to the girl students of the Women's College.

### **Ramakatha puppet play**

On January 11, girls of the Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur, presented a "Tolubommalaata" of Ramakatha in the Institute Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Bhagavan. All the leather dolls for the show had been made by the girls themselves. They showed superb skill in manipulating the figures in the story according to the actions in the play. The entire theme had been well conceived and finely executed. The music was very good. The use of leather puppets for dramatic performances is a 300-year old tradition in Andhra Pradesh. The presentation by the Anantapur students was thoroughly professional in every way and reflected the enthusiasm and hard work they had brought to their performance.

### **Flowers in Sai's Garden**

*Like buds of many-coloured flowers  
Are these children of ours;  
Give them proper love and treat,  
They'll blossom into flowers sweet.*

*Let them have their rightful place  
And see Sai's Smile on every face;  
The future belongs to the young;  
Send them where Sai songs are sung.*

*As the sun dispels the darkness of night,*

*Like parts they'll relate to the Whole,  
When they march to Sai, heart and soul.*

*Can anything ever go wrong  
With a foundation iron-strong?  
Build the future for the young  
With "Sai Ram" on the tongue.*

*Protect well the innocent child  
From forces cruel and wild;  
Buds blossom into flowers sweet  
When offered at Sai's Lotus Feet.*

**—Chandrabhan Singh, South Africa.**

### **The Lord's Birthday**

*Our Sweet Lord  
Everyday is Your Birthday  
It reminds us that  
Time is timeless  
Work is limitless  
Love is fathomless  
Bliss is endless  
Peace is priceless*

*Beauty is spotless  
Penance is harmless  
Creation is countless  
Faith is matchless  
Devotion is selfless and  
God is ageless  
So Everyday is His Birthday.*

**—S. N. Saraf**

### **Man's Divine Destiny**

The Divine is One without a second. "Ekoham bahusyaam Prajaayeyethi." ("I am One. Let me become many for the sake of progeny.") Willing in this way, the Divine assumed a myriad amazing variety of forms in the universe and taught in the Gita the threefold paths of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti to enable humanity to realise the magnificence of the Divine.

Man has been engaged in exploring the infinite wonderful secrets of Nature in this marvellous creation in all possible ways. But because of the vagaries of his mind, intellect and ego, man has failed to understand the true eternal, spiritual basis underlying everything in the Universe and has lost himself in the pursuit of the external phenomenal world as if it were the only reality. In the process he has failed to realise his own true nature and has totally perverted his mind. The simple truth that everything is permeated by the One has been lost sight of.

### **Grievous error**

It is to remind man of this grievous error that Sri Krishna declared in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gita (in sloka 61) "Easwaras-sarvabhoothanam hriddese-Arjuna thishtathi" ("The Lord resides, oh Arjuna, in the heart region of all beings") and went on to adjure in the 62<sup>nd</sup> sloka "Thameva saranam gachcha sdrvabhaavena Bharata" ("Take refuge in Him alone with all thy heart, oh Bharata"). This means that if the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, He must be residing in Arjuna's heart also! Hence, the injunction, "Thameva saranam gachcha" means: "Seek refuge in yourself." It must be understood from this that whatever one may say or do, he is doing it only to himself and for himself.

The Bhagavad Gita begins with Dhritarashtra's reference to "Dharma kshetre Kurukshetre." "Dharma kshetra" is the seat of Atma. "Kurukshetra" is the body, which is the source of all actions. It is the combination of the Atma and the body—the Kshetra-Kshetrajna relationship—which explains the human predicament. By forgetting the Atma and involving himself in "Deha Dharma" (the claims of the body), man is subjecting himself to endless suffering. He grieves about things which are not worth lamenting and does not grieve for the things that ought to make him sad. This state of delusion is the result of his identifying himself with the body and forgetting his inherent divinity. If he realises that he is one with the Omni-Self, he will have no cause for sorrow. He will be aware that Truth and Bliss are inherent in his spiritual reality.

When man realises that the Divine is all-pervasive, there will be no room for acquisitive selfishness or divisiveness. When Dhritarashtra made a distinction between "his" sons ("maamakaah" "my children") and the Pandavas, he betrayed his spiritual blindness and his ignorance of the unity that subsumes the multiplicity in the world.

The body is the instrument for all action. The body experiences the fruits of all actions. It is born as a result of past actions. The one who recognises the non-acting Indwelling Spirit in the body—which is the source of all action and realises that the same Spirit dwells in every being, is a really emancipated person. Knowing that the Divine is Omnipresent, he will do no harm to anyone and will be loving towards everyone.

### **The divine seed**

The many has come out of the One. A single seed is the source of innumerable trees. "Beejam maam sarvabhoothaanaam", says Krishna in the Gita. ("I am the seed in all living beings"). The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings as a seed. The Lord is the primordial seed. The Cosmos is the gigantic tree that has come from Him. In this tree, every country or nation is



Mahavakya, "Ekoham Bahusyaam" means that the Lord has assumed all the multifarious forms in the Universe. Those who see with a spiritual vision recognise the common divinity in all things. But those who view the world as a physical entity are caught up in endless troubles. Every human being should distinguish between the physical body and the Indwelling Spirit and seek to realise his inherent divinity. That divine has no birth or death. The body is a vesture made up of the five elements which the Spirit has assumed for the moment, Recognising this fact man has to carry out his duties as a human being in this world.

Love for the Divine is devotion. Devotion is not something objective and concrete. It is an inner experience which springs from the heart. As you think, so you become. Hence, the heart must be filled with good feelings. The senses must be engaged in good actions. When the eyes are turned towards God, all creation appears Divine. When you wear the right kind of spectacles, you see everything clearly. But if the glasses are not correct, you get a distorted picture and your eyes are spoilt. Likewise, if your heart is filled with Love of God, all your feelings are sanctified by that love. Other undesirable thoughts drop away. Devotees pray to the Lord to come and reside in their pure and tranquil hearts. Where the heart is impure, there is no room for God.

### **The Lord's "vibhutis"**

In the Bhagavad Gita, there is a canto devoted to the "Vibhutis" of the Lord. What are these "Vibhutis"—the glories of God? Everything in the Universe testifies to the glory of God. Everything is a gift from the Divine. To the one who has unqualified faith in God, there is nothing good or evil. He welcomes everything equally. When a child is well, the mother gives it all eatables. But when it is unwell, it is given bitter medicine by the doctor. Likewise, the man who is groping in the darkness of ignorance has to be enlightened by the discipline of wisdom. The enforcement of such discipline does not mean that the Divine is angry or displeased. There is grace even in the severity of the discipline. It is like the surgeon's knife which is used to perform a necessary operation. The devotee should look upon pain and pleasure alike as designed for his good. He will not then be affected by troubles. He will regard them as stages in the evolution of his consciousness. Pain and pleasure are inseparable twins in life. One leads to the other, even as the New Moon culminates in the Full Moon. These are manifestations of the Wheel of Time, expressions of the Divine Will.

Man should get rid of the feeling that he is the doer (Ahamkara). As long as the ego is dominant, the Atmic consciousness will not develop. The egoist cannot recognise the Atma. It is egoism that is at the root of all man's troubles. It is a kind of delusion based on the misconceived notion that the body is real and permanent. The truth is otherwise. From an early age one should recognise the evanescence of the body and the senses and control the desires prompted by the sense organs. Desires are insatiable. The pursuit of wealth, power and position can only end in misery. Instead, one should take refuge in God and dedicate all actions to the Divine.

### **Achieve inner peace**

In spite of his precious birth as a human being, man leads a life worse than that of animals. Animals are not consumed by envy. They do not take pride in their possessions. They have no

with whatever food and shelter they can get. As man's knowledge and skill have increased, his moral calibre has declined. Man has to discover the secret of the good life. He has to realise that he has taken birth not for enjoyment of worldly pleasures but to realise his divine destiny by the cultivation of good qualities and by performing good actions. To indulge in demoniac actions while having the human form means degrading human nature. Of what use are wealth and position if one has no peace of mind? A quiet conscience is man's brightest jewel. To achieve inner peace, desires have to be subdued and all thoughts should be centred on God. Engage yourselves in service activities in a spirit of dedication. Do not hanker after leadership. True service consists in helping the poor and the forlorn in society with humility and dedication. This is real service to the Divine. "Dharme Ram, Haathme Kaam" ("Rama in the heart and service with the hand"). Prepare yourselves for serving the people with God in your hearts and strength in your arms!

*—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 9-1-1988*

### **Sri Sathya Sai Dharma Prachar Parishad**

Sri Sathya Sai Dharma Prachar Parishad, which was launched in January '87, after the Sadhus' Conference, to carry the message of Sanathana Dharma to the people through Sadhus, celebrated its first anniversary on January 7, 8 and 9, with a programme of discourses by Bhagavan Baba and addresses by Swami Bhoomananda and others. The meetings, which were held in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam, were attended by a large number of Indian and Overseas devotees.

On the opening day, Swami Bhoomananda explained the genesis of the Dharma Prachar Parishad and said that some Sadhus had decided to dedicate themselves to the propagation of Dharma with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba. They derived their inspiration and strength from Swami, whose advent was as significant for the world today as the avatars of Rama and Krishna had been in previous epochs. Bhagavan Baba's mission had achieved global dimensions within His own lifetime. People from all countries and of all faiths are flocking to Him to get the benefit of His grace and sublimate their lives by living up to His teachings. The Sadhus found that wherever they went to propagate the Dharmic truths, there were devotees worshipping Swami's pictures and revering Him as incarnation of the Divine. Bhagavan has come to divinise mankind. The role of the Dharma Prachar Parishad is to awaken among the people consciousness of their inherent divinity, as taught by Bhagavan Baba, and to teach them to lead righteous and godly lives. He said the Sadhus were dedicating all their actions as an offering to Bhagavan Baba.

Swami Ramakrishnananda hailed Bhagavan Baba as an Avatar whose sole mission was to raise the whole of humanity to a higher level of consciousness, from the human to the Divine. He stressed the importance of practising the teachings of Bhagavan. Merely listening to Him for years was of no use if no attempt was made to live up to His message.

On the second day, Sri Sachchidananda said that though many who came to Baba wanted one or other of their wishes to be fulfilled, there were a large number of devotees who came in search of peace and spiritual enlightenment. He mentioned the case of a devotee who had lost a son in an accident and who observed that the Lord had given the son and had taken him away. It was by coming to Baba that he had achieved such equanimity and serenity. He said it was essential to promote equal respect for all faiths among the people.

Swami Prasannananda said that control of the senses was essential for spiritual realisation.

Sri Bhaskarananda explained why the Divine appears in human form and said it was their great good fortune that Bhagavan Baba was among them to transform them by His life and message.

Sri Krishnananda said that inner peace can be got only when the ego and the desires associated with it are eliminated. The heart has to be purified to experience the Divine.

Propagation of Dharma has become essential today because the present deplorable plight of man is due to the neglect of Dharma by people. It should be realised that even in the pursuit of wealth (Artha) and the enjoyment of things (Kama), Dharma (Righteousness) has to be adhered to. Both Artha and Kama are based on Dharma.

Men want peace but forget that it is desire that is standing in the way. Peace is natural to man. In the state of deep sleep, when no desires or thoughts are present, man enjoys undisturbed peace. In the waking state, man is caught up in desires and has no peace. When the ego is freed from desires, peace and bliss are experienced spontaneously. Searching for peace outside oneself is to behave like the woman who had lost a needle in her house and was searching for it under a roadside lamp.

Speaking on the third day, Swami Bhoomananda looked forward to intensified activities by the Sri Sathya Sai Dharma Prachar Parishad in the years to come.

Mr. V. K. Narasimhan said that Bhagavan Baba's advent was of the greatest significance when the world is plunged in the deepest moral and spiritual crisis in human history. After centuries of conflict and hatred, humanity can look forward to an era of harmony and peace only if society is rebuilt on the basis of Love, Truth and Righteousness, as propounded by Baba. Bhagavan Baba's message has spread to the whole world in a few decades and His devotees run into many millions all over the world. The process of divinisation of mankind has begun and will gather momentum in the coming years. With unswerving faith in God and unshakable courage, Bhagavan's devotees should strive for the building up of a new world based on Bhagavan's basic values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

discourses on all the three days, concluding them with His bhajans. (Bhagavan's discourses are published separately.)

## **The Avatar's Voice in El Salvador**

*—George and Betty Teague*

For more than five years now, in El Salvador, Central America, radio listeners can listen twice a week, on Sundays at 7-30 in the morning and on Thursdays at 7-30 in the evening, to a broadcast programme entitled, "Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the voice of the Avatar—a message that will make you happier."

The programme transmits Swami's discourses as they are presented in the "Sanathana Sarathi" or in the "Sathya Sai Speaks" volumes. The messages have a background of Indian instrumental music and, in some cases, fragments of "Sai Bhajans".

The programme is broadcast by Radio El Mundo as an offering to Bhagavan Baba. From the very beginning the programme has been produced by a Sai Baba devotee who is also the Radio Technician of the station. The material is prepared by the Executive Secretary of the station, who is also a Sai devotee. The Air Time of the Radio station is offered at no cost as a service to the community.

Radio El Mundo is a Radio Station inspired by and dedicated to Swami. In addition to the "Voice of the Avatar" programme, during the day it transmits short messages containing thoughts from the teachings of Sai Baba. It also transmits other programmes of spiritual nature.

Radio El Mundo is a private broadcasting station that reaches housewives, executives, professionals, and government officials and, in general, cultured people of all sects and religions. Everyday, the Sai Message is having more and more acceptance in all sectors of the population.

The experience of El Salvador demonstrates that the Voice of the Avatar penetrates in all consciences, in all minds and in all hearts because it is a universal message of Love, Faith and Hope, and because it is a message that all of us have been waiting for.

***DHARMA PRACHAR:***

## **The Crowning Virtue**

*The man that is bereft of Dharma,*

*And hath no virtues in him,  
But is replete with vices,  
Cannot find happiness here  
Or in the Hereafter.*

### *Embodiments of Divine Love!*

The term Dhaarani is derived from the root *Dhr*. Dhaarani means that which binds the universe in unison through Dharma, Righteousness. "Dharmo Viswasya Jagatah Pratishtaa". It is Dharma which upholds the universe. "Dharme Sarvam Pratishtitham". Everything abides in Dharma, Righteousness. The presence of this Dharma cannot be established by sense perception or through inferential deduction. It transcends the canons of logic. Its existence has to be derived from the authority of revealed scriptural testimony (the Vedas).

What is Veda? "Vetthyanena iti Vedah" Veda is that which enlightens or expounds fully a subject or matter. For instance, Dhanur Veda expounds the science of archery. Natya Veda is the treatise on Dance. Sama Veda is the science of spiritual music. Ayur Veda is the science of life and medicine. The prefix figuring before the term Veda indicates the type of science that is dealt with in that particular Veda.

Dharma (Righteousness) and Moksha (liberation) are transcendental—beyond the intellect and sense perceptions. How can the Vedas throw light on Dharma and Moksha, which are beyond the reach of the senses? They can do so only by indicating the Yajnas and Yagas that constitute the spiritual exercises leading to Dharma and Moksha. Even the Vedas are not competent to provide direct access to Dharma and Moksha. That is why the Vedas have declared: "Na Karmanaa, Na Prajayaa dhanena Thyaaagenaike Amrutatvamaanasuh". "Not by meritorious deeds, progeny or wealth can immortality be attained. It can be experienced only through renunciation." But the Vedas show that through good deeds and practice's, one can acquire the competence to realise Dharma and Moksha.

### **Vidhana**

The emperor Manu coined a special term to describe the significance of the Vedas as the scriptures prescribing the spiritual and worldly actions to be performed by men. He gave the name "Vidhana" to all the actions to be performed in daily life to direct mankind in the path of truth. At the present day, in the Kaliyuga, the term "Vidhana" has been associated with legislative bodies. "Vidhana" means that which lays down the law. Because the proper significance of the term has not been understood, mankind has gone astray.

Dharma is a term which is all-embracing. The whole universe is bound by it. What is the need, it may be asked, for propagating Dharma when it encompasses everything. The reason is that, though Dharma is present everywhere, it is covered by ignorance and pride, like fire that is covered by ashes or water by moss. These covering elements have to be removed so that the true

needed only for this purpose.

### **Dharma prachar and practice**

Propagation of Dharma does not mean spreading knowledge about something that is not known. Its basic purpose is to promote the practice of Dharma. Only those who practise Dharma are qualified to propagate it. It is because Dharma and Sathya (Righteousness and Truth) have not been propagated by persons practising them that they have been eclipsed as it were and are not perceivable. It is only when they are practised in daily life that their true nature and value will be realised.

A man is judged by the nature of his actions. If his actions are good, he is described as a good man. If his actions are bad, he is described as a wicked person. One's qualities and actions are interdependent. Actions reveal qualities and qualities determine actions. Hence, everyone should strive to reform himself by developing good qualities. Swami Ramakrishnananda (who had spoken earlier) asked what good has been derived by persons who had been listening to spiritual discourses for years and who had been living in the ashram for a long time. Unless an effort is made to put into practice at least a few of the teachings, all these exercises are futile.

### **Kshama—the supreme virtue**

Qualities like forbearance (Kshama), sympathy (Daya), truth, love and compassion are not associated with any particular nation, faith or community. They are spiritual qualities and are essential, for people anywhere, at all times.

Among the qualities a man has to develop if he is to realise his divinity, the foremost is *Kshama*—forbearance or forgiveness. It is essential for every human being. It is supreme among virtues. Kshama is Truth, Dharma, Sympathy, Non-violence and all else. Kshama comprehends every quality.

### **Four types of purity**

How is Kshama to be acquired? It is acquired by practising four kinds of purity:

1. Dravya Soucham (purity of commodities); 2. Manasika Soucham (purity of the mind); 3. Vaak Soucham (purity in speech); 4. Kriya Soucham (purity in action or purity of body).

*Dravya Soucham:* Purity of commodities covers all things used by a person, from clothes, food and cooking utensils to houses and all the varied things used by a person. Everything that is in daily use should be completely pure.

*Manasika Soucham:* Purity of the mind. This calls for the total elimination of attachments and aversions from the mind. Hatred and envy should have no place. One should cultivate the large-heartedness to return good for evil and not to cause pain to anyone in any circumstance. This is the mark of a pure mind. Today people are filled with hatred and envy. They cannot bear to see others happy or prosperous. This is the sign of a polluted mind. Men with evil minds develop demoniac traits. To be truly human, one has to have a pure, unsullied mind. He has to

dwells in him and the power that animates him are present equally in every human being. One who is conscious of this unity will have an untrammelled mind.

*Vaak Soucham:* Purity of speech. This means that one must speak the truth. He must be sweet and pleasant in speech and avoid using harsh words. Excessive talking should be avoided. Purity in speech implies avoidance of falsehood, garrulousness, abusive language, slanderous gossip and speech which causes pain to others. Today there is very little purity of speech. Bad thoughts and bad words are the order of the day. A vile tongue fouls the mind and dehumanises man.

*Sarira Soucham:* Purity of the body. The body has to be purified by performing Aachamana with water (This ritual involves uttering the names of the Lord thrice and drinking three spoonfuls of water from the palm).

When these four kinds of purity are practised, the quality of Kshama develops to some extent.

### **"Have no enemies"**

Once when the Pandavas were living in exile in the forest, Bhima and Draupadi approached Dharmaja (the eldest of the Pandavas) and asked him what plans he had for dealing with their enemies, the Kauravas. Smilingly, Dharmaja replied to them to pacify their feelings. "We have no enemies. Our own qualities are either our friends or foes. Our actions can be our enemies. We should try to conquer these enemies in the form of bad thoughts and bad deeds. Our bad feelings get themselves reflected in others and make them appear as evil minded. Realise, Oh Bhima, we have no enemies. The Kauravas whom you regard as our enemies are not so. If we fill our hearts with good feelings, the Kauravas will be our friends and brothers."

To give another illustration from the Mahabharata: Once Vidura went to Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kauravas, and said to him: "Dhritarashtra! You are not only physically blind, but you are lacking the eyes of wisdom. You accepted the five Pandava brothers as the children of Pandu on the authentic testimony of Maharishis (great sages). Many did not know that they were the children of Pandu. Moreover, the great Bhishma, who had the gift of Divine sight, also testified to this fact. You accepted Pandu's children and kept them with you. But your sons did not favour the affection and consideration bestowed on them. Your evil-minded sons subjected the Pandavas to all kinds of ordeals and hardships. Out of your misplaced love for your sons, you have allowed these wrongs to be perpetrated. If an individual takes poison, he alone dies. If an arrow hits a person, he alone is injured. But when a ruler pursues an unrighteous policy, the entire state is ruined. The people as well as the ruler perish. By succumbing to bad counsel and evil ways, you are leading your kingdom and your dynasty to disaster. This is not proper." Vidura warned the king to recognise the truth. He did not mince words in his accusation of Dhritarashtra. He said: "Those who are born blind or deaf and dumb, those who are insane and those of unsteady mind have no right to rule. When any such person is a ruler, he causes

the kingdom with your own hands.”

### **Sathya and dharma**

“Dharmaja is endowed with the supreme virtue of Kshama (forbearance). You are mistaking his forbearance for cowardice. Forbearance is like a crown on his head. Very soon, the Pandavas' forbearance will bring about your complete ruin." It was this forbearance which brought ultimate victory to the Pandavas and conferred lasting glory and fame on them. This forbearance is based on the four kinds of purity (soucham). Purity has its roots in Righteousness. Truth is born of Righteousness, which in its turn sustains Truth. Man should adhere to Truth and Righteousness as the bases of life in the world.

Dharma is not a word; to be bandied about. Repeating oft-quoted aphorisms like "Dhaarayatheethi Dharmah" (Dharma is that which sustains) and "Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithah" (Dharma protects its protector) are easy enough. But what is needed is practice of Dharma. Right conduct alone constitutes Dharma. The man who leads a righteous life is bound to find peace.

When you go out into towns and villages for propagating Dharma, you have to tell the people: "Do not cause harm to any one. Do not abuse anybody. Perform your duties with devotion. Make your heart pure."

Realisation of the Divine is the goal. But most of our actions are related to worldly concerns. The only way to sanctify all actions is to do them as acts of worship, as an offering to the Divine. Thereby life itself becomes sacred.

You must shed the feeling of "mine" and "thine". You have to realise the truth that the Divine dwells in every being. ("Eko vasi Sarvabhoothaantharaatma"). You must develop this sense of oneness and share it with others.

### **Who is a sadhu?**

The distinction made between householders and Sanyasis is not of real significance. The wearing of the ochre robe alone will not make a man a devotee of God. By the mere mouthing of mantras, one's sins will not be washed away. Carrying the Gita and shouting slogans will not make one meritorious. Only the man whose thoughts and deeds are in harmony can be called a Sadhu (a saintly person).

Who are Sadhus? Not merely those who don the ochre robe. All are Sadhus. All beings have sadhutwa (goodness and purity) inherent in them. They have to foster and manifest these qualities and not the external vesture. It is the purity of one's thoughts which reveals his "Sadhutwa". There is no need to put on the orange robe to become a Sadhu. The heart must be pure. Ravana put on the guise of an ascetic to kidnap Sita. His garb only concealed his evil intent. It is the evil qualities that have to be given up. Even if the process is begun in a small way, it will result in great good. The start must be made when one is young.



### **How God helps**

A mother and son were living in poor circumstances. The father died, when the son was born. With great difficulty the mother put the son to school and made him reach the final year. Then he had to pay Rs. 90 as examination fees. The mother was at a loss how to find so much money. She was shedding tears under a tree, when the son importuned her to reveal the cause of her sadness. When she said that the boy would have to give up further studies, as she did not have the money for paying the examination fees, the son asked, in his childish innocence, whether there was anybody who could help them. He would repay the amount later. The mother said: "God alone is the helper for the helpless. He is the source of all wealth and He is the universal provider." In his innocence, the boy asked his mother: "Where is that God? By some means or other I shall get the money from Him." The mother said: "He is in Vaikuntha." The boy implicitly believed in his mother's words: He ran to the post office, wrote a letter; bought an envelope, enclosed the letter in it and addressed it to "Sri Narayana, Vaikuntha." He was trying to post the letter in a post box which was fixed a little too high for him. The postmaster, watching his plight, came to his help and asked him: "To whom are you sending your letter? " The boy replied, "Sir, this is a very urgent letter. I need money by tomorrow to pay my fees. Please see that the letter is dispatched quick." The postmaster took the letter from the boy and found that it was addressed to "Sriman Narayana, Vaikuntha." He asked the boy who had given him that address. He related his entire story and what his mother had told him about Sriman Narayana as the refuge of the poor and forlorn.

The postmaster was moved to tears by the boy's story. He wondered at the innocence and pure heartedness of the boy and told him: "Dear Child! I shall post the letter. You come here tomorrow morning. The money will be received by then and you can take it." The boy was happy beyond words and conveyed the news to his mother. The next morning he went to the postmaster and asked him whether the money had come. The postmaster went in, brought Rs. 90 and gave it to the boy. He ran with the money to his mother. The mother wondered how he got the money, whether he had stolen it or got it from someone. She asked him how he got the money. He related what all had happened. He swore that the money had been sent by Narayana Himself. The mother then asked him to take her to the postmaster. The postmaster told her: "As soon as I saw your son's letter, God induced me to, come to your son's help. The money has come from Him. I am only an instrument in His hands."

### **Childlike innocence**

The moral of the story is that if we pray to God with a pure heart, God will make use of someone to respond to our prayer. It is silly to raise such questions as: Where is that God? How will He help? By raising such questions only our faith is weakened. That is the reason why Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said: "If you want to pray to God, be like an innocent child." Jesus also said the same thing when he told his disciples: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." He also used to say: "Even if I am like a child for even a brief moment in a day, how pure can I become?"

the words of their mothers. Mothers should avoid putting wrong ideas in the children. When there are such exemplary mothers and children, the world will be full of joy and festivities. When Bharat has such mothers and children, it will be an example to the world.

### **Sadhus on the move**

There is no use in preaching to others, if your own thoughts and conduct have not changed. Engage yourselves in Sadhanas to cleanse your heart and mind and to fill them with pure thoughts and feelings. The burden of spreading the Dharmic message has been shouldered by Swami Bhoomanand, who has been going round the villages despite his age. Though he is a Sanyasi, he has dedicated himself to the propagation of Dharma and is constantly on the move carrying the message to the people. Other Sadhus are also cooperating with him in this sacred mission. Swamis Sachidananda, Ramakrishnananda and others are carrying on this work with enthusiasm. They are all pure-hearted; I bless them all and want them to continue this new work they have taken up with redoubled vigour and redeem their lives. Whatever they do should be regarded as service to the Divine. They should consider themselves as Divine instruments. This alone is real service to society. Doing Japa and dhyana for attaining individual salvation is one form of selfishness. You must develop largeness of heart and strive to take others with you to the supreme goal of liberation. Giving up the narrow outlook, you should have love for all. It is high time the old attitudes of hatred and envy are given up.

### **Frogs in lotus pond**

There are here today people from overseas who have travelled thousands of miles to obtain peace and serenity before they return. It is a pity that those who have been here for years have not tried to cultivate these qualities and are immersed in worries and confusion. They are like frogs in a lotus pond which are not aware of the nectarine honey in the lotus in search of which bees gather from long distances. This supineness should go. Those who are here should practise at least a few of the things that they learn here so that they may go forward towards their divine destiny.

The great movement for the propagation of Dharma launched by the Dharma Prachar Parishad is bound to succeed. Swami will extend all necessary help and strength to this movement.

*—Bhagavan's discourse to the Sri Sathya Sai Dharma Prachar Parishad,  
in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 7-1-19*

**"The Indwelling God"**

*—Peggy Mason*

aspects of phenomena the physical—have we not sacrificed the subtle areas of consciousness and perception since the 18th century when reason began to be worshipped in the West?

If ours is the most cerebral age in history, why is it also the most destructive? Why, in this century, have we defiled and polluted the earth and its atmosphere and decimated animal life more quickly than in all the preceding millennia of man's existence? Does reason in isolation plunge us deeper and deeper into unreason?

Yet it may well be that an understanding of sub-human intelligence will become a factor in helping us to save ourselves from ourselves and to become truly human. Although plant intelligence has been officially recognised, plants are organically far from us and therefore less embarrassing than the recognition of animal intelligence.

Gandhi said, "The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forceful because it is speechless." (Though Baba has said he understands the languages of animals, adding that it is "often far sweeter than that of humans.")

### **Animal intelligence**

But it is embarrassingly forceful now that it has been proved and demonstrated that although animals cannot speak with the tongue (except instances of imitation), many domestic ones not only listen to and understand the language of their owners (as children do), but can also learn, with the aid of an abacus (the counting frame children have) and a blackboard, to do addition, division, subtraction and other more complicated mathematical problems more quickly than I ever could! This is not telepathy, for often the answer has not been worked out by the teacher.

Of course dog owners well know that many words have to be spelt out rather than spoken, like w-a-l-k or d-i-n-n-e-r, for example, if they don't want their dog to react immediately. But in the 102 or thereabouts known cases of animals (horses, ponies, dogs and at least two cats) which have been taught the alphabet and the foot, or paw, tapping system of communication by their owners, it has been proved that they think, reflect, feel, and have opinions about day to day matters, and a wide variety of subjects both ethical and even philosophical—even about death.

Anyone who has experienced astral projections will know that when meeting and talking to animals in the out-of-the-body state one hears their spoken words although their mouths do not move. This is, of course, communication by telepathy, but the thoughts behind the words are being transmitted from the animal's consciousness.

If certain animals then, can learn the alphabet as quickly (and even more quickly) than children can, and also learn the tapping code for the letters—though the results are quite often phonetic spelling, as with children—and moreover when the answers to questions are thought out and sometimes totally unexpected, animal intelligence of a high order is demonstrated as a fact. And this is to many people an embarrassing fact.

transplanting hundreds of living dogs' heads on the necks of other dogs, in the spiritually unacceptable cause of enabling a few humans to stay a few days or weeks, or even months or a year or so, longer on this planet. Now at least it would appear that Dr. Barnard is seeing a glimmer of light, for quite recently he wrote:

"Last year a Dutch animal breeding centre sent me two chimpanzees as a gift. I killed one and cut its heart out. The other wept bitterly and was inconsolable. I vowed never again to experiment with such sensitive creatures, and the memory of that weeping chimp has remained with me." (The hospital staff were haunted for days by the heartbroken chimp's crying.)

### **Love among insects**

But what creature is not sensitive? I have never forgotten two earwigs which my young son and I rescued from drowning a few years ago. We laid them on a table and thought they were dead, but soon one of them recovered. The first thing it did was to go to the other one and, with its feelers, it kept on stroking its head and fussing round it in obvious distress and concern. Finally, the second one showed signs of life. When fully recovered they went off together.

Does nuclear age man, if he is not to destroy himself, or continue to massacre his fellows, have to learn from a humble insect? There is only one way to stop or curb the rot. That is by teaching, spreading, and above all, practising LOVE which is the recognition of ONENESS.

If it be thought that I have laboured the kinship of the human and animal kingdoms it is because it is vital to our progress and our survival that we recognise that the basis of life is interrelationship on all levels in all kingdoms. And these include the subtle kingdoms of the ethers, the angels of the air and water, the nature spirits and Devas on whose co-operation we depend, and whose alienation, by our own actions, can create havoc and catastrophe.

We reap the fruits of our actions. Some words of Baba's will bear repetition here: "Man's inhumanity to man (and all kingdoms) expresses itself in the form of natural catastrophes, like earthquakes." And "God does not decree those calamities (such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, famine, epidemics) but man invites them by way of retribution for his own evil deeds.

### **Why calamities occur**

"So, finally, if the Avatar brings the calamities mentioned by you to an immediate end, which I can, and do when there is a great need, the whole drama of creation with its *karmic* law will collapse. Remember these calamities occur not because of what God has made of man, but really because of what man has made of man. Therefore man has to be UNMADE with his ego destroyed and replaced by a transcendent consciousness, so that he may rise above the *karmic* (law) to command... The Avatar leads the people themselves to a higher level of consciousness to enable them to understand the truth of spiritual laws so that they may turn towards righteousness and steadfastly work for better conditions.

transcend the cycle of cause and effect in which today they are involved as victims, and thereby command and control the natural forces to be able to avert the calamities you mention. "

### **Raising the consciousness**

The questioner asked, "You mean that you are presently raising the consciousness of mankind to a Godlike condition to enable them to command their own destiny?" Baba replied, "Exactly. They would become shareholders of my Sankalpa, Shakti (divine will power). I have to work through them, rouse the indwelling God in them and evolve them to a higher reality in order to enable them to master the natural laws and forces.

"If I cure everything instantly, leaving the people at their present level of consciousness, they would soon mess up things and be at one another's throats again with the result that the same chaotic situation would develop in the world."

It is the realisation of the indwelling God, in all creation, which is so vital, and in our present stage of duality, when the observer feels separate from the observed (whether other humans or other kingdoms of nature) it is by love and loving service that we can best bridge the gap, one could almost say the chasms which divide us.

Love is not sentimentality. Rather is it the experiencing of compassion which allows us to feel the essence of all forms of life. Through love we can blend with the aspiring consciousness of the animal, the plant kingdom, the very stones under our feet—and of human beings, however strange they may appear to be. Baba tells us, "There is *nothing* in the world that has no heart, which is incapable of feeling joy or grief." Whatever we do against others, in all the kingdoms, we do against ourselves. That means the Indwelling God.

**—From "The Embodiment of Love" by Peggy Mason and Ron Laing**

*Every single unselfish act which prepares the ground for the merging of the Soul with the Oversoul, which broadens the vision towards the basic Brahman immanent everywhere, is a dharmic act. Each such act is a tiny stream rushing towards the sea of Brahmajnana. Whatever is done in an attitude of dedication and surrender is a component of the dharma which leads to Realization.*

**—Baba**

*Those who argue that the Spiritual path is for the individual only, and that society should not be involved in it, are committing a great mistake. It is like insisting that there should be light inside the house, and saying that it does not matter if there is darkness outside. Devotion towards GOD goes ill with hatred towards fellowmen. Fellowmen and the world must be seen ever in the mirror of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Kinship based on this recognition will alone last. That is the Sai Kinship. When you deepen the kinship, the True Presence of Sathya Sai will be yours. Do not be*

## **The Shmaa -The Unity Mantra of the Bible**

—*Al Drucker*

Baba says, "Expansion is My life." Once you come into His fold you cannot help but expand. The Vedas proclaim, "To know Brahman is to become Brahman." The root verb of the word Brahman means to expand. So, to know God is to become God, is to expand beyond the confines of this little consciousness. Our awareness widens and deepens and we begin to manifest the truth of our own immortal self. One of the steps in that process is that we become more deeply rooted in the basic truths of our own religious upbringing, while at the same time we begin to recognize the underlying oneness of all religious experience. In time, most devotees develop this kind of broader vision. Let me recount a little of my own experience in this regard.

A number of times in recent years, I have been given the blessed opportunity of speaking about Jesus on Christmas Day. The first time Bhagavan asked me to prepare such a talk, I hesitated, "Swamiji," I said, "I'm not a Christian, I was brought up as a Jew. How can I speak on Jesus?" Baba replied, "Jesus was also a Jew. Go ahead and speak!" And then later on, to emphasize His point, during His Christmas Discourse, Bhagavan mentioned that in the presence of Swami there is complete unity of all faiths, and that on Christmas Day at Prasanthi Nilayam you will find even Jews celebrating the birth of Jesus. Swami's directive to me to speak on Jesus turned into a very powerful impetus for becoming immersed in the life and teachings of Jesus; at the same time, I began reconnecting with the wisdom and beauty of my own faith, Judaism, which I had observed very strictly as a boy, but had later abandoned in the 40 years that followed. I would like to relate an insight that has come out of this, by taking up the SHMAA, a great link that unifies the basic teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Vedanta.

The different parts of the Christian Bible, the New Testament, were set down in Greek many years after Jesus' death. Later these were translated into Latin and then into the so-called vulgar tongues of English, German, French, Spanish, etc. But, to the best of our knowledge, Jesus never knew Greek or Latin. As Swami said, Jesus was a Jew. He spoke primarily to Jews. The Holy Scripture he taught was that of the Jews. He spoke in his local regional language of Aramaic, and when quoting the scripture he would do so in the sacred language in which it was written, which was Hebrew; just as Swami speaks in his native language of Telugu and quotes the scriptures in the sacred language of Sanskrit.

### **The foremost commandment**

On one occasion Jesus was asked, "Rabbi, what is the most important of all the commandments?" We must remember that although at first only ten commandments were given by God through Moses to the children of Israel, eventually these original ten were supplemented

delineated in great detail in the last four of the five books of Moses, the so-called Torah. Now the learned questioner wanted to know from Jesus what is the most important of all these many commandments. Jesus cut right through the superstructure of rites and rituals to get to the heart of the spiritual teachings. He answered by giving the SHMAA.

The SHMAA is a series of verses that start out with the proclamation of the Unity of God, and then enjoin us to love God with all our heart and all our mind. Every observing Jew repeats the SHMAA numerous times a day, the way an orthodox Brahmin repeats the Gayatri. When a Jewish child is born it is welcomed into the world with the SHMAA; when a Jew dies, the SHMAA is the last sound he utters. Jesus was reaffirming what had been universally believed by Jews for a thousand years previously, that the greatest Mantra of the faith was this profound proclamation by the Divinity given through Moses that the Supreme is always One. That affirmation of the Unity is the very heart of the Bible and is undoubtedly what Baba referred to when He said the Bible is also a Veda.

Jesus called the SHMAA the first of all the commandments, and he said the ancient injunction given by Moses to love your neighbour and to love the stranger, was the second most important commandment; then he added that on these hang all the other commandments. As reported by St. Mark in his Gospel, when the questioner heard Jesus' answer he was deeply moved and repeated in summary form what Jesus had said. In this one short summary statement given by this scribe, we find one of the clearest and most concise statements of the universal teachings which are the heart of the Vedanta as well as mystical Christianity and Judaism. This is what the scribe said:

"Well spoken, Master, what you have just stated is true... *He is One and there can be no other...* therefore, to love Him with all our heart, with all our understanding and all our strength, and to love our neighbour as ourself, is far more important than any burnt offering we give as sacrifice." Jesus seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." Here then, are the three parts to the great proclamation, as summarized in this passage.

### **Jnana, bhakti and karma**

First: There is the SHMAA, the unity statement regarding the Divinity. It proclaims that God is one and there is no other. And it is to be linked to the other great Mantra of the Bible given to Moses, in which God identifies Himself as the I AM, the universal Self. This refers to the passage in the Old Testament where God said to Moses, "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH...I AM WHO I AM. This is what you must say to the sons of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" That there is the One God, that there is no other, and that He is the universal I AM, the Aham Aham, is also the highest teaching of Indian philosophy contained in the great Upanishadic sayings, the Mahavakyas. That is *Jnana Yoga*.

Second: After the initial unity declaration of the SHMAA, there comes the statement that we should love God with all our heart, all our soul and all our strength. From the oneness, it follows that God is love and to be one with that oneness, to be steeped in God-consciousness, we too

towards God, for all there truly is, is only God. That is *Bhakti Yoga*.

Third: We must see God everywhere by serving God in our fellow man ...loving our neighbour as we love ourself, for that one Self in truth is God. That is much more important than any sacrificial offerings or rites that we might perform. Hands that work are more important than lips that pray, Swami tells us. "Work is worship! Go! Do your duty to society!" He says. That is *Karma Yoga*.

These three rungs on the spiritual ladder, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga are the essential teachings of the Gita. We start with selfless service, next we develop in devotion, and then we reach the loftiest heights of wisdom, through God-realisation. But, the teachings themselves, are given in the reverse order. First, Krishna taught the knowledge of the unity of God, which is knowledge of the universal Self, in order to rescue Arjuna from his despondency. Then he showed him how through duty, service and devotion he could become a Sthithaprajna, a truly wise man and reach that highest realisation. This, in essence, is also what Jesus taught and this is what Moses taught.

### **Rediscovering the one**

Unfortunately, today the SHMAA, the great Mantra which Jesus said is the very heart of the ancient teachings, is almost totally unknown among Christians, and with it much of the age-old message of unity and universality of the spirit has become lost in the Christian tradition in the Western world. Isn't it time for people of the Christian faith to rediscover the SHMAA and understand the deeper significance of its last word, ECHOD, meaning 'the One ', which like the Sanskrit word EKAM, gives the great message of unity in the oneness of God?

Now, a question may arise. Isn't it enough to love God and your fellow man? What is the significance of this special emphasis on the unity of the Divinity? How does it relate to our spiritual experience? We find the answer in Swami's teachings. Baba told us in His Gita discourses that much more important than our loving God is that God loves us. And that happens when we see God everywhere and love everyone as the One Self, knowing no other. That is the non-dual Vedanta which is Swami's highest teaching and possibly the most important aspect of His mission as Yuga Avatar. By embracing it and putting it into practice we develop the pure, unwavering devotion that He appreciates, which is also the highest wisdom. Once the ego is completely eradicated and only the pure self remains, then we don't need any injunction that commands us to love, because love Will prevail as our own natural state. From then on there is no other; all we see everywhere is the one God, whom we discover to be our true inner self, the One Atmic Self, which is always pure love and boundless delight.

### **Message of unity**

Jesus, the realised spiritual master steeped in Vedanta, taught this message of unity. When he said, 'I AM the bread of life,' 'I AM the light of the world,' it was the universal 'I AM' which he spoke of. Over the centuries this message has become obscured, but now, two thousand years later, its light blazes forth again in the unity teachings of Bhagavan Baba.



### **The shmaa**

Here is the essence of the SHMAA as given by Moses to the Israelites in the Sinai desert: SHMAA YISROEL ADAUNOI ELAUHENU ADAUNOI ECHOD... Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, The Lord is One. Therefore, love your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart. Repeat them to your children. Say them at your lying down and at your rising up, when you are at rest in your house and when you are walking abroad.

### **The Warning Again**

We have received enquiries from overseas devotees as to whether they can make donations to organisations in India carrying Sri Sathya Sai Baba's name and claiming to run orphanages at Srirangapatnam (in Karnataka) or educational institutions at Visakhapatnam, (in Andhra Pradesh).

Recognised Sathya Sai Service Organisations are not permitted to solicit donations from any source.

Overseas devotees are hereby cautioned against making contributions to any institution seeking donations as a Sathya Sai Organisation.

**The editor**

### **Transcending the Gunas**

*Seeking liberation, if man worships  
A myriad deities, he will not get  
Freedom from affliction.  
If he destroys the ego in him  
He has no need to seek liberation  
He will be Liberation itself!*

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

The phenomenal universe that we perceive is the product of the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). It is sustained by the three gunas. The gunas, again, account for its dissolution. The gunas are the life-breath of the Cosmos. They are responsible for all that happens in the Cosmos.

can man transcend the three gunas. For this purpose, man has to acquire three qualities: Anasakti (desirelessness), Virakti (detachment) and Upeksha (unconcerned about the future).

"Anasakti" is absence of all desires except the desire for God. All other acquisitions are to be given up and one should rely only on the Divine. "Virakti" does not mean renunciation of hearth and home and betaking one-self to the forest for penance. Giving up of bad thoughts and feelings is true renunciation (Thyaga) and leads to Yoga. You may enjoy worldly things, but there should be no sense of possessiveness (of "mine" and "thine").

"Upeksha" is the absence of concern for the future. It is freedom from expectations and hopes.

The desire for worldly objects can plunge one in endless misery. Desires are like a green pumpkin which will sink in water. A desireless man will be like a dried pumpkin which will float on water. He will be able to overcome the pulls of the mundane world and even aspire for a Godly life. He may not be keen about liberation (Mukti) but he will not give up devotion. God looks after the welfare of such a person here and in the hereafter (Yogakshemam) because being desireless and detached, his thoughts are centred on God. To secure the Grace of the Divine in this way is itself a kind of yoga. To preserve that grace is to ensure one's well-being (Kshemam). This is known in Vedantic parlance as "Prapta-Apraptamulu" (securing what is not easily attainable). It can be got only through human efforts. Some spiritual exercises are necessary, for this purpose.

### **The three gunas**

As the universe is constituted by the three gunas (Tamas, Rajas and Satwa) and is permeated by them, the first stage in spiritual sadhana is to put an end to the Tamasic quality. The Tamoguna is characterised by "Murkhatwam" (foolish obstinacy). A Tamasic person lacks intelligence and is inclined to indulge in meaningless questioning and argumentation. It is essential to get rid of such tendencies. Every issue should be deeply studied and the conclusions should be digested. Only then will the experience be rewarding. Endless verbal debates over every trivial matter should be avoided. Such controversies result only in provoking bitterness instead of harmony. They do not serve to reveal the truth. The Tamasic person is incapable of perceiving the truth and cannot realise the Divine. He will be caught up in the endless cycle of birth and death.

The person with Rajoguna is one who is excessively happy when he gets what he desires. His ego gets inflated thereby. When his desires are not fulfilled, he develops hatred. Thus, for the Rajasic person, whether the desires are fulfilled or not, the effects are not good. He is consumed by anger and bitterness. Rajasic qualities make a person hot-blooded and hot-tempered.

The third quality is Satwa. Even this 'results in a form of bondage. It becomes a redeeming quality when all pure and meritorious actions are done as an offering to the Divine.

symbolises darkness and ignorance. The Rajoguna, which rouses anger and hatred in a person, excites his blood and turns his eyes red, is represented by the red colour. The Satwaguna, which is characterised by purity and dedication, is represented by the white colour.

### **Gunas and actions**

Everyone in the world is a creature of one or other of these three gunas. One's actions are based on these gunas. The categorisation of men under different types (Varnas) in the Gita has been made on the basis of their qualities and actions ("Gunakarma vibhaagasah"). At birth every person is ignorant. When he dies he should die as a Jnani (a man who has perceived the Truth). Likewise, everyone is a Shudra at birth. This means he is an ignorant person (Ajnani). But when he dies he should die as a Brahmin (a Jnani, who has realised Brahman). It is on this basis that the four Varnas (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) had come into existence. Those with predominantly Tamasic qualities comprise one group. Those who are prone to excitement and anger form another category. And those who are inclined to renounce everything and who are pure in thought, word and deed, form a third group. The ignorant and dull-witted were described as Shudras. The excitable, the courageous and the high-spirited were described as Kshatriyas. Those who were devoted to God and led a pure and sanctified life were described as Brahmins. These categories were associated with qualities and actions.

### **No high or low**

Straying from the basic truth, the social system took a wrong turn. The result is that today society is driven by innumerable divisions and conflicts. Actually, among the groups (Varnas), one cannot be called high and another low. For instance, Sage Vyasa classified the single corpus of the Vedas into four different collections. Among the four can anyone be ranked higher than another? All have equal status and authority, are equally sacred and preach the same path of righteousness. Likewise, when men are classified according to their qualities and vocations, one category cannot be regarded as superior to another. No one is competent to determine such ranking. It is through narrow-minded interpretations that such distinctions and divisions have been made to the detriment of social harmony and progress.

### **Birth not the basis**

The right to interpret the Shastras is given to "Brahmins". But "Brahmins" have been defined as those who have made a thorough study of the Shastras, who have no self-interest and who live up to Shastraic injunctions. Anyone may acquire these qualifications. They are not confined to any caste on the basis of birth. Only qualities and actions are the determining factors and not birth.

A Kshatriya is one who is prepared to lay down his life for his country. The nation's safety should mean more for him than the protection of his body. This attitude of sacrifice may be displayed by anyone and he should be regarded as a Kshatriya.

All those engaged in agriculture have been described as Shudras. Everyone needs food. If food is not grown by the so-called Shudras, the world will perish.

The entire purpose of classifying people according to their qualifications and functions is to ensure that persons in each category carry on their duties with dedication. It is the failure to maintain the purity and sacredness of the system as envisaged by the Shastras that has resulted in indefensible divisions and social chaos.

### **Awareness of oneness**

All are children of God. He is the sole Lord of mankind. People may seem to differ in their names and forms and in their beliefs and practices. But the parent is One alone. Recognition of this basic truth of oneness is Brahmajnana (Knowledge of the Absolute). This Knowledge is not gained by studying the scriptures and holding metaphysical discussions. What has to be recognised is the truth that every being in the universe is an embodiment of the Supreme. Awareness of the unity that subsumes the diversity is the highest Knowledge. Mere bookish lore is of no avail. Practical living is what matters. Expounding a philosophy is easy. Living up to it is difficult. He alone is a true Siddhanti (preceptor) who practises what he professes. Time is wasted on metaphysical dialectics. We need today men who practise what they have learnt. Such persons should explain to the common people the truth about righteous living and transform them into good and honest men.

### **"Swadharma"**

There is a statement in the Gita that it is best for a person to adhere to his "Swadharma" and that following "Para Dharma" is fraught with danger. What is "Swadharma"? "Swa" refers to the Atma. "Swadharma" means "Atma Dharma" (the Dharma of the Spirit). Adherence to the Law of the Spirit is beneficial. It will protect one from any kind of danger. It will ensure peace.

What is "Para Dharma"? "Para" means that which is responsible for good and bad actions, namely, the body. "Para Dharma" means all actions based on the body-consciousness. All such actions have consequences which have to be gone through in successive lives. Men are caught up in this perpetual cycle of birth, death and rebirth. They do not know what is in store for them at any moment or place. This is the perilous state of man.

The Gita reference to "Swadharma" is ordinarily interpreted as meaning one's own dharma or duties attaching to the caste or community in which one is born. With regard to Arjuna, for instance, it is considered that he was a Kshatriya and should adhere to the Kshatriya dharma. This view is not correct. The Gita does not speak about the dharma of Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Shudras. It only affirms that these categories are based on qualities and actions (Guna and Karma). Therefore, if a person has the Tamoguna and indulges in actions of a Tamasic nature, he must be regarded as a Shudra, even if he is a Brahmin by birth. One who devotes his entire time to the contemplation of God and does sacred acts is a Brahmin, regardless of the caste in which he may be born. "Brahmin" is one who seeks God.

Obsessed with distinctions of caste, community and creed and indulging in futile and meaningless controversies, people should not degrade humanity. All are brothers and sisters. It is the basic truth that should be propagated in our society today so that spiritual values may grow.

## **Dharma is eternal**

Bharatiya culture is not the product of ephemeral efforts. Bharatiya Dharma is the embodiment of unchanging and eternal truth, unaffected by time, place or circumstance. Without realising this supreme truth, people are polluting their minds with conflicts of caste and creed. All religions have taught what is good and everyone should lead a righteous life based on this knowledge. If the minds are pure, how can any religion be bad? Let every Bharatiya take heed of this fact. Every effort should be made to purify the mind.

All religions are different paths, leading to one and the same destination. All devotees should experience this truth and live up to it in their daily lives, setting an example to the rest of the world. Their devotion should not be artificial. They should adhere to the right path, lead righteous lives and thereby experience enduring bliss. Only then will their sadhana be fruitful.

What use is there in meditation in which one counts the beads of the rosary while his thoughts are centred on some petty thing? Listen to the words of the wise, purify your thoughts and concentrate your mind on God. God can be installed only in a pure heart. The aim of all sadhana should be to purify the heart. All the available time and opportunities should be utilised for this purpose. It should not be wasted in any way.

You have listened to this discourse for two hours. Only if you put into practice at least one or two of the things you have heard will the time you have spent here been worthwhile. First of all, banish from your minds differences based on caste and religion. Deepen your faith in God. Nourish the spirit of desirelessness (anaasakti). Cultivate detachment (virakti) and experience bliss. These are the means to transcend the three gunas.

The Lord, who is the embodiment of Love, can be experienced only through love. As He is the incarnation of Truth and Righteousness, He can be realised only through Truth and Righteousness (Sathya and Dharma). Always bearing in mind the supreme importance of Sathya, Dharma and Prema, you should sanctify your lives by rendering dedicated and disinterested service.

The revered sadhus present here have expounded to you profound truths in simple and easily intelligible language, with appropriate illustrations from real life. Their exposition and your listening would have served a useful purpose only if you try to practise at least some of their teachings. You have had a golden opportunity to listen to them. You must make good use of it by directing your lives on the right path.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan "*Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai!*"

—*Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 8-1-1988*

I stood at the summit of Mt. Ego  
And turned my gaze down-hill.  
And viewed the vast expanse of ocean blue,  
The very Embodiment of Love and Mercy,  
Boundless, placid and majestic.

Gradually the vision changed  
Pinkish blue it was; my eyes glued  
To the very personification of Immensity  
Revealed two twinkling little eyes  
Beckoning as though to be one with them.

My hair stood on end,  
For, the heart had flowed down  
To merge in that Immense Being.  
But the mind sent a fearful thrill  
At the prospect of a fearsome fall  
To the abyss of the depthless ocean.

Stretched across the endless expanse  
Were mountains likened to the one I stood  
on  
And I espied many who stood on them  
Perhaps with feelings same as mine,  
Now desiring to plunge in;  
Now hesitating in fear.

The heart wrestled with the mind  
The mind mindful of its /imitations;  
The heart yearning upto the limitless.  
Betwixt these wrestles and tussles,  
As if solving the puzzle,  
The memory of a dialogue clicked in me;  
A dialogue between the Master and the  
Disciple.

"Think yourself to be a bee," said He unto  
him,

"Sitting on the rim of a vessel  
With honey filled to the brim.  
What method will you adopt

To taste the tasty honey?"  
Answered Narendra saying:  
"Cautiously shall I partake of the juicy  
liquid  
Lest I slip unawares into the thick jelly."  
"Nay, " said the Master,  
"Would you not be immersed in sweetness,  
Sacrificing the raiment of your soul,  
And attain to your True Nature?"

That sent through me  
Currents of joy, raptures of ecstasy.  
And then I was fast nearing  
The waters of Love...  
But no...  
The waters of Love were rising!  
For, the mountain had dwindled in height

Then flashed in me the Word of Sai:  
"TAKE ONE STEP TOWARDS ME;  
I SHALL TAKE A HUNDRED  
TOWARDS YOU."

—*K. Ramesh Kumar*

*More effulgent than the Sun,  
Whiter and purer than snow  
Subtler than ether in space,  
The Paramatma dwells in all,  
Permeating the entire Cosmos,  
Shining in every atom.*

*You are in that Brahman  
That Brahman is in you  
You are that Brahman  
And Brahman is you  
What greater truth  
Can I convey to you?*

The vast Cosmos, with its myriad animate and inanimate objects, having countless names and forms, is a manifestation of Brahman. It has emanated from the Brahman, is sustained by it and dissolves in it. When the unmanifest Brahman manifests itself, it is cognisable as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Sat indicates that it is self-existing with no other basis than itself. Chit indicates the awareness of its self-existence as a self-illuminating Consciousness. Ananda (Bliss) is the expression of that awareness. What is the reason for the Brahman manifesting itself? It is for making known its infinite potencies by Self-evolution.

### **Kosas and purushas**

Man is not a mere combination of the physical, the mental and the intellectual. He is enveloped in five sheaths the Annamaya Kosa (gross body), the Pranamaya Kosa (the vital sheath), the Manomaya (Mental sheath), Vijnanamaya (Intelligence) and Anandamaya (the sheath of Bliss). The Upanishads have pointed out the importance, the sacredness and the divine characteristics of these Kosas (sheaths).

The physical form that is sustained by the food that we consume is the gross body. Thereafter we have the Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosas (subtle bodies) which together form the Lingaswarupa—the "Within Body" or 'Sense Body'. The third form is the Anandamaya Kosa, the subtle body which has "knowledge of the Real Self".

There is an entity which keeps under control the three subtle bodies—Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosas. This is the Antaratma—the Indwelling Spirit. This Antaratma is also known as Chaitanya Purusha. The seat of this Chaitanya Purusha is a "cave in the heart" (Hridaya Guhyam). The "heart" referred to here is not the physical heart in the human body, but the spiritual heart—which is all-pervasive, all-knowing and boundless. The scriptures have called it "Atma" (the Soul). The Isavasyopanishad has described the many forms of this Consciousness and the Chaitanya Purusha (the Indwelling Spirit).

### **Levels of consciousness**

The Spirit (Atma) when it is associated with the physical body is called Annamaya Purusha. This is the state of ordinary consciousness. When the spiritual consciousness is associated with the Vital Consciousness (the Pranamaya Kosa), the Atma is known as Pranaswarupa (Life Consciousness). When the Atma is associated with the mental consciousness, it is known as Manopurusha. The fourth consciousness transcends the human senses. It is called "Atheetha Manasatwam" Transcendental Consciousness. The Vedas and Upanishads have described this state as "Brihat" and "Ritam". It transcends human limitations and comes close to divinity. It is called Super Mind. The Atma in this state is called Vijnanapurusha. Above this state is the Anandamaya Purusha-the enjoyer of Bliss. It is a state of Super-Consciousness, which expands in due course to merge in the Universal Consciousness.

This all-pervading Universal Consciousness has been called "Chit-Tapas". It is the highest Consciousness which encompasses all other levels of consciousness and is the basis for all of them. That is the "Suddha-Satwa", the "All-effective Will", "The Super-Divine life". This is the "Sai-tattwa" (the Sai Principle).

The Suddha Satwa, which constitutes: the Sai Principle is omnipotent. There is nothing that is beyond its power. It is the embodiment of all powers. It should be everyone's aim to strive to recognise this Supreme Principle.

### **Awareness of divinity**

There are some clearly defined methods for achieving this aim. Man's vision, which is now turned outward towards the phenomenal universe, should be turned inwards towards the Indwelling Spirit. One should manifest the divine consciousness inherent in him. He should submit himself to that Consciousness as a Spiritual discipline. This is called "Conscious Realisation of the Inner Divine."

The first task is to develop awareness of the Divinity within. The next stage is the realisation of the truth that the divinity that is within ones self is equally present in all others. One must recognise that the veil or barrier that appears to separate him from others is born of delusion and every effort should be made to remove it. Only then will it be possible to experience the oneness of all living things. "Aham eva idam Sarvam" says the Shruti. "I am indeed all this." The realisation dawns: "All this is contained in me." And then there is the consciousness, "I am Divine. The Divine is me. I am Brahman. Brahman is myself. There is no distinction between Brahman and me." "Eko devah sarvabhootheshu gudhah." "The One God is present in subtle form in all beings." That is the all-pervading Universal Consciousness which is present in diverse forms. Recognition of this truth is "Realisation of the Cosmic Divine."

### **Six mental states**

After attaining this stage, there is a third stage, which has been characterised as the "Aarohana-Avarohana" stage the "Ascent-and-Descent" stage. Man has six different kinds of



Illuminated Mind; 5) The Intuitive Mind; 6) The Over-mind.

The starting base for the six levels of mind is the ordinary mind. At the summit level is the Over-Mind. In the mental processes, what goes on is an ascent from the ordinary mind to Over-Mind as well as a descent from the Over-Mind to the lowest level. It is when the ascending process and the descending process meet that there is fullness in the human being.

There is no difference between one kind of consciousness and another. All consciousness is alike because it is a manifestation of Brahman (the Absolute). It is Brahman that has manifested itself as the Cosmos.

The doctrine of evolution is being discussed widely and widely accepted. But one should try to understand how evolution takes place in Nature. Evolution in Nature is really the gradual unfoldment of the inherent powers of Nature.

### **The evolutionary process**

For instance, life has evolved from matter and mind has evolved from life. What is meant by matter? Matter is that which is encased in life. Consider the example of paddy. As long as the rice grain is covered by husk it is called paddy. When the husk is removed it becomes rice. Paddy has the power to germinate as long as the husk remains. Likewise, the vital principle is contained in matter. It may thus be seen that life came from matter. Likewise, the mind evolved from life. Today men are prepared to recognise that mind evolved from life and life from matter. But they are not ready to go beyond this stage in human evolution. Human evolution cannot be complete unless it goes beyond the mind.

The next step in human evolution is the Super-Mind. But man has to go forward even from the Supra-mental to the ultimate stage of Sat-Chit-Ananda to realise his final destiny. The day when Man is able to experience the divine state of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) is really the holy day of "Siva-ratri". Till then, he is in perpetual darkness. Until a fruit ripens in a tree, its juice is not sweet. When the fruit is fully ripe, it drops from the tree. Attachment to the tree is gone. Likewise when a man achieves spiritual maturity he acquires automatically "Vairagya" (detachment). Man has to endeavour to reach this level of maturity by spiritual practices for transforming his consciousness. In the evolution of Consciousness several changes take place.

### **Quest for the unknown**

Today everyone knows about electrical energy and atomic power. There was a time when these were not known, but that did not mean they did not exist. To deny the existence of something merely because its existence has not been proved so far is a mark of foolishness. What was unknown yesterday becomes common knowledge today. What appears non-existent today may become a reality in the future. No one has the right to say that what is not known cannot exist. There must be a continuous quest to discover the unknown.

to remain ignorant. The gross body is sustained by food and is limited by its material basis. But there is a subtle body which transcends the physical. This is called the Linga-deha. After understanding the nature of this subtle body, men should try to proceed further to know the nature of the Causal body (which is subtler than the Linga-deha), which is the experiencer of Ananda (divine bliss). Everything has its origin in Bliss (Ananda) and is dependent on Bliss. Bliss is present in a subtle form in every object in creation.

### **The urge to change**

Of what avail is the study of the Upanishads or the Gita, if there is no transformation in our thoughts or way of life? There must be the urge to change and progress towards a higher state of consciousness. It is only when we reach the supra-mental stage that we can grasp to some extent the relationship between the phenomenal Universe and the Divine. In reality we are all embodiments of "Sat-Chit- Ananda" Your real "I" exists in all the stages of waking, dream and deep sleep. But in the dream and deep sleep states you are not conscious of your body. The entity that exists in all the three states undergoes no change. You must try to understand the nature of this "I".

You must examine where all your Sadhanas are leading you. You have to proceed from the purely mental stage to the highest stage of "Over-Mind" and experience oneness with the Universal Consciousness. You may regard this as extremely difficult. But if you have dedication and perseverance, it will be quite easy. There is nothing in the world easier than the spiritual path. But when there is no earnestness, it appears difficult. That is why the Gita has declared: "Shradhavan labhathe Jnanam" (The earnest aspirant acquires the Supreme Wisdom). If you are deeply interested in anything, you will accomplish it.

### **The cosmic consciousness**

Hence, you should constantly remind yourself: "I am the embodiment of Divine Consciousness. Sat-Chit-Ananda constitutes my form." Man today has forgotten his true nature and looks upon the world entirely through the senses, the mind and the intellect. But behind all these organs there is the Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is fundamental. It is because of this Atmic Bliss principle in him, that man is ever seeking bliss. The whole Cosmos has emanated from the Parabrahmam—the Omni-Will. It appears as a material object. But from the material, we should proceed to the spiritual—the Universal Consciousness.

Take, for instance, an egg. At first it appears as an inanimate object. Through incubation, life develops in it. Similarly in all the objects you perceive, consciousness (*Chaitanyam*) is immanent. We have to recognise the omnipresence of this consciousness.

There is the "Higher Mind" in man. It is present to enable man to transcend the physical and mental and reach for the Divine. Ordinary life consists of Matter + Mind. But Matter + Being is beyond the mind. It leads to the Super-Mind.

attachments. Above all, it encourages the inflation of the Ego (Ahamkara). Puffed up by his ego, man loses all powers of discrimination and forgets what is evanescent and what is permanent. He makes himself an object of derision. It is only when the ego is deflated and eliminated that man can gradually realise his spiritual essence. Spirituality cannot be understood as long as the ego is dominant. And of what use are spiritual studies and discourses to one who has no understanding?

### **The world is real**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!* You are engaged in various spiritual exercises. Some call this world illusory and ephemeral. It is described as "Maya" or "Mithya"—as illusion or delusion. This is entirely wrong. I am Real (SATHYAM). You are Real. The whole universe is Real. Consciousness is immanent in everything. Everything is a manifestation of Brahman. When we recognise this unity that underlies everything we shall be able to know the nature of Divinity.

To go about describing the world as unreal, illusory and impermanent will amount to practising a deception on the people and not proclaiming the truth. If the world is unreal, even the teaching that it is unreal is equally unreal and has no meaning. No. That is not so. This Cosmos is Real. It is not a question of seeing truth within the unreal or the unreal in the truth. It is recognition of the Real in the Real ("Sathyamuloni Sathyamu"). It is only when this basic truth is recognised that we shall be competent to grasp the nature of our inherent Reality.

The Cosmos is Real. The forms in it may change. Bodies may change. It is the nature of bodies to undergo change. Change is the characteristic of the evolutionary process. But what should be recognised is that at the core of all things is a fundamental Reality. This is the triple Principle: Asti, Bhaati, Priyam (Existing, Shining and Pleasing) or Sat-Chit-Ananda or Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness and Beauty).

### **Reality and change**

When we recognise that the body, which is the basis of life, is subject to change, how can the phenomenal world be described as a delusion just because it is also subject to change? The universe has come from the Brahman, the Universal Consciousness. The multiplicity of forms are like the different kinds of figures made from sugar to attract children. The forms are different, but the basic consciousness is one. Just as the doll made from sugar is dissolved in the mouth, the external form of the body should dissolve in the experience of Atmic bliss. The source of life is Brahman. Change and evolution are natural to it. But the presence of the unchanging Divinity should be experienced within the changing body.

In the evolutionary process, the Brahmic Principle existing in matter evolved to life. The mind evolved by a leap from consciousness in life. The mind should not stop there. It should evolve towards consciousness of the Divine and ultimately merge in the Universal Consciousness—the Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Every human being should strive to progress towards the ultimate state of "Over-Mind" consciousness—the state which has been described by the seers as Vijnanamaya-Kosa (the Super-Intellectual-Mind). Modern science (Vijnana) is concerned with analysing physical objects. But the Vijnanamaya-Kosa (the Super-intellectual Mind) is concerned with exploring the Supreme Reality- the Omnipresent Consciousness. This alone is true scientific enquiry. It is from the Vijnanamaya-Kosa that one proceeds to the Anandamaya-Kosa—the state of Super-consciousness, of total Bliss.

It may appear difficult to attain this state. But without making the necessary effort, it should not be treated as beyond one's capacity. Listen to my words. I shall show you the way. If merely you listen, but do not practise what I say, you will not reach the goal.

It is a natural process. In a bud, there is very little fragrance. When it grows and blossoms, it acquires fine fragrance. Likewise, when the human consciousness expands, it finds fullness in the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Starting with the ordinary mind, the Consciousness rises to the Super-Mind level. Then it moves up to the state of the Higher Mind. The next higher stage is that of the Illuminated Mind. Through all these stages, the continuing entity remains the same, as in the bodily changes from infancy to old age. That is the Universal Consciousness, which is present in everyone- the One in the Many. That Universal Consciousness is the Truth (Sathyam). It is Jnanam (the Supreme Wisdom). It is Anantam (Infinite).

Turn your minds towards the Divine. Repetition of the names of the Lord has been prescribed as a spiritual discipline to turn your mind away from the things of the world. If you devote the whole of this night to thoughts about the Lord, your minds will be transformed, even if you are not able to reach the highest state of "Over-Mind". Ever bearing in mind the triple characteristics of the Divine—Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahma—strive to achieve the supreme goal of Man.

**—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Sivaratri Day 6-2-1988**

### ***Seva Dal Journal***

"Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal", the quarterly journal devoted to reports of Seva activities of Sathya Sai Organisations all over the world, entered the fourth year of its existence in January 1988. The New Year Number carries an interesting article on the service to the handicapped rendered by two Sai devotees—the O'brien twins—in Australia by training them for suitable occupations so that they may be self-reliant. The journal is amply illustrated. The Editorial Board invites articles and reports from Sathya Sai Organisations on different aspects of the service activities undertaken by them. The journal is edited and published by N. Ramani, "Sundaram", 7, Pughs Road, Madras-28 (600 028). The annual subscription for the journal is Rs. 15.

## Earn God's Love

*From the Sat has emerged all there is  
The Sat permeates the whole of creation  
Nothing exists without the power of Sat  
Behold the glory of this eternal Sat.*

*Tossed about on the bitter ocean of mundane existence,  
Going hither and thither without rudder or compass  
if only you steady your mind for a moment  
The Lord of Sri will send you, Oh Man, His rescue boat.*

*Dear Students!*

The love of God is the foremost reward to be attained in human life. It is more precious than all the wealth in the world. All wealth and position are obtained by the love and grace of the Divine.

The value of the love of God (Bhagvata-prema) can be realised only if the meaning of the term "Bhagavan" is rightly understood. "Brahmam", "Para-Brahmam", "Shabda" are among the terms used as appellations of "Bhagavan". The term "Bhagavan" is the sweetest of them all.

Ghee is the end-product got from milk. Milk is converted into curds. By churning curds, we get butter. Clarifying butter we get ghee. Ghee cannot be changed to anything else. It has to be consumed. Likewise there can be changes in the use of terms like "Brahmam", "Para-Brahmam", "Atma" and "Paramatma", but after the use of the term "Bhagavan", there can be no further change. Even the term "Atma" is susceptible to variations such as "Deha-atma" (the Atma that dwells in the body), the "Jiva-atma" (the Atma that is associated with life), Pratyaga-atma and Paramatma (the Over-Soul). But the term "Bhagavan" does not lend itself to any such variations. It expresses the Supreme Truth.

### "Bhagavan"

"Bhagah" means the One who is the repository of all Divine attributes and is uniquely worthy of adoration. "Ga" refers to One who has all the excellences and who creates, sustains and reabsorbs everything.

The letter "Bha" has two meanings: "Sambharta" and "Bharta". "Sambharta" means one who is competent to make Nature the instrument of the creative process. Because He is also competent to sustain what is created, He is called "Bharta." "Bha" has also other meanings like Santhi (Peace), light, effulgence, and illumination. "Ga" means all-pervasive. "Vaan" (or "Vanthudu" in Telugu) means "One who is capable". Hence the term Bhagavan means the One who is capable of lighting the Divine effulgence, the illumination of wisdom, the Eternal Inner

Omnipotent Lord? There is nothing on earth or beyond it which is equal to Divine love. To make all endeavours to earn that love is the whole purpose and meaning of human existence.

### **Mental peace**

To lead a happy life, man needs peace of mind. The mind is like the turbulent Ganga. It has to be restrained by the use of brakes, as in a fast-moving vehicle. "Dhyana" (or meditation) is the brake devised for the control of the mind. "Dhyana" means one-pointed concentration. All the diseases which afflict man are the result of agitations in the mind. The enormous growth of disease in the world today is due to the loss of peace of mind. To get rid of illness and to lead a calm, healthy life, man has to cultivate mental peace.

Students today are a prey to one or other illness. Investigations conducted during the past three years revealed that 85% of students in Calcutta University, 90% of students in Madras University and 82% of students in Bombay University were suffering from illness. If students, who ought to be sturdy, strong and capable of prodigious physical exertions at this age, are decrepit weaklings, what is their future?

The root cause of this ill-health among students is their food and recreational habits. All kinds of food are consumed indiscriminately. It is better to starve than eat unwholesome food. As regards recreation, the practices of most people are not worth scrutiny. In both respects, men are indulging in such unhealthy practices that they are sick in body and mind. They are such nervous wrecks that they have no power of memory or concentration. To be healthy mentally and physically and experience the joy of living, they have to develop physical fitness.

Man's mind has three kinds of capabilities. One is a wandering mind (Anekaagrata). Another is vacancy, emptiness ("shoonyata"). The third is single-pointed concentration. What is "Shoonyata"? It is the state in which the mind goes to sleep while something edifying is being said. The mind is unresponsive to what is good and beneficial. Such a state of mind is called Tamasic. It is the blindness of ignorance. The wandering mind (Anekaagrata) is an equally undesirable mental state. It also degrades man.

### **Concentration of mind**

Then there is one-pointed concentration of mind. This is what everyone needs most today. To develop powers of concentration sports and games are very essential. They serve to promote physical fitness and mental health. Games and sports are to be practised mainly for keeping the body in good trim. Unfortunately, today the spirit of commercialism is rampant even in the fields of sports and entertainment. When the idea of making money is predominant, concern for health recedes to the background. Sports and the fine arts have become commercial arts and are not practised for the sake of health or enjoyment. "Art" has come from "heart", but today the heart has been divorced from the arts. The spiritual basis of the latter has been ignored. The scriptures proclaimed: "Na ayam Atma balaheenena labhyah" ("The Atma cannot be realised by a weakling"). One who is spiritually weak is weak in everything. It must also be remembered that in practising athletics or games or acquiring proficiency in music or other arts, the objective

truth has been forgotten that the country is in poor shape.

What the students need today are three things: The spirit of sacrifice; devotion to God; love of the Motherland. Because people are filled with pride, selfishness and self-interest, they are ceasing to be human. It is supremely important that the qualities of devotion to God, patriotism and self-sacrifice should be developed among the people. For this the first requisite is the elimination of the idea of "my" and "mine". The readiness to sacrifice one's pleasure and comforts for the sake of the nation should be promoted among students. When there are many high-minded, spiritually-oriented students, the nation will achieve peace and security.

Students should be selfless and humble. Many of them are selling their souls for a mess of pottage. Bharat has always stood for the pursuit of Dharma and other Purusharthas and has condemned injustice, unrighteousness and evil in any form. Love of the nation should express itself in dedicated work for the country. If everyone does his duty, the nation will progress. When everyone has a lamp in front of his house, the entire street will be lighted.

Education should be for acquiring knowledge and for facing the challenges of life, not merely for getting a job. Students should not become servile seekers of posts in Government. They should have faith in God and bow their heads only to the Divine. They must be prepared always to make any sacrifice for God and country. Demoniatic forces have gained strength because the people have lost their faith in the power of God and Dharma. Students should develop self-reliance and self-confidence.

Students should bear in mind one vital obligation: they should not give any room for caste and community loyalties. They have to adhere to basic qualities such as truth, righteousness, forbearance, self-sacrifice, which are common to all people without regard to nationality, creed or language. They must cultivate abroad outlook, based on the fact that the Divine is present in everyone. There is nothing which they cannot accomplish if they have faith in God and earn God's grace.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Institute Auditorium on 14-1-1988,  
after the distribution of prizes and certificates to winners in the Sports Festival*

## **Learning from Bhagavan**

Bhagavan Baba's grace and love flows to us continually wherever we may be and whenever we need it. Silently watching ourselves as our lives unfold after we have become fully conscious of this Avatar of the age, He takes root in our consciousness, guarding us and guiding us. Particularly when we are in His immediate presence in Puttaparthi can we become keenly aware of His omnipotence as He, in His mysterious ways, seems to alter the laws of time, space and

in this life) our sadhana and spiritual growth.

Much of His personal instruction to us comes in the form of conferring experiences to synthesize the knowledge that He gives us. In other words, His teachings are not merely in the form of mere words in a discourse or on the printed page. He gives us the experiences in our lives which directly relate to His teachings to enable us to truly learn.

In order to receive His teachings we must prepare ourselves via a process of purification. If we are wrapped up in our worldly preoccupations, to gratify our senses and ego desires, or immersed in fears, or filled with anger, our consciousness is diverted away from the knowledge and experience He is conferring on us. So we must embark upon this purification process to be prepared and ready to receive from Him what He has come to give us.

As we become purified and are able to receive His teachings we can become witnesses to the miracle of the personal experiences that He confers on us to underscore His teachings and to give us personal guidance uniquely suited to our own individual temperament and needs. In this process any part of creation may serve as His instrument to teach us. As we live our life watching it unfold, experiences and circumstances seem to be designed by His Divine Hand to teach us what we must be taught. Each individual is unique. For some these learning experiences may be keenly felt at Prasanthi Nilayam because that Holy ground seems to be a unique theatre where we play out a part of our earthly roles under His directorship and tutelage.

This is not to say that this process does not occur elsewhere. Of course it does. But it may be that in Puttaparthi the sensory impact of the surroundings may make us more acutely aware of the process.

History has not told us of any spiritual teacher that has taught so many people over so long a time throughout the entire world as our Beloved Bhagavan.

We must reflect on this unique blessing we have been given and not waste time so that we may learn from Him what mankind must be taught. We must pray to Him that He gives us the strength, courage and ability to know, understand and put into practice in our daily lives His Divine teachings.

—X

## **Life's Pilgrimage**

—*Dr. A. Adivi Reddy*

Life, according to Bhagavan Baba, is a pilgrimage from "I" to "We". In other words, it is a spiritual journey from separateness to togetherness, from the "Vyashti" (particular) to the 'Samashti' (universal), from "Bheda" (differentiation) to "Abheda" (non-differentiation), from



lovelessness to selflessness or universal love, from the transient finite self to the real infinite Self, from "Mrutyu" (mortality) to "Amruta" (immortality), from "Viyoga" (separation from God) to "Yoga" (union with God), from the status of "Jivatma" (individual soul) to that of "Paramatma" (Supreme Soul). If this is so, how well are we equipped for this journey? We find the answer to this question in the Katha Upanishad which gives the example of a chariot to explain this pilgrimage. According to it, the Jivatma undertakes the pilgrimage to the Paramatma in the chariot of the body, with the Buddhi (intellect) as the charioteer, the mind as the reins and the senses as horses. Baba uses a more modern example-the motor car-to drive home the message of the Upanishad. The human body is the -vehicle, the intellect is the driver, the mind is the braking system and the senses are the wheels.

### **"Shreyas" and "preyas"**

The purpose of this example is to show that if the senses are under the control of mind, the mind under the control of the intellect, and the intellect under the control of the Jiva, the latter will be able to complete his pilgrimage quickly and safely. In the scriptures this is called "Nivritti Marga" (or the path of internal sadhana). It is also known as the path of "Shreyas" (what is beneficent).

In contrast to this, if the chain of commands and controls operates in reverse, with the senses dominating the mind, the Jiva would be involved in accidents and departures from the right path, resulting in hold-ups and delays in the completion of the pilgrimage. This is designated as the "Pravritti Marga" (the pursuit of the external). The scriptures have termed this as the path of "Preyas" (the apparently pleasant).

One of the oft-repeated warnings of Bhagavan to devotees is: "Start early, drive slowly and reach safely." Many of us have the wrong notion that we can or should start the spiritual journey only in our old age. But Bhagavan has insisted that if people are to be placed well and truly on the spiritual path, you must "catch 'em young." The truth of this is exemplified in the global Bal Vikas movement initiated by Bhagavan and the way Swami teaches students in His educational institutions. Children are introduced to a life of the spirit from a very early age. They are inspired by the message of the Vedic hymns and the slokas in the Gita. It is always a thrilling experience to watch the young children of Bhagavan's Primary School at Prasanthi Nilayam reciting stanzas from the Upanishads and the Gita.

The caution regarding driving "slowly and safely" is as relevant to spiritual travel as it is to travel by road or rail. Instances are not wanting of people landing themselves in the lunatic asylum instead of safely reaching the spiritual goal, because of their resorting to shortcuts or indulging in austerities beyond their capacity, in their exuberant anxiety to achieve results too quickly.

"Stop and proceed" is a common traffic sign at many a cross-roads in the spiritual path, and Swami advises us that before proceeding further at such crossings, we should ask ourselves, "Where am I now?" "Whither am I bound?" "Which way should I take?" etc. "Don't follow

suggestions to thorough scrutiny by the intellect and the heart before you proceed further, thereby avoiding pitfalls in the spiritual path ahead."

"Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure," says the ubiquitous slogan of the Indian Railways. Baba tells us that if we want to have a comfortable spiritual journey, we must learn to travel light, by jettisoning the unwanted luggage prompted by excessive desires. "Properties are not proper-ties," quips Swami. Hence His emphasis on Tyaga (renunciation) as the essential element in spiritual Sadhana. He recommends moderation in everything-moderation in food, in speech, in personal possessions. He disapproves wastage of any kind-of food, money time and energy.

"Come to Me now and then for recharging your battery," Swami urges on us, because nothing can boost the energy and enthusiasm of a spiritual aspirant as much as contact with Bhagavan and the company of His devotees.

Sending the automobile to the workshop for overhauling and repairs is a matter of common experience to car owners. Similarly Swami says that, whenever He feels it necessary, He sends His devotees to the workshop of trials and tribulations in order to toughen them and make them road-worthy to continue their spiritual journey.

"Road under repair; use the diversion," is a familiar traffic signal. This is cited by Swami as an analogy whenever He avoids or ignores a devotee for some time because of some lapse on his part, which needs some introspection or atonement.

Finally, Baba gives us a yardstick by which to judge whether we have successfully completed the pilgrimage of life. If we who cried "Koham" (who am I?) at the time of our birth can firmly answer that question with "Soham" (I am He) at the time of our passing then according to Baba, we have reached the goal. Needless to say, we can attain this consummation if we follow the aforesaid traffic guidelines of Bhagavan Baba. However, it can hardly be denied that most of us falter and stumble in our life's pilgrimage because of our inability to adhere strictly to His guidelines. So, as a capstone to His guidelines Swami advises us, "Hand over the reins of your chariot, or the steering of your car, to Me, giving no room for any doubt, fear or anxiety; and I, the Sanathana Sarathi, will certainly lead you to victory, as did Krishna in the case of Arjuna."

## **Many Voices**

*When you examine your mind, you will find voices there, holding sway, not one but many counsellors, with their contrariness causing confusion. For example, no sooner have you planned to come to Puttaparthi to take the Darshan of Swami, these counsellors start playing*

*present there. Another voice suggests that you can put through a call to 'so-and-so' and discover whether Swami is at Bangalore or at Puttaparthi. A third lays before you alternative routes and means of transport, and causes a good deal of headache. Another voice might intervene and say, O! Considering all the wrongs done, all the faults committed, it is very doubtful, if Swami will grant you an "interview". In the wake of this Voice another will begin its argument of assurance. It will comfort, saying, "No! Swami is the very embodiment of compassion. He will certainly pardon all errors." The principle that guides and guards you along spiritual path is the Lingam that is in the centre of the Consciousness clustering round the inner and outer senses.*

**—Baba**  
**("Chinnakatha")**

## **Living with Divinity**

**—Ruchir K. Desai**

There are times when we all reflect on the events of the years gone by. One such evening, I was sitting and recapitulating my life and I could not but remember Shakespeare's words, "There is a tide in the affairs of men..."

As a child, I used to be like other children, playful and carefree, with only myself at the centre of all things. Perhaps my only link with God was the time I used to spend near the altar at home and watch raptly the elaborate puja being performed. Being a small kid in the house, it was perhaps a relief for everybody to find me sitting quietly and busy at work with God. But at that time, God was known only as a picture-frame or an attractive image which had to be worshipped with flowers, garlands and prasadam. After the puja the rituals and the partaking of prasadam was over, I sometimes used to think of God. And, God, to the mind of a child, was a person who had to be pleased by being worshipped properly, who would be angry if certain things were not observed and followed. I used to think that this God, whoever and wherever He was ...would be delighted to shower boons on me . ...

But then, as time passed, God took on a more meaningful and purposeful role. I was now a thinking young teenager. Despite this thoughtfulness and awareness, I was after all a teenager in the last year of my school life I had no time for God; nor did I have time enough to reflect—in short, I was very busy with myself. But, then, destiny had willed that things were not to be allowed to drift on like that in my case.

The wheel of time moved, as it always does, waiting for no man. I found myself in totally different environs—something which I thought were alien to me then. Till then, my only obligation to anything was to maintain a tolerable level of discipline and obedience. But the conditions now were totally different. To the casual and indifferent person that I was, Bhagavan Baba's picture in the altar was something only to be formally bowed down for a few half-hearted

to Him whole-heartedly.

And then, I became a student of Swami's college. Again, when I look back, I wonder how it all happened. One fine day, I found that I had made the decision. Perhaps, it was one of those things which happen in life—you don't know how they happen—but they happen as if they were in the normal course of nature.

Now, when I remember my childhood thoughts about God, I realise that trying to understand Him will only confound the confusion. Living with Divinity, as it were, a lot has to be learnt. All of us, in our limited understanding, make, at sometime or the other, the mistake of measuring Him and trying to understand Him with our limited vision. Yet His profound Love and His Divinity allow us all the indulgence, so that some day we may learn. Life at the Lotus Feet is a continuous story of Divine revelations and of lessons in the Divine principles of Faith, Love and Truth, which He, by His words and His silence, by His action and inaction, has been teaching to all of us.

*Each one should ask himself the question Mahatmas and Mahapurushas were also persons like me; they were also embodied beings. When they could attain perfection, can I also not succeed if I follow their method? What profits me if I spend time in discovering the faults and weaknesses of others? Therefore the first sadhana is: search for the faults and weaknesses within thyself, strive to correct them and become perfect.*

—Baba

### **Medicos' Seva in Sathya Sai Taluk**

A large number of doctors, drawn from all parts of Andhra Pradesh, assembled in Prasanthi Nilayam prior to Sivaratri to carry out a comprehensive medical check-up of the rural population in Sri Sathya Sai Taluk, with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba.

The team consisted of 130 doctors (including 42 lady doctors), of whom 45 were specialists in medicine, Paediatrics, Surgery, Ophthalmology, E.N.T., Skin diseases, and dentistry. In addition, one radiologist and two pathologists and twelve technicians rendered service in the X-Ray, E.C.G. and laboratory investigations.

Improvised camps were set up at eight centres: Puttaparthi, Marala, Pamudurti, Talamarla, Bandlapalli, Niddinamedi, Peddapalli and Vengalamma Cheruvu. The camps were conducted from February 12 to 14. Altogether over 20,000 patients (9829 males and 10,577 women) were examined at the eight centres. Besides 50 E.C.G. tests, 200 X-Ray pictures were taken and 500 laboratory tests were conducted. Medicines were supplied free to all the patients. Besides

doctors went into the interior villages to attend to patients who could not come to the centres. The medicines and equipment were brought by the doctors themselves, who used their own transport.

During the three days, a team of 38 veterinary doctors conducted veterinary camps at three centres: Yenumulapalli, Marala and Bandlapalli. A large number of cattle were treated at these centres.

Bhagavan Baba congratulated all the doctors for their service at a special meeting in Prasanthi Mandir on February 15 and distributed to them stainless steel dining plates and tumblers, as well as Swami's Vibhuti prasadam. By way of advice Swami told them that in treating patients, they should cheer them up and encourage them rather than frighten them by disclosing the gravity of their illness.

## **"Mind Your Mind"**

**—V. Pandit, *Professor of Economics,*  
*University of Delhi***

The mind is the basic cause as well as the objective of our perception of the world around us. All experiences are products of the mind. The world itself is a projection of the mind. It is indeed the mind which is the source of pain and pleasure and therefore the cause of man's bondage.

Bhagavan Baba says in one of His discourses: "The mind is a bundle of desires which are a hindrance in the path of spiritual progress. Unless these (desires) are removed by their roots there is no hope of eliminating the mind."

The first lesson for a Sadhaka is "mind your mind." The spiritual quest begins with the question: "Who am I?" To get the answer the mind needs to be drawn inward to find whence the thought of 'I' or ego arises.

It is clear that annihilation of the ego is essential. A simple but by no means an easy solution to this problem lies in unqualified and total 'surrender' to the Will of the Lord. It is to this that Lord Krishna finally turns at the end of His long Discourse to Arjuna. "Sarva Dharmaan parithyajya maamekam saranam vraja. Aham thvaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa suchah" (" Giving up all dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. I shall save you from all sins. Do not grieve.")

Learn to merge your *Sankalpa* with His Divine Sankalpa. That is 'surrender'. The ego will persist and desires will remain as long as one has not surrendered. But once one does surrender there is neither brooding over the past nor worry for the future. A little thought shows that desires are in a way the result of a sense of insecurity and lack of faith in oneself. Since surrender instils not only self-confidence but also security, all desires vanish. In the consummation of this state one may only pray to God: "Let Thy will be done! I do not know what is good for me and therefore what to ask for. Lord, give me whatever You Will." Once on this path, desires will slowly but steadily peel off and drop away.

Gandhiji once remarked: "The world has enough to meet the 'needs' of mankind but not enough to satisfy its greed." This is indeed so. It is the greed component of desires that must drop. However, what may appear to be essential to one person may not be so essential to another person. What, then, is the norm to be adopted? Clearly, no objective and universal norm can be set. This is not even essential. For, spirituality is a matter of experience and not experiment so that no uniformity, by the very nature of things, can be visualised. Everyone has to set his norm depending on how he is positioned in life. Indeed what norm is set is also unimportant. This is because reduction of desires has to be viewed as a process and not a state—dynamic rather than static. The more important thing therefore is that we begin with a norm—a circle within which we confine our requirements. There must then be progress towards the ultimate goal—the total extinction of desires. The circle must keep shrinking till ultimately only the dimensionless centre remains.

### **Contraction of desires**

How is this to be done? Whenever you want to buy or acquire something, says Baba in His characteristic simple way, just ask yourself, "Can I not do without it?" Curtail not only your personal needs but also all wasteful activity of any kind. Hence the desirability of talking less, seeing only what is good and hearing only what is worth hearing.

A curtailment of desires and hence consumption, particularly by the rich, will release resources which can be diverted from the production of luxuries to that of necessities for the common man. There will also be an increase in savings which can be used for productive investment.

At the social level, we are painfully aware that corruption, crime and social evils like dowry system are a direct consequence of unlimited desires. For, it is these that compel people to live beyond their legitimate means—prompting them to adopt forbidden sinful ways.

A consciously accepted and practised programme of contraction of desires as a spiritual sadhana will not only do much good to the individual, but will be of immense benefit to society and the world.

In the quiet silent morn,  
Rang the bell of dawn,  
When the students wake up,  
To sing the Suprabhatam song.

'Om' goes on and on,  
To the count of twenty-one,  
Then sing we the praises of the Lord,  
And fill our hearts with Divine Song.

Soon after the Suprabhatam,  
We put on our socks and shoes,  
To the playground we go,  
Where balls and bats await our show.

"Oh! It is seven-fifteen!"  
All the teams hurry to the hostel,  
Where we bathe and change,  
And wend our way to the dining hall.

"Brahmaarpanam Brahmahavih..."  
We offer, Oh Lord, our food to Thee,  
Accept it and bless us,  
To eat as 'prasad' from Thee.

Filling our hungry bellies,  
We run to our rooms,  
And ready, we sing the melodies  
Of morning bhajans at school.

To the hostel we come again.  
At four in the afternoon,  
Sip our tea and stand in the lines,  
And off we march to the Mandir Divine.

Sitting there on the portico,  
We wait and wait,  
For our beloved Master,  
To come and bless us sweet.

Oh Lord! Our minds are filled with Thee,  
We sing bhajans with full glee.

We surrender ourselves to Thee.

After the evening bhajans,  
We wend our way to the hostel,  
Where food awaits us all.

And, then, we sit in our rooms,  
To pore over our books.

Having done enough for the day,  
Milk comes to refresh our way,  
We end our day with prayers to the Lord,  
'Karacharana Krutamvaa.'

We lie down to rest,  
To do once again our best.  
Oh Lord! We pray! Bless us  
And shower Thy grace on us.

—*Harish M. Mirpuri, XII Standard*

## **Spiritual Insight Transcends All Science**

—*R. Priddy, (Philosophy Lecturer, Oslo University)*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has insisted that scientists cannot understand the spiritual and that the spiritual starts where science ends. He has repeatedly refused to demonstrate materialisations for the advancement of science saying that it is a mystery beyond scientific explanation and that demonstrating powers rather than using them exclusively for the good of his devotees would be the same as black magic. (See *Miracles are my Visiting Cards* by E. Haraldsson. Century 1987)

There is a philosophical distinction between knowledge and wisdom (Latin *scientia* and *sapientia*), corresponding to that between the sciences and moral or spiritual insight. One may say that this latter is what makes for human being (*homo sapiens*) rather than scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is always founded on what is observable to the senses, is about the sensory 'outer' world, or else it is not acceptable to the scientific community.

Insight into oneself, on the other hand, is what tells us what is good and right or conversely. Conscience can only be known by insight. It is not a measurable physical thing. The wisdom derived from studying one's conscience is of another order altogether different from the know-how obtained from scientific experiments. Technological advances may be made by the



human good or not does not depend on any such knowledge. It can depend, in the first and last analysis, only on the conscience of the individual.

The success and popularity of scientific thinking are due to its ability to make accurate predictions about causes and effects, which give us more control of the physical environment (eg. with technology and in the prevention of some diseases etc.). It is not due to the discovery of any new truths about the human soul or its destiny, for these are matters entirely beyond its scope. In short, science is by its nature oriented towards changing the material world, not towards practical self-discovery or spiritual truth.

There is a very widespread tendency for people who wish to be taken seriously to wish to see their work as scientific. Thus, what not long ago were called 'arts' or 'humanities' now style themselves as 'historical and social sciences'. Their dilemma is usually how to employ natural scientific methods to human beings and their works. Though we have bodies and use matter to express our life work, we are souls and our expressions also are of a spiritual sort.

### **Beyond science**

No scientific methods can hope to plumb the depths of the soul, however, for it is an inward matter simply not open to laboratory observation, even in the most indirect way. Neither statistics nor questionnaires can penetrate the internal relation between ourselves and the spiritual source that informs our consciences, illumines our intellects with the power of discrimination between right and wrong or helps to direct our will towards the good when this is our wish.

Modern science arose in the European Renaissance as the result of the search for truth, not least as a correction to unreasonable theological dogmas that had come to deny many matters of worldly fact. Yet science did not concern itself with moral questions, for its hypothetical deductive experimental method can provide no test of right or wrong (i.e. whether one ought or ought not to act in some given way). At best it can only provide evidence to help decide factual questions (i.e. whether something is true or contrariwise). Remaining neutral on all matters of values (i.e. of right or wrong), scientific theory does not and cannot seek truth in the sense of spiritual verities. No serious scientist or philosopher today will assert that science can reach *certain* knowledge in *any* field at all, or that scientific method can cast any light on moral questions. Since the time of David Hume clear, logical reasons why this must be so have been known. This uncertainty in principle is accepted as a fundamental axiom of the philosophy of science by the world scientific community. It is further very widely accepted that the history of science shows that all scientific theories have hitherto been subject to major or minor alterations, sometimes even a most radical change of paradigm. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has informed us of the same Himself when He said, according to Dr. Hislop:

"Science is highly fragmentary, and its approach to reality is through *Maya*, and this is a highly dangerous procedure. Science does not even know the truth of chemistry and physics. Each ten years or so, the old truths are discarded or modified' because of research results. So, when man tries to compare science and the spiritual world, he is comparing a science whose

There are those who would like to see spirituality become the object of scientific research and others who would try to justify the existence of spirit and of its truths by the support of one or another science. Surely, is this not putting the cart before the horse? Who needs the doubtful authority of science so as to lend support to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings? Science is entirely surpassed by "Saience".

## **The Divine Transformer**

There are innumerable subtle ways in which Bhagavan Baba transforms the devotees who come to Him. There are, of course, equally countless cases in which by direct advice or reproof or even a sharp chiding, He makes devotees realise the error of their ways and to give up one or other spiritually and socially undesirable habit. Many who had been addicted to drink, smoking, meat eating or other practices have given them up after coming under the influence of Bhagavan. Invariably the devotees have reformed themselves out of the conviction that these habits are totally repugnant to the spiritual way of life for which they had come to Baba.

A notable instance of how a thirty-year old habit was given up in one agonising moment is described by Prof. Kasturi in his delightful and illuminating autobiography, "Loving God", which is replete with anecdotes of his experiences with Bhagavan. Describing a trip to the Himalayas with Bhagavan Baba in 1957, Prof. Kasturi writes:

On my first night at Hrishikesh, the sacred spot on the Ganga, I gained a victory which had eluded me for over nine agonising years. I must admit that I had fallen a victim to snuff during my years at the Royal City of Mysore. The preparation of a dark variety of capsules which when pressed between thumb and index finger became flavourful snuff to be inhaled slowly and enjoyed was an art known only to a few families there. It was an aristocratic and aromatic acquisition. My friend Swami Siddeswarananda, the poet Puttappa and many others of that generation were devoted to that exciting device for mental arousal. For over three decades, that vice had led me by the nose. When I yielded to the impact of Baba, I decided, like Sindbad, to overthrow the old man who was riding on me. But he sat astride firmly. Baba often spoke sharply within my hearing of the habit. But luckily only in general terms. He spoke disparagingly about a few persons, whom I Knew, and condemned the weakness which prevented them from wriggling out of the dirty dusty snuff habit. I felt glad that he had not black-listed me, by name. When I joined the Hrishikesh party I armed myself with a pound weight of the precious stuff bought at Madras, so that I could happily nose around that snuff less region.

That crucial night, Baba came over from the cottage of the Ashram-complex, which was allotted for His stay, into the dormitory where I and five others were settling down for rest. I had prepared my bed and was enjoying the stretching of limbs, when Baba appeared, followed by

snuff-box cosily resting there. I shivered in remorse. I remembered the centuries old ritual, which Hindus observe when they reach pilgrim spots. They give up a habit that is dearly loved. Baba looked at me sternly. He said only one single word, "Dirty". I took the box and threw it far into the thick night. I clenched my teeth to lock my sobs in. I took an explosive vow, touching Baba's feet "No more, Swami! I am giving it up from this moment."

Baba gave me a soft pat on the shoulder. I bent under the cot, dragged out my leather luggage box and took hold of the one pound tin of the disgusting stuff and was about to cast it into the bushy under-growth when two renunciants in ochre robes snatched it from my hands. They said (they were evidently not belonging to the Shivanand-ashram) they were getting their supplies of the 'Jnana Choornam' (the Powder that promotes the intellect), from New Delhi, which was too far away. Hearing the noise, Baba turned back and laughed. Satchidananda and Sadananda too laughed. I have not inhaled that Rajasic poison since. It was indeed a pity that what I, a house-holder, threw to the winds was caught and treasured by those Sanyasins!

*—From "Loving God", published by the Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust,  
Prasanthi Nilayam*

## **The Five D's**

The universe is itself a university in which every human being is a student. Every student pursues one subject and acquires a degree. Each one chooses the subject he likes. But whatever different subjects they may study, there is one thing common to all of them, one common pursuit and goal: to obtain the degree of Divine love. In an army there are a variety of jobs to be done and a hierarchy of ranks. But whatever the job, whether it is that of a washerman, an orderly, a sentry, or a commander, disciplined drill at the parade and the ability to use the rifle are essential requirements for everyone. Likewise in the cosmic university, though there are scientific, political, economic, and other studies, what is fundamental to all of them is spiritual knowledge.

Even in the spiritual field, there are special subjects. There is one group which may be described as the Five D's: Dedication, Devotion, Discipline, Discrimination, and Determination. Those who have mastered the Five D's are qualified to receive God's love.

### **Dedication**

*Dedication:* It means offering. As soon as Swami arrived (in the Auditorium) teachers and students made offerings of flowers and offered their salutations. The flower symbolises the heart. When you offer the flower of your heart to the Lord, it should be free from the pests of desire, hatred, envy, greed and the like. Only pure flowers are offered to the Lord or to those whom you revere. The flower of the heart is subject to infestation by two evil creatures—one is self-conceit (Ahamkara); the other is envy (Asooya). Self-conceit is based on eight different factors: wealth, physical prowess, birth, scholarship, beauty, power and penance. Of these, the arrogance born of

predominant, it is impossible to recognise the Divine or one's spiritual reality. Self-conceit is a great barrier between the individual and God. It has to be utterly demolished.

### **Eschew pride**

Pride of wealth is another grievous human failing, which causes the downfall of man. All forms of pride, based on birth, wealth, power or scholarship, have to be given up totally. Only when egoistic pride is offered as a sacrifice at the altar of the Divine can man discover his true nature. This is the Dedication that is called for as the first step in the spiritual journey.

### **Devotion**

Next comes *Devotion*. This is the highest form of love. "Service to Hrishikesa is known as Bhakti," says the Sutra. Devotion means constant contemplation of God. The term Bhakti is derived from the root "Bhaj" (to worship). Devotion means loving contemplation of God, repetition of His name, worshipping Him and doing penance for Him. Service to the Lord is the highest expression of devotion. There is nothing which is not attainable through loving service to the Divine. Once Tulsidas was engaged in meditation at the confluence of the three rivers (Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati). Rama and Lakshmana appeared before him as two young boys. They asked him: "Kakaji! What is it you are doing?" Tulsidas replied, "Children! I am doing service to Rama." The boys asked: "What is the use of doing service to Rama?" Tulsidas replied: "Through service I get a sweet." They said: "What is the use of getting a sweet? Once you have eaten and digested it, nothing remains." Then Tulsidas explained that the sweet got from others is digested in a brief time. But the sweet given by God is His love, which is not digested and cast away. When it is eaten, all hunger is appeased. The sweet of Divine love illumines the spirit. When the oil of Devotion is put into the lamp of the Antahkarana (the Indwelling motivator) and the wick of integral consciousness (Prajna) is lit by the fire of spiritual enquiry, the flame of Self-knowledge shines effulgently.

Devotion does not mean merely doing bhajans or performing puja. These forms of devotion at present are based on some kind of self-interest and self-seeking. True devotion should be free from selfishness of any kind. For the external observer all appear to be devotees, filled with humility and piety. But internally, their hearts are otherwise. Judging a student by his marks, he may have a high *rank*. But as regards his conduct he is a *blank*. Likewise, judging from external practices a person may appear to be a devotee. But his heart and mind may be filled with evil. This sort of duplicity should be given up. There should be the same loving devotion both inside and outside. Devotion is not something to be, proclaimed or demonstrated. Exhibitionistic devotion may result in disaster. True devotion should be an expression of love both internally and externally.

### **Discipline**

Next comes *Discipline*: This is most essential for students. From the moment you wake up, you have to carry out your morning ablutions, meditate on God and then do your prescribed duties in an orderly manner without deviating from the regular routine. Variations in the routine from day to day are undesirable. You should not wake up at one hour on one day and at a

Immediately after finishing the morning chores, one should devote, in the calm and serene atmosphere of the morning, at least a few minutes to loving meditation on God. The human estate is based upon regulations and self-control. These have to be strictly adhered to in daily life.

### **Discrimination**

Then comes *Discrimination*: The world is a mixture of good and bad, of joy and sorrow, right and wrong, victory and defeat. In a world replete with such opposites, man has to make constantly the choice between what is right and proper and what is wrong or undesirable. A man who has no such discriminating faculty is an animal. Man should not let himself be guided by the mind. He should follow the directions of his intelligence (Buddhi). As long as you follow the mind, you cannot obtain Madhava (Divinity). Young people in their tender years tend to follow the inclinations of the mind. They do not rise to the level of their intelligence. Consequently, they are subject to various agitations and frustrations. They have, therefore, to learn to use their powers of discrimination. "I am a human being. I am also a student seeking knowledge. In this condition, how should I conduct myself so that I may win the respect and regard of others?" These are the questions which each student should ask himself. He should enquire on every occasion as to what is the right course and what should be avoided. He should decide on what he should do and where he should go after due enquiry. Having acquired knowledge, he should not behave like an illiterate, uneducated person. His conduct should be in keeping with his learning. Humility is the index of true education. Without humility, scholarship will lack lustre. Discrimination is essential for every student and educated man.

### **Determination**

*"Determination"* is the fifth D. It is like the reins for a horse. When you want to achieve something, you must have the determination and persistence to secure it by all your efforts. No room should be given for doubts and hesitations. There is nothing on earth which cannot be achieved by firm determination.

Starting with Dedication, you end with Determination. There is no use relying solely on book knowledge or mere intellectual cleverness. There must be firm faith in God as the basis of everything.

There is one kind of pest which affects the leaves and branches of a tree. There is another which destroys the roots of a tree. Likewise, a hypocrite is a human pest that can spoil a good man. The hypocrite is not merely an actor. He poses as a devotee externally, but is really evil-minded. He leads a double life. It is dangerous to associate with such persons. Many good men in the world have come to grief because of association with such pretenders.

### **Worldly and Divine love**

Love is of two kinds: One related to the physical and the other related to the Divine. All the fears and delusions afflicting the world, all the chaos and violence prevalent today, are due primarily to physical attachments. These are also responsible for the falsehood, corruption and

administration and even for international conflicts. Divine love knows no differences among individuals or nations. Egoistic attachments and selfishness are at the root of all human troubles and conflicts. The Mahabharata war was also the result of selfish and narrow attachments. Dhritarashtra made a distinction between his own sons ("Mamakarah") and the Pandavas (the sons of his brother Pandu). This narrow attachment was responsible for the complete ruin of the Kauravas.

Physical love should be confined to strict limits. If the divine consciousness were not present within, of what use would the body be? It would be as useless as a school without teachers, a farm without water, a temple without a deity.

You must develop divine love. You must be resolute in striving to achieve what you aim at. Only then will your devotion and discipline bear fruit. There is no meaning in parading one's devotion. The external human form has no significance. You must be human in your actions and feelings. By reforming your conduct and purifying your thoughts and actions, sanctify your lives. That alone is true education, which will lead you to Self-realisation.

**—From *Bhagavan's address at the Institute Auditorium on 16-1-1988***

### ***A Child's Prayer***

*Baba lifts up each child who tries,  
To reach upto spiritual skies.  
Divine strength and courage He supplies,  
To every humble child who applies*

*The more our greedy minds desire,  
The more we grieve when we don't acquire.  
The Grace of Sai doth each require,  
To be free from desires entire.*

*My mind is a huge banyan tree,  
It's full of noisy birds I cannot see,*

*When I sing of Thee they flee,  
Thy name sets my mind free  
To surrender myself to Thee.*

*When the world is plunged in delusion,  
When each one's mind suffers from pollution,*

*—P. Sai Latha*

**Here comes our Sai.....**

Here comes, here comes, here comes our Sai  
With all His Might and Light He comes.

The birds come down, to take joy from Him  
The clouds come down, to take bliss from Him  
The rain comes down, to kiss HIS LOTUS FEET.  
The cool breeze comes down, to caress Him.

Here comes, here comes our Sai  
With all His Might and Light He comes.

He comes down, to improve and correct us,  
He comes down, to inspire and remind us,  
He comes down, to save and protect us,  
He comes down, to guide and show us the way.

Here comes, here comes, here comes our Sai  
With all His Might and Light He comes.

*—Kamal Sharma*

In the study of the scriptures we come across the terms 'Sama' and 'Dama'. 'Sama' is generally regarded as meaning control of the inner senses and 'Dama' as referring to control of the external senses. This is not correct. 'Sama' means control of both the inner and outer sense organs.

Among these sense organs, three are most important: the eyes, the ears and the tongue. Each of them tries to follow the other. When the eye sees something, the ear tries to listen to what is happening. Immediately thereafter, the eye seeks to explore something new on the basis of what the ear has heard.

These sense organs, however, do not function by themselves. They are called 'Upakaranas', that is, subsidiary instruments. For all of them, the mind is the base. It is the mind that creates within itself its conception of the Universe. It gives form to the perceptions got from the senses.

The mind is the basis for the actions of the eye, the ear and the tongue. In the waking state, the eye sees, the ear hears and the tongue speaks. In the dream state, the eyes, the ears and the tongue are inoperative. In the dream state, the mind alone sees, hears and does the talking. The mind does all of the functions of the senses. It is the inner operator of all the sense organs.

Without control of the mind, man cannot have peace even for a moment. One who wishes to lead a happy and peaceful life, must exercise control over his senses. Man today has lost peace of mind because he has no control over his senses.

### **The senses and the elements**

There are five kinds of senses in man hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. These five senses are based on the five elements: ether (Aakasa), air (Vayu), fire (Agni), water (Aapa), and earth (Prithvi). The earth is the grossest of the elements; water is subtler and more pervasive than the earth. Fire is subtler and more pervasive than water. Air is even subtler than fire and is extremely pervasive. Ether is the subtlest and pervades everything. In this ascending order of subtlety, each element exhibits a wider pervasiveness than the preceding element. With increasing subtlety, pervasiveness also expands. In the reverse process, when the subtlety diminishes, the density increases and the pervasiveness contracts. Thus air is less subtle and is grosser than ether. Fire is grosser and less pervasive than air. Earth is the grossest and least pervasive.

### **Aakasa—the base**

It may be seen from this that ether is the basis of all the other elements. 'Aakasa' (ether or space) is the basis from which the other elements have emerged. Aakasa may be compared to an infinite pot. All the other four elements have evolved from it. From the movement ('Gatha') of ether, air came into existence. Out of air, fire emerged in course of time. Without air, there could be no fire. Out of the heat generated by fire, water was formed. For instance, in the human body, after a bout of fever, there is sweating. When we move in the hot sun, we perspire. This shows how water results from heat. From water all multifarious forms in Nature have evolved.



Suppose, for instance, a jasmine flower is placed on a table in a room. The flower, which is gross, is small in size. But its fragrance, which is subtle, pervades the whole room. Likewise, steam, which is generated from water, occupies much larger space than the volume of water from which it is produced.

The mind of man, because of its extreme subtlety, is capable of immense expansion. But because of the senses, the mind has attraction for a variety of objects and persons. When these objects fill the mind, its expansiveness gets reduced. It is only when the attraction for these objects is reduced that the mind can achieve expansion.

### **The senses and the kosas**

If today man is filled with worries and has no peace of mind, it is because his mind is filled with innumerable desires. The world cannot be blamed for man's mental state. Nor can 'Samsara' (family life) be held responsible for man's bondage. You bind yourself to Nature and the family, by your attachments and desires. To withdraw yourself from these attachments and to reduce your subjection to the external world, you have to practise control over your eyes, ears and tongue.

In this context, you have to consider three factors: the gross, the subtle and the causal. Taking the example of a tamarind fruit, you find that it has an outer rind, the fruit inside it and the seed within the fruit. All these are associated with one another. Our body is like the outer rind of the tamarind fruit. Our mind can be compared to the fruit within. Our causal body is comparable to the seed in the fruit. The human entity is a combination of these three. And in this entity, there are five Kosas (sheaths) the Annamaya (the food sheath), the Pranamaya (the vital air sheath), the Manomaya (the mental), the Vijñanamaya (the Intelligence) and the Anandamaya (the Blissful) Kosas.

The Annamaya kosa has three qualities: hunger, thirst and sleep. The Vital (Pranamaya) sheath has also three qualities: inhaling, exhaling and motion. The Manomaya kosa has these three qualities: Sankalpa (thought), Vikalpa (absence of thought) and Manana (introspection). Vijñanamaya kosa has three qualities: Medhashakti (Intelligence), Vivekashakti (power of discrimination) and Vijñanashakti (Wisdom). The three qualities of Anandamaya kosa are Priyam (fondness), Modam (delight), and Pramodam (Supreme delight or ecstasy). Everyone aspires to have these three experiences. When a person sees something and has a liking for it, the feeling is called "Priyaananda". When he enjoys an object or an idea or the company of a person dear to him, that experience is called "Modam". The experience one has, when he identifies himself with an idea or a person or an object that he likes, is called "Pramodam". For example, one learns that mangoes have come into the market. He derives a pleasure immediately on seeing the mangoes. This is Priyam. He then buys the mango and takes it home. The joy he derives from possessing the mango is "Modam". Then he eats the fruit with relish. The joy derived from this is "Pramodam".

The devotee yearning constantly for a vision of the Lord derives a similar kind of delight, which has been described as "Nityanandam Parama Sukhadam", ever-blissful and conferring supreme happiness. Or he may wish to see the physical form of someone who is eminently estimable and dear to him. The moment he sees such a person he experiences delight. This is Priyam. He goes near the person and delights in the nearness to him. This is described as "Modam". When they experience joy together, it is called "Pramodam".

There are three levels in the experiencing of this joy (Ananda). Many kinds of spiritual practices are resorted to for realising God. During these exercises, one day God appears in a dream. The devotee rejoices in it. When the Lord seen in the dream appears before him, the devotee derives even greater delight. When he is able to move and sport with the Lord, he becomes ecstatic. That is described as "Brahmaanandam" or "Yoganandam" or "Advaitaanandam" (the bliss of oneness with the Divine). It is also called "Paramananda" (Supreme Bliss). Of all forms of delight, the bliss that is experienced in oneness with the Divine is unexcelled.

### **Discrimination**

To achieve this state of bliss a start has to be made with the control of the senses. The senses have to be directed along right lines. The mind is the basis for all the sense organs. Without mental consciousness the sense organs will not be able to function at all. From time to time the senses are likely to go astray. If a brass vessel is struck with a stick, it will send out vibrations. Likewise, when someone criticises you, your mind will get excited by the sound waves reaching a certain nerve centre in the brain. Immediately an angry reaction occurs. The stage is set for a quarrel. Then there is no control over the mind. On the other hand someone else may come and praise you. You forget yourself and get immersed in joy. The sense of discrimination may be lost through excessive elation or through deep distress. When the discriminating power is weak, the mind is prone to pursue wrong courses.

You have, therefore, to find out the true role of the mind. Below the mind is the vital principle. Above the mind is the Buddhi (Intelligence). Buddhi is associated with the Agni (fire) principle. Prana (the vital force) is also associated with the "fire" principle. The mind is situated between these two. "Chandramaa Manaso Jaatah" says the Veda. The moon is the presiding deity of the mind. The moon is considered a watery planet. Caught between the two "fires" above and below it, the mind is unstable.

### **The atma and the senses**

You must understand how the mind functions. It is the underlying current in all the sense organs. Supposing you are asleep and are experiencing a dream. You see in the dream your parents and friends. Was it your eyes that saw them in the dream? No. In the dream state the eyes are closed. In the dream you are talking to your parents and friends. But compared to the waking state, the mouth is silent in the dream state. You feel in the dream you are listening to what your parents and friends are saying, but it is not your ears that are hearing. All that you see, hear or

only subsidiary organs and not self-acting instruments.

However, beyond the senses, the mind and the Buddhi (intellect) there is the Atma (the indwelling Spirit). Each sense organ has only one function to perform and cannot perform any other function. The eye can only see but cannot hear. The ear can only hear but cannot see. The tongue can only speak but cannot hear. Each sense organ is confined to its specific function. But the Atma comprehends and transcends all of them. It can see, listen, speak and think. Hence, it is said: "Buddhi grahyam atendriyam" (The Atma transcends all the senses).

### **No drug for egoism**

The sense organs are subject to various kinds of afflictions. With such disabilities, they cannot serve as reliable indicators of the truth. Take, for instance, the tongue. When a man is healthy, the laddu (made from sugar) tastes sweet to the tongue. But the same laddu tastes bitter to the tongue when the person suffers from Malaria. Thus, when there is disease, the tongue fails to serve as a truthful organ of taste. Consider the case of the eyes. When one is healthy, the eye sees every colour in its true form as red, green or yellow. But when the man suffers from jaundice, the eye sees everything as yellow. Here, again, the eye fails to serve as a reliable indicator of truth when it is subject to disease. All the organs in the body are prone to disease of one sort or another. But, of all the ills to which man is prone, there is one which cannot be cured by any medicine, that is, Ahamkara (egoism). This ego aggravates the tendency of the senses to lead man astray.

In this context, there are seven factors which have to be considered: (1) the body; (2) Karma (action); (3) Raga (attachment); (4) Dwesha (hatred); (5) Ahamkara (egoism); (6) Aviveka (lack of discrimination) and (7) Ajnana (ignorance). These seven influence the human condition. Ignorance undermines the power of discrimination. Without discrimination, self-conceit (Ahamkara) develops. Ahamkara breeds the twins: attachment and hatred. Attachment and hatred lead to the experience of Karma (the consequences of one's action). Raga and Dwesha generate actions of various kinds. These actions, in their turn, are the cause of birth in a body (deha).

### **Six forms of devotion**

It follows that the root cause of human birth (Janma) is action (Karma). When your actions are good, you obtain a good birth. Your birth is the result of your actions. The nature of one's birth determines one's attachments and aversions. The attachments of a good person (by birth) are to God and the godly way of life. He yearns for God, adores God and worships God. Such a person develops one or other of six forms of devotion such as Santham (tranquility), Sakhyam (friendship), Dasyam (service), Vatsalya (maternal love), Anuraga (loving devotion) and Madhura (ecstatic) Bhakti.

Bhishma, Arjuna, Hanuman, the Gopikas, Yashoda and Radha are examples of the different forms of Bhakti.

awaiting the advent of the auspicious moment for giving up his body, Bhishma devoted his thoughts to God with a serene sweetness and calm mind.

Arjuna is the exemplar of Sakhya Bhakti. All his life he was devoted to Krishna, enjoying the relationship as brother-in-law, but always adoring Krishna as his divine mentor. Arjuna's devotion was based on kinship. Krishna, for the same reason, protected Arjuna as a kinsman.

Hanuman's devotion to Rama exemplifies Dasya Bhakti (service as a form of devotion). Hanuman's only thought was to serve Rama always, be near to him and wait for his commands. Once Rama called Hanuman and asked him

"Hanuman! How do you love me?" Hanuman replied: "In terms of the physical, I look upon you as my Lord and regard myself as your servant. In terms of the mind, you are the object and I am only your image. Spiritually, You are I and I am You. I am experiencing you in these ways. As long as I have the body consciousness, you are the Lord and I am your servant." This is the attitude that prevails in Dasya Bhakti.

Anuraga Bhakti (loving devotion) is exemplified by the Gopikas. Whatever work they might be doing, their thoughts were centred on Krishna and they were always yearning for Him. When work is done in this way, it is transformed into worship. Every action is dedicated to the Divine and is performed as an offering to the Divine. With this attitude, the Gopikas were prepared for any kind of trials and tribulations from husbands and mothers-in-law. They worshipped Krishna without any feeling of rancour or bitterness against those who treated them harshly. Krishna was firmly implanted in their hearts. This is known as "Anuraga Bhakti"—the form of devotion in which the devotee is inseparably bound to the Lord in his heart.

Yashoda exemplified "Vatsalya Bhakti" loving the Lord as a mother loves her child. Despite the numerous miracles performed by Krishna and in spite of witnessing manifestations of His divinity in various ways, Yashoda regarded Krishna as her son and loved Him with maternal feelings. Even when Krishna showed to her all the fourteen worlds in His open mouth, Yashoda imagined that it was only her own imagination and Krishna was just a child. Even when Krishna was performing wonders in Mathura, Yashoda was worried about Him as any mother would and made anxious enquiries about her "Gopala", when Uddhava came to Repalle.

In worshipping Krishna, devotees have their own individual partiality for certain names. Meerabai always hailed Him as "Giridhara Gopala". Sakkubai always called Him "Ranga! Ranga!" Yashoda was attached to the name "Gopala".

Radha is the example for "Madhura Bhakti". Radha completely identified herself with Krishna. Her devotion to Krishna was based on an inseparable relationship. The Radha-Krishna relationship is that of Prakriti and Paramatma, of Nature and God.

In the journey to the Divine, man has to reduce progressively his desires, which are the cause of all his difficulties. It is true that man cannot exist without desires. But, they should be within reasonable limits. There can be no happiness without control of desires. Among the senses, two are most important: the eyes and the tongue. Because of their exceptional importance, the Lord has provided them with the means of restraining their activities. The Lord points out: "You silly man! Take note that I have provided natural means for closing the eyes and the mouth." If you do not want to see anything undesirable, you can close your eyes with the eyelids. The ears and the nose have no such devices for closing them. The mouth has lips which can seal the tongue. Observe, therefore, restraint in speech and control the tongue. Control your eyes. When you control your eyes and tongue, you can easily control all other senses.

When the eyes roam freely, the tongue begins to wag without restraint. When the tongue is engaged in endless talking, the eyes want to look at every conceivable thing. When both these organs combine without restraint, life can become a calamity. Therefore, direct your eyes on good things alone.

Students should realise that only when they have control over what they see, what they hear and what they speak will they be able to lead happy and meaningful lives. Observe moderation and sweetness in speech. Do not indulge in purposeless or evil talk or in scandalous gossip.

### **The triple purity**

There are three things which are immensely pleasing to the Lord: A tongue that never indulges in falsehood. A body that is not tainted by causing harm to others. And a mind that is free from attachment and hatred. These three constitute the Triple Purity (Trikarana Shuddhi). Refrain from uttering falsehood, inflicting pain on others and entertaining ill will towards others. Practise silence as a means of preventing the tongue from straying away from truth. The ancient sages practised and preached silence for this purpose.

In the use of sense organs, there must be due regard for moderation and purity. This applies to food as well as to other things which you may take in.

### **The desireless state**

It is the mind that has to exercise control over the senses, which cannot function by themselves. The mind is present in three states of consciousness—the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states. But, it is absent in the causal (Karna) state in which there is only experience of the Divine. This is the state of "total desirelessness." It is only when desires cease that the mind stops functioning. Real bliss is experienced in that state.

As long as the mind is active, there can be no escape from sorrow. To the extent the mind is under control, you can experience happiness. One way to reduce desires is to get absorbed in activity. Idleness encourages the mind to indulge in all kinds of thoughts. If you are intensely engaged in reading, singing, playing or any other activity, the mind will have no chance to wander hither and thither.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho, Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

—*from Bhagavan's Discourse at "Trayee Brindavan" on 13-3-88*

## **Bhagavan in Bombay**

Visiting Bombay after twenty-six months, Bhagavan Baba uplifted the yearning hearts of thousands of His devotees, who had flocked to Dharmakshetra to have the unbounding joy of His darshan during His four-day visit (March 17-20). Devotees from all over Maharashtra had assembled to greet Swami on arrival.

Every group of workers participating in one or other activity of the Sai Organisation, had the privilege of meeting Swami and receiving His advice and blessings, including the farmers from "adopted" villages. Parents of Bal Vikas children, young members of the "Amritdhara" course and Bal Vikas Gurus were among those who had special darshan.

For the first time in the re-structured zonal organisational set-up, active workers from the Western Zone, comprising Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, had the blessing of a separate audience with Swami.

The second day of Bhagavan's visit happened to be a very auspicious day for Maharashtra—"Gudi Padva." It was also "Yugadi" day for the Telugu and Kannada-speaking people. The Divine Message for the day, to a gathering overflowing the spacious "Jalan Mandap", contained a forceful reminder that a pure mind is the primary requisite for going on the right path in life ("Manasu Nirmalambu, Manchiki Maargambu"). Swami said: "Man should develop self-confidence and not allow evil tendencies to take hold of him or fall a victim to undesirable habits." Man should remember that every moment is a "Yugadi" and his constant efforts should be to conduct himself in thought, word and deed as a human being.

Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, former Indian ambassador to Libya and Italy, presided over the Yugadi day gathering.

On March 17th, Swami opened in "Santhi Deep", in the Dharmakshetra complex, an elaborately got up exhibition of an extensive collection of stamps on "Saints" issued in different parts of the world.

There were two other programmes during Swami's visit which won the heart of Bombay and would be long-remembered. One was the staging of "Bhaja Govindam" by the senior research students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the other an impressive rally by Bal Vikas children.

### **Bal vikas rally**

The Bal Vikas children presented the 5-Ds (Discipline, Discrimination, Devotion and Dedication) in a well-conceived programme on the lawn of "Sathya Deep", which had been given a fairy tale look by Sai workers. Scores of Gurus had worked hard to make the programme aesthetically pleasing and perfect. The parents of the 1500 participating children were brimming with delight.

Bhagavan was pleased with the children's performance and remarked "Bahut Achcha Hai." He moved among the children, lovingly patted them and had a word of praise for each of the young group leaders.

### **"Bhaja Govindam"**

The drama, "Bhaja Govindam", presented by the University Group from Prasanthi Nilayam, drew repeated applause, scene after scene. Even the 3000-seat Shanmukhananda Hall proved inadequate. The drama critic of a national daily watching the scintillating performance could not resist joining others in applauding. Seeing Video cameras at work, many in the audience, felt that the performance deserved to reach wider audiences in the country.

On His last full day in the City, Swami addressed a public meeting at "Dharmakshetra" on "Manava Dharma". Swami returned to Brindavan on the 21st.

—V. N. B., *Bombay*

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

## **Beyond Degrees: God's Love**

*Students!*

Your real form is not made up of the body, the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Atma Who is the indwelling Witness in you, is your real form. Instead of realising this truth, people are wasting their lives by identifying themselves with this body.

The universe is a great university. By pursuing a variety of studies-literary, scientific, political, economic and other studies-knowledge is acquired, but not peace of mind. Succumbing to insatiable desires, people are losing peace and leading meaningless lives. It is essential to practise spiritual discipline along with academic studies.

Specialisation in studies does not help the student to get an integral view of life and its problems. Education should serve to develop a broad outlook and an all-round view of life. It is not enough to acquire degrees. You must learn to acquire God's grace. The means of getting

(Vicharana) and determination (diksha). When you succeed in these tests, you will experience the grace of the Divine.

Devotion should manifest itself in every action. Everything done out of love for God and as an offering to God becomes devotion. The devotee is filled with love and shares that love with all others. The nine different forms of worship are only means to cultivate devotion. But the goal of all of them is to experience oneness with the Divine.

"Prapti" means total surrender, offering everything to the Divine. The sense of ego separates the individual from the Divine. When the individual offers everything to God, this ego barrier is removed. Of all the diseases to which man is prone, the disease arising from the ego (Ahamkara) is the most deadly. The only panacea for this disease is surrender to the will of the Divine.

Education should be utilised for developing the power of discrimination between right and wrong, good and evil. Without discrimination, a human being is worse than an animal.

You need determination to face the challenges of life, which is filled with ups and downs, successes and failures, joys and sorrows. These challenges have to be faced with faith in God. The mind should not be allowed to waver and hop from one thing to another. A steady mind is the mark of the truly educated person. Life should be governed by definite regulations. Self-control is essential for leading a righteous life.

Bharat's culture has always laid stress on the well-being of all. "Lokas Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu." ("Let all the worlds be happy.") You should not be overwhelmed by the difficulties that you may encounter in life. They are all transient and they come and go. The source of enduring bliss is within you. Do not give way to weakness of will. The Upanishad declares: "Na ayam Atma balaheenena labhyah" (The Spirit is not realised by a weakling.) Most students are apt to get disheartened when they fail to obtain high marks in an examination. They should, on the contrary, regard it as a challenge to do better in the future. Students must develop courage, self-confidence and determination so that they can face any situation in life. This is the reason for combining spiritual discipline with academic studies.

After you complete your studies, you must become ideal mothers. The mother is the most decisive factor in a child's life. A child's future is moulded by the mother.

You have, an obligation to please your parents, who are responsible for all that you are. Give joy and satisfaction to them. Thereby you will be ensuring joy and satisfaction for yourselves from your children in the years to come.

Have high aims in life. Set before yourselves the examples of great men and women who have figured in the history of our country and the world. Take a lesson from their life of sacrifice and heroism. Wherever you go, whatever walk of life you may choose, bear in mind the honour and glory of the Sathya Sai Institute and prove yourselves in action to be worthy alumni of the



love. Bring credit to the family in which you are born and to the family in which your married life may be spent.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse to the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur, on 21-1-1988. Bhagavan distributed on the occasion prizes and certificates to winners in the sports events*

## **From Death to Immortality**

*—Gaurav Khanna*

Death remains yet as an unsolved riddle. Where men go after death is the question many ask. Few know the answer. Lord Krishna told Arjuna, "Jaathasyahi dhruvo mrithyu" (For everyone who is born, death is certain). But we do not accept death as normal occurrence. Even when an aged person dies, men wonder why. Young people should not die at all. Though we hear of death, we witness death, of course we do not accept death. We all hope to live forever. This is the reason why Krishna had to remind Arjuna that all those who suffer birth have to suffer death.

Swami subscribed to the Hindu view of death. It must be said that people everywhere will find it difficult to practise this attitude. When confronted with death, especially of one very near and dear, we react sorrowfully. Swami teaches us to be wise and brave. Swami's mother, Easwaramma, died in Brindavan during the 1973 summer course, when there were a thousand students from all over India. No one knew that this had happened; Swami sent the body to Puttaparthi for burial. The classes continued and Swami moved among the students as usual. But, when devotees confront death, Swami considers and comforts them. He assures them, that the person who has passed away is happy in the new place. On the death of Walter Cowan in the United States, Swami sent a telegram to Mrs. Cowan "Walter arrived in good shape." He is the same Walter whom Swami had resurrected 19 months earlier at Madras. "Accept the inevitable," says Swami.

Swami's concern is about what we do, how we behave, in every moment of our lives rather than when and how we die. The only way to overcome the fear of death is to live in such a way that one has no time to think of the end. A life filled with selfless activity is the best solution for facing the problem of death. Swami says, "You must live with the constant thought of God as well as another fact, Death." Though we appreciate the basic attitude to death determined by our philosophy, we avoid as inauspicious any mention of death in day-to-day life. If by chance one utters the word, one immediately negates it! Swami says, "Death is considered as something to be afraid of, something that should not be spoken in happy circumstances. But death is neither good nor bad. You have no choice in the matter; you cannot get it sooner if you welcome it, nor can you avoid it if you condemn it. From the moment of birth the march to the cremation ground

and arrive late; that is the only difference, in death between one person and the other. Yet man talks about death as if a distant calamity." Swami encourages us to live in the constant remembrance of death. He says, "The body is the car in which you are riding to death. You may not meet death at any moment, while riding. Remember Death."

Swami says, "Intent on a journey and having purchased a ticket for the same, if you enter a train, whether you sit quiet or lie down or read or meditate, the train takes you willy-nilly to the destination. So too each living being has at its birth received a ticket to Death and is on a journey; so whatever your struggles and safe-guards and precautions, the place has to be reached some day. Whatever else is uncertain, death is certain. It is impossible to change the law." We do not have to struggle hard to reach death; it is the only thing that comes to us without effort. The thought of the certainty of death and the equal uncertainty of the time of the event should give us a sense of urgency and heighten our awareness of the value of each moment as a fresh gift from God.

What man needs is a change in perspective regarding life, death and immortality. Bhagavan declares that "Immortality does not imply that one can avoid death and continue living in the physical body for all time. It means that one's name and fame will shine in the memories of people if his character and achievements are noble and beneficial." Through this point, Swami is emphasising the need to live a good life and the life dedicated to service.

Leading a good life is itself a sadhana which helps us to break the cycle of birth and rebirth. Good life rescues us from the snare of desires. Rebirth is determined by the nature of the thoughts during the last moments of our lives. But Swami reminds us that unless we have lived in the constant remembrance of the Lord, we will not be able to call on Him at the last moment. It has been said that the actions of this life are the destiny of the next.

Swami has related the story of the shopkeeper who had given his children the names of God in the belief that when he talked to them in his deathbed, he would be uttering the names of God. Swami said, the moment came at last and according to programme, he called the Lord by proxy, six times in all. The boys came and stood around his cot. The last thought that came to the dying man's mind, just before he was about to quit was, "Alas, all of you have come away. Who will look after the shop now?" Swami added, "You see, his shop was his ruling passion all through his life and he could not switch to God at short notice. The latent tendencies will have their say, whatever you wish. The thought of God cannot survive in a climate of acts marked by pride and greed."

Swami reminds us that we are responsible for our death whenever, wherever and however it happens. "The God of Death does not bring a noose when he comes to drag people to his abode. The noose is made by the victim himself and he has it round his neck, awaiting the arrival of Yama. He has only to take hold of the rope and pull you along! It is a three-stranded rope, the strands being: egoism, sense attachment and desire."

for the chance! Did he not have men to guard him—soldiers, security men, body-guards? But it was all in vain. So, while life persists do good, speak soft and sweet, never injure or insult another, serve those in need and keep the image of God, ever before the mind's eye."

Swami has gifted us a beautiful picture to ponder upon so that we can frame our attitude to death. "How do you know which is the last moment?" The God of Death does not give notice of his arrival to take you away. He is not like the photographer who says, "I am about to click. Are you ready? "If you wish that your portrait be hung on the walls of heaven, that it must be attractive, if you want your stance, your pose and your smile to be as attractive as possible, then be ready for the click day or night with His name ever resting on the tongue."

Swami has said that the inquiry into death is actually inquiry into one's own reality. Those who have the inner urge to achieve the higher wisdom which confers liberation, have therefore, to reflect upon and investigate the phenomenon of death. Do not postpone the reflection on death, feeling that it is inappropriate and profitless. Every mystery latent in human existence is entwined with the mystery of death. The glory and majesty of the Divine are fully revealed only when Death is investigated.

To sum up, Swami's recipe for facing death is as follows: Live every moment as if it were the last, fully, intensely, purposefully, selflessly and joyfully, so that we are too busy to worry about death. When death comes, welcome the click with a smile.

Swami says, "Work as if you were to live a hundred years, pray as if you were to die tomorrow."

***GURUDEVA VANI:***

## **Karma and Divine Grace**

The edifice of man's life is erected on four walls: Janma, Karma, Dharma, Brahman (Birth, Actions, Duties and Brahman). These four walls are interdependent and inextricably connected with each other. What for does birth take place? To perform actions. How are actions to be done? Actions should be filled with Righteousness (Dharma). Through Righteous actions, one should realise the Brahman.

Man has forgotten this goal. Today actions are related to physical needs and "Dharma" is concerned with getting on in the world. There is no awareness of the Supreme. Without four bare walls, even a cottage cannot be erected. The mansion of life has to be supported by the four essential walls of Janma, Karma, Dharma and Brahman.

instrument of this vital force. Karma sustains life in the body, through the body. Every action done by man is described as Karma. Man performs actions for the fruits thereof. He takes birth again to experience the results of his actions. That is why, it is declared in the Gita: "Man's life in the world is bound by Karma" ("Karmaanubandhini manushyaloke"). It is not possible to get away from action. As everything is associated with action, it is essential to perform actions properly.

Our condition in life is determined by our actions. Our habits are governed by our actions. Habits determine conduct. And conduct determines our future. Hence it is supremely important how we act. Good and evil in life are determined by the nature of our actions. To claim that "I am the doer, I am the experiencer and I am the enjoyer," is a sign of egoism. Good and evil result from actions, whether one is aware of their consequences or not.

### **Krishna and Dharmaja**

After the end of the Mahabharata war, Krishna approached Dharmaja and told him: "Dharmaja! The battle is over. You have been victorious. You must now be crowned as king." Dharmaja did not accept Krishna's advice. He told Krishna: "Did I kill so many of my kinsmen and friends only to assume the crown? For whose sake should I become the ruler? I killed many of my kinsmen and I was also responsible for the death of many others. Over whom should I rule? What joy can I derive from such rulership? I have no use for this paltry kingship. I do not wish to be crowned." Dharmaja pleaded in this way with Krishna and would not agree for his coronation. Krishna realised that it was no use himself arguing with Dharmaja.

The ways of the Lord are mysterious. In everything He does, He sets an example to the world. No action of the Lord is without a purpose, though its meaning may not be obvious. When the Lord comes in human form, proximity to the Lord may conceal the full import of His words or actions.

Krishna thought that Dharmaja might be more amenable to advice if it came from a venerable elder like Bhishma. So He took Dharmaja to the grandsire of the Pandavas, Bhishma, who was lying on a bed of arrows. Krishna knew that Dharmaja would heed Bhishma's sage counsel. If Bhishma advised and encouraged Dharmaja to go through the coronation and accept the burdens of kingship, Krishna felt that Dharmaja would not refuse. So, after leaving Dharmaja with Bhishma, Krishna retired.

Bhishma looked at Dharmaja with tears streaming from his eyes and said, "Dharmaja! Will you wholeheartedly respect my words?" Dharmaja held the hands of his grandsire and reverentially promised him that he had never gone against Bhishma's injunctions in the past and would not do so in the future.

### **Bhishma's advice**

Bhishma then said: "Dharmaja! Before the war, you relied on Krishna. You regarded him as your mentor. He, whom you revered as your mentor before your ends had to be realised, is

ignore Krishna's advice now. You are looking upon him only as a kinsman. Krishna is God incarnate. No doubt he is your kinsman and friend, but you have no conception of his powers. Looking at the world externally, you are wasting your time. Look within and see the Truth," advised Bhishma.

Dharmaja replied: "Grandsire! I know full well with what love you brought us up when we were left fatherless. You fostered us with greater care than even a father could have bestowed. But we fought against you in the war and brought you down. We resorted to a deceitful stratagem to make our Guru, Dronacharya, lay down his arms. We killed numerous dear kinsmen and friends in the war. After all this, what joy can I derive by ascending the throne? Please spare me from the ignominy of coronation." Dharmaja piteously pleaded with Bhishma in these words.

### **The bonds of karma**

Bhishma, smiling at Dharmaja, said: "The world is bound by Karma. Dharmaja! You are well versed in the scriptures. Nevertheless, you speak about having killed so many persons. Who are the killed? And who are the killers? You do not have the power to kill or to make others kill. Killing and getting killed are the consequences of past karmas. Karma is responsible for everything that happens. Let me illustrate this by a story."

Bhishma then related the following story: "A woman who had an only son lost her husband. Taking her son with her she was going through a forest to go to another village. On the way she rested under a tree with her son sleeping on her lap. Suddenly the boy woke up with a shriek and started crying. The mother woke up and noticed that a cobra had bitten her son and was wriggling back into an anthill. Within a few moments the boy died. While the mother was wailing helplessly over the death of her son, a highway robber, who was passing that way, heard her cries and enquired about the cause of her grief. Learning about the death of the son from a snakebite, the robber decided to dig up the anthill and kill the cobra. At that stage, the woman took hold of the robber's hands and pleaded: "Dear man! Please do not kill that cobra. Will my son get back his life if you kill that cobra? I cannot escape my fate." The robber said: "That poisonous snake can cause the death of others who may come here. I have a duty to destroy poisonous creatures." Then the mother replied: "Son! It is by the dictates of Fate (Kala) that this poisonous cobra bit my son. His death is the result of his own past karma."

"We are not aware of the consequences of our actions when we do them. We grieve over our calamities when they occur. Behind every good or bad event there is a cause. Dharmaja! People talk about Yama, the God of Death. He comes in innumerable forms to take away life at the appointed time. Yama is called Time or destiny. Dharmaja! Karma is responsible for everything. How is it that you could not see what a simple woman realised so clearly? You are well versed in all the Shastras and know what is wrong. Knowing that gambling is among the five great sins, you succumbed to playing dice and as a result had to endure innumerable difficulties including living in the forest as an exile with your family. Were not all your ordeals the consequence of your action? No one can escape from the consequences of one's deeds. With God's grace, the results can be overcome. But if one disobeys the commands of the Lord, no one can save him.

actions," concluded Bhishma.

### **Submit to the divine will**

Finally, Bhishma exhorted Dharmaja in these words: "The Divine will is the basis of all action. The Divine can annul the consequences of actions or provide the means of expiation for them. Hence, your duty is to carry out faithfully the Divine command. If you act to the contrary you will be ruining your life. Bow to Krishna's command and get yourself crowned."

Dharmaja, however, continued to be racked by doubts as to how the law of Karma operated. Was the boy's death from the cobra bite a decree of Fate? Bhishma reassured Dharmaja. The Lord grants the fruits of every action, according to each person's deserts, in any form, in any situation, through any agency. All results follow from the actions. The wicked Kauravas, although they knew the principles of morality and justice, subjected the noble Pandavas to such troubles and ordeals that ultimately their entire clan was destroyed. Because the Divine was on their side, the Pandavas were victorious. Bhishma, therefore, advised the Pandavas not to ignore Krishna's advice in the hour of their success.

It is not easy to explain in what form and in what manner Karma follows a person. A cow, which may feel proud about its horns and its size, finds itself controlled by a rope through its nostrils on account of its Karma. Hence one must bear with whatever troubles that may come, treating them as the consequences of past actions. But the effects can be mitigated or removed by earning the grace of the Divine.

Men today do not view things in this manner. Considering some person as the author of their misfortunes, they tend to abuse him, without thinking about their own actions. They should realise the truth of the saying: "As you sow, so shall you reap." Your present state is the result of your past actions. Therefore, by doing good acts in the present, you must ensure beneficial results in the future. Everyone should realise that for happiness or sorrow, profit or loss, his own actions are responsible.

Of all actions, nothing is so reprehensible as the violation or ignoring of Divine injunctions. The Vedas have emphasised the important role of Karma and urged that due regard should be had for its operation.

Students should try to understand the inner meaning of all teachings. They should not concern themselves with the actions or words of individuals. They must concentrate on their respective duties. Intelligent persons may discuss matters of moment. The small-minded may discuss personalities. Both types of discussions are likely to be exercises in futility. What should be realised is that nothing happens without a cause and that every result is the outcome of a particular action. Once the cause is understood, one should act on that understanding, avoiding actions which are bound to have undesirable consequences and performing actions which will yield beneficial results. Do not be concerned about whether someone is watching your actions or

times and in all situations.

Today people claim to be working for world peace. How can those who have not achieved peace within themselves hope to achieve world peace? Those who have not learnt to look within themselves and cultivate a broad spiritual outlook are not competent to work for peace in the world.

Students! Your actions are responsible for your good or ill, your fame or disgrace, your joy or grief. Do not get excited over petty demands and desires. Fix your minds on permanent ideals. The discipline you observe should not be confined to your tenure in the college. When Bhishma questioned Yudhishtira whether his faith in Krishna endured only as long as the war lasted, Yudhishtira was bitten to the quick. He realised his mistake and felt repentant deep in his heart.

### **"Lest you forget"**

Today's students, however, seem to be immune to such appeals. Do you need Sai Baba only for obtaining a seat in the Institute? Don't you need the help of Sai after you have finished your studies? You will need Sai always. You must not forget how you completed your studies and what the Sathya Sai Institute has done for you. If you forget this, you are in for all sorts of troubles. You should not forget the pledge you have given to the Institute, whatever difficulties you may confront. Remember the example of Emperor Harishchandra who went through every kind of ordeal to honour his plighted word. Treat your word as a sacred expression of the Divine. Do not speak ill of others. Do not give room for attachment and hatred in your hearts. Education is for acquiring wisdom, not for getting material wealth.

Do not treat lightly your human birth. Show respect for the words of elders, parents and teachers. The Yadava clan, in which Sri Krishna was born, was totally destroyed because of the disrespect shown to a sage. Bharat's history is full of the lives of great souls. Bear in mind their message, which will be of use to you sometime or other. Their teachings are wholesome medicine for the spirit.

Mundane existence is subject to a variety of diseases. For all of them, remembrance of the name of the Lord is the panacea. When you install the name of the Lord in your hearts, revere your parents and respect the Divine that is present in all beings, you will be able to lead ideal lives. Pursue your studies for achieving this consummation. Cultivate good habits. Thanks to your good Karmas in previous lives you are having the good fortune of studying here. Take full advantage of this precious opportunity.

### **Krishna the surgeon**

Dharmaja once asked Krishna: "Krishna! Why did you bring about this disastrous war for the sake of this contemptible rulership over a kingdom? Forty lakhs of warriors died in this battle. Only the Pandavas have survived. Is there any justice in sacrificing the lives of forty lakhs of men for the sake of the five Pandavas?" Krishna replied "Dharmaja! You are looking at the numbers involved. I am looking at the principles at issue. Can any crores of insects equal a lion?

"Kurukshetra is comparable to the body. 'Kuru' means work. The body is the instrument of action. Because it is the field in which action takes place, it is called 'Kshetra' (field). Supposing in the back of the body, there is gangrene. If it is allowed to grow, it will spread throughout the body. If the gangrene is on the arm or the leg, you can remove it by amputation of the limb concerned. But when it is in the back, how do you deal with it? A major operation will be necessary. Likewise the evil qualities in the Kauravas were like cancer in the body politic. If they had been ignored, the entire nation would have been infected. Hence, acting as the surgeon, I carried out the operation of the Mahabharata war, with Arjuna as my assistant. In the process, forty lakhs of 'microbes' died. For the sake of saving these microbes, should we let the patient die? To save the individual, you have to eliminate the cancerous microbes. Likewise, persons with evil qualities are like cancer cells. I saved the nation by destroying these bacteria. There is no sin in this," declared Krishna.

### **How the divine acts**

If for doing a good deed, you have to cause a little harm, even that should be regarded as a help. But, in all such cases, there should be absolutely no element of self-interest. Whatever help is rendered with a selfish motive behind it is no help at all. Because the Divine is totally free from self-interest, whatever He does is utterly blameless and is solely for the welfare of the world. It is foolish to question the propriety of God's actions. There is nothing beyond His powers. He is the creator, the protector and the destroyer. When He protects, no one asks why He protects. But when He does not protect, questions are asked about His inaction. When the Lord punishes, the question is asked: "Why does God inflict punishment? Is it not wrong on His part to do so?" Such questions are motivated by selfishness and self-interest. God is totally free from any taint of self-interest. To indulge in controversies over Divine actions is supreme folly.

There is a valid reason behind every action of the Divine. Therefore, your duty is to pray to God and secure His grace. Take, for instance, the case of Sakkubai. When Sakkubai wanted to join the pilgrims going to Pandharpur, Krishna could have openly arranged for her joining the party. But He did not do so. If she had gone against her husband's will, she would have got a bad name. To maintain her good reputation and show her as an example to the world, Krishna assumed Sakkubai's form and subjected Himself to all the harassments of the mother-in-law, while the real Sakkubai was sent to Pandharpur. Why did Krishna do this? The Lord is ready to assume any form and subject Himself to any hardship to uphold Dharma. On the one hand, public opinion has to be respected. On the other side, the devotee should not go astray. Only the Divine knows how to reconcile these opposites.

Men in general can look at things only from their personal point of view. They cannot have an integral view of things. Students should note that on the one side they have to set an example to the world by their behaviour. At the same time they have to conform to the will of the Divine. They have to follow both these courses. They have to please their parents who have done so much for them. They have to bring credit to the Institute which has been their Alma Mater. Whether you are here or elsewhere, your conduct must be the same. It is unworthy of a human being to vary his behaviour according to place and time.



### **Sanctify every act**

Recognising the supremacy of action, you must see that everything you do is pure and holy. Action is not limited to what you do with your hands. What you hear, what you see, what you speak and even what you think—all of them constitute action. This means that the things you see, the words you hear, the thoughts you think and the speech you make should all be pure. All that you take in through your five senses should be wholesome and pure, not merely your food alone. Only then can it be Satwic. Devotion is not confined to bhajans and exhibiting a yearning for Swami. Every one of your actions should be filled with devotion.

Each one is the architect of his destiny. And, as Bhishma pointed out to Dharmaja, no one can avoid the consequences of his actions. What he can do is to pray to the Lord to show to him how he can atone for his wrong doings.

It is essential to suffuse all our actions with Dharma. That Dharma should be dedicated to the Divine. When this happens, life becomes sanctified. There may be no rebirth at all. Therefore, build your lives on the four pillars of Janma, Karma, Dharma and Brahman. This is my benediction for all of you.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse to the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute,  
at the students' hostel, on 21-2-1988*

### **Moments of Revelation**

As I sit alone in a rather pensive mood, attempting a mental resume of my student life at His lotus feet, the thought overawes me that, in fact, seven precious summers have passed since I entered the portals of this paradise. It is unbelievable... for was it not only yesterday that I joined Bhagavan's college? Verily one forgets to keep track of time when one is living with Eternity itself.

The thought gives me joy with a tinge of sorrow, for when I try to peep into the inner recesses of my heart to find the glow of His love, I at once discover that He has been unfailing in His bountiful love for me. In spite of knowing that He is the way and the goal for all of us without whom our lives would not bear any meaning or taste, we fail to understand His love.

On a number of occasions, He has reminded us to realise the DIVINITY in Him and not to be deluded by external appearances. Through parables and examples, jokes and stories He has been constantly trying to drive home that TRUTH in all of us.

One such golden moment came in my life on a bright morning. The Day was the 7th of November 1984. All of us were eagerly awaiting Swami's Darshan. As He came out, He picked

Mandir apparently to clean and tidy up the room.

After going round the devotees and granting them the much-coveted darshan, Swami came straight into the room, where we were engaged in cleaning the place. We all stood in front of Him with folded hands. Swami in His characteristic and Divine way proceeded to grant us one of the rarest moments of my life.

Swami pointed to a deerskin which was rolled and kept on a rack, and addressed one of the boys, "Take this deer skin to the Himalayas and do Tapasya there?" For a moment the boy was nonplussed. "Did He really mean it? Is Swami telling seriously or is it meant to be a pleasant joke?" There was silence for a few seconds, while Swami waited for an answer from us. Swami looked at me and asked, "Is it good to do Tapasya in the Himalayas?" I promptly said, "Yes Swami." But this answer did not satisfy Him. He Himself said, "Do you not realise that the RESULT of all Tapasya is Here?" and pointed at Himself.

He thus gave us a glimpse of His Divinity and showed that there is no need to do Tapasya in the Himalayas when the object of all such endeavours was right in front of us in flesh and blood. He continued, "Whenever I give darshan to those who are engaged in penance in the Himalayas, even for a few seconds, they feel extremely blissful for having attained that vision of God. And they regard it as a great experience. But you all are having my darshan every morning and evening, yet, you never realise the value of it."

He gave further a beautiful illustration. "Whenever people desire to see an elephant they go to the forest. And by chance, if they see even the tail of an elephant whose body might have been hidden among the bushes and shrubs, they feel immense joy at having seen an elephant. In your case, there is an elephant (Sai Geeta) in front of your Hostel. But you do not pine to see her, because she is a familiar sight."

We must realise the value of His Divine Darshan from these examples. Since we are blessed with the opportunity to be near Him, we should make the best use of each and every moment of our life here. Sometimes, we may be confused by delusion and despair. In those weak moments, we must pray to Swami for His benign grace so that we may always feel His presence within us.

—**Rabin Kumar Diyali, II M.A., Prasanthi Nilayam Campus**

*Man is Divine, take it from me; he is really here on a holy mission for a divine purpose. To consider him as mean or weak or sinful is a great mistake. That is itself a great sin. Man must earn his birthright, namely, Santhi. Ashanti is for him an unnatural state. His real nature is Santhi. To recover his heritage of Santhi, man tries various methods: accumulation of riches, maintenance of health, mastery of knowledge, cultivation of the arts, though these are not fundamental. Three basic wants still remain after all these methods have been tried: the need for*

will be stabilised.

—Baba

## Silence anal Shouting

*The voice that shouts  
Hides in vain  
The fear that roars  
In the depth of the heart.*

*The gentle voice  
Sings of stillness  
Born of strength  
In the depth of the heart.*

—I. S. V., Boston, USA.

## "Teach me to be aware"

*O! Sai Lord, in my heart do dwell  
And all the darkness from there dispel;  
Remove all lust, falsehood and greed  
Let not hatred therein breed.*

*O! Lord, now all that I need  
Is Thou my character knead,  
My jealousy and ego blow,  
And make my Atma glow.*

*Lord! sow in me love, the seed,  
And in the dharmic path do lead;  
Let me Thy advice heed,  
That I may on Thy Amrith feed.*

*My mind, O! Lord, is like a steed  
That runs wild with blinkers freed  
Let me not get caught in the Maya snare'  
Teach me, Lord, ever to be Aware.*

*STUDENTS' CORNER:*

## **The Agni Pariksha**

"So, you are from Puttaparthi, are you?" For the hundredth time I winced and inwardly I was making a mental note to tell my mother not to tell everyone that I was from Parthi. I told the gentleman, "Yes, Sir, I am." "Well, then, you would like to tell us something about the place, how it runs..." And so it went on.

The conversation might sound insignificant to some. But to Sathya Sai students, this is an 'Agni Pariksha' or an ordeal by fire-the test to determine his moral standard as shaped by the Lord. Of course, one cannot engage in the unholy duty of categorizing those who fail in this test as "untrue" Sathya Sai students. There might be several reasons for a person's failure to live up to Sai ideals at a crucial moment. Sai's ideals are the highest and considering the world from which we all have come to Parthi, it is obvious that time and patience are needed to see the day when a student can proudly say that he is a Sathya Sai student without being afraid of behaving otherwise.

### **Testing time**

Holidays are one thing which several students look forward to so that they can go back to their parents. At the same time they are not happy at the prospect of leaving Parthi. The moment the bus leaves Parthi, it is as if some part of our being is left behind. This feeling invariably has an effect on our behaviour, the extent of which depends directly upon how far one has been able to grasp and absorb our Lord's teachings. For some, holidays are not just a stretch of days to enjoy, but a period of severe trial in which their degree of absorption of the Lord's ideals is tested.

There are three types of people one is likely to come across in the world outside, viz., (i) those who seem genuinely interested in us and wish to know all about Bhagavan Baba, (ii) those who are just not bothered, and (iii) those who want to know more for the purpose of criticism and ridicule. Most of us, students, would undoubtedly like to move with people belonging to the first category and would not mind meeting a few of the second. But, we definitely would prefer to keep away from the third. But with all the three types of people one will undergo the above-mentioned 'Agni Pariksha'.

How does this work? The people in the first category have some regard for us and at any word of disparagement from us, they begin to revise their opinions about us. Hence, one has to succeed in the test with them.

Regarding the second category of persons who are uncommitted in their opinion, it is just enough if one speaks the right words that will tilt their opinion more to the brighter side. As for the third category, most of us cannot do anything. If they refuse to acknowledge the Lord's presence, then we should remember that they are to be pitied rather than shunned.

Most of us have seen Swami constantly urging us to go home for the holidays. But, how many of us readily realize that He is sending us into the testing crucible—the place where we are tested for the qualities we have imbibed at Prasanthi Nilayam. But, there is nothing to worry. If we just think about Swami and call on His help at such times of test, we may be sure He is there. This is my personal experience.

### **Cynic turned devotee**

I have an uncle who is very much of a cynic and casts doubts on everything. I was always dreading the prospect of encountering him and be the target of his bombardment. One day what I feared happened. That day he dropped in at our home and said, "Ah! How is your Puttaparthi?" I muttered within myself "Hey Bhagavan!" and said, "Fine, uncle." Then followed a fusillade of questions and I answered them all in monosyllables, until I met my mother's disapproving frown. And then? I saw Swami frowning that way. I knew then that I must stop my uncle's tirade. I fervently prayed to Bhagavan and then started answering my uncle's questions with more fire and punch in them. I even found myself plunging him into thoughtful silence now and again. I felt very proud of this achievement, though I never took the credit for myself. It was only later that I realised that Swami had been with me at that time. I knew this when I heard my uncle tell my father "Sai (referring to me) has matured quite a lot! I have never heard such an argument from him!" It was four weeks later that I got a letter from him in which he expressed his desire to come to Parthi!

Hence, Sai students need not get panicky at the thought of holidays. Of course, we should remember to have an iron control over ourselves when we go home for holidays. Knowingly or unknowingly, there are a thousand eyes watching our every move, and as many mouths to spread the word. Let us bravely go forward and face our Agni Pariksha with the same zest and zeal that we show to the "enjoying part" of our holidays. Let us remember the joy that we would give our Lord if we come out with flying colours in this test. Let that joy in His eyes and our satisfaction at that, be our guiding light to our goal.

*—M. Sainath, III B.Sc., Vidyagiri*

### **The Miracle the World Needs**

*—Dr. William Jackson, U.S.A.*

I believe the world awaits a miracle.

Yes, nature sighs, on the lookout for a magnificent wonder.

And the purpose of magnificence, I believe, is to enshrine significance.

The Sunrise is magnificently attractive, drawing us to the day's work.

And Sri Sathya Sai Baba's glory and leelas uplift, re-attune us to Divinity, putting us on the road to realization, the road of self-sacrifice, the purifying discipline of dedicated labour.

The call to give of ourselves comes again and again in life, dawning on us in ever-new circumstances, and that is grace; it is also grace to be listening when it comes, and to follow the inspiration which Sri Sai Baba signals from within our hearts, and to respond, to cooperate with Him and vibrate to His tuning, reflecting a fraction of His perfection.

I believe the world awaits a miracle. But as I said, I also believe miraculous wonder and beauty always conceal a deeper purpose. We are drawn to the miraculous manifestation in order that we might reach the meaning it conceals; the teaching of a truth deeper than our senses can appreciate. Sri Sai Baba gives us whatever we want, so that we may really want what He truly has to give.

### **A divine sign**

Humanity craves a miracle, a Divine sign. But when we desire to see the soothing of another's suffering as much as we desire to see a marvellous event, when we crave to see the hungry and homeless fed and sheltered as much as we wish to observe fascinating miracles, when we seek the well being of confused humanity as much as we delight in being astounded by wonders, we shall begin to do our share in making the life on earth more worthwhile, harmonious and spiritual, and I believe God will be thrilled to observe this miracle in our lives...

If we are satisfied with something less than this, it is as if we have filled our stomachs with the appetizer before starting in on the main meal. All the glories of God are meant to be aids to help us find fulfillment in the substantial truth of God.

It is a miracle—and God waits to witness it—to be able to work patiently 20-30-40 years at a task in a world that is like a snake forever shedding its skin, always changing.

May the most silent, deep intimate moments of devotion which human beings have known be seeds which in time sprout to do far reaching good, linking life to life, in Divine realization.

May we have faith in the miracle of wisdom—through the changes in time it remains fresh, thirst-quenching, satisfying, saving—Praise to the wisdom of all ages and places; may we love, earn and apply it every day, and witness its miraculous effects.

invisible unity, the love sung by St. Francis of Assisi, and the mystic rabbi known as the Baal Shem Tov—love which we know because we have felt Sri Sai Baba's love.

### **Dedicated work**

The earth moans for a marvel—the marvel it longs to see is what the Lingayats of Karnataka say: "Work is heaven." Dedicated work is the celestial magic that fulfills time's glory. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King both gave their lives to it. Earth sighs for the astonishing—and what is it but wisdom, the miraculous alchemy which in the midst of change finds eternity, and which inspired by the spirit, comes to the rescue of the unfortunate, spreading peace. All the great souls from all the religions of the world-Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian have been moved by that great wisdom.

But most of us are like a people who have found a treasure, but have not yet really spent very much of it.

We are like inquirers who have found the amazing truth, but have not fully understood or adjusted to all its implications. We are like travellers who have found the guide, but we have not yet followed all of his directions.

We have heard the royal command but are only just beginning to carry it out by adventuring to the utmost of our capacity until we reach the promised land. How fortunate we are to have the Avatar nearby to tell us "Fear not."

### **True spirituality**

True spirituality is a miracle which has always inspired beyond artificial limits and barriers of nations, languages, institutions. A study of history reveals that over a thousand years ago the Buddha's life was translated into Latin by a Christian named Johannes, and that his life story was so inspiring that the people instinctively seized upon it. They incorporated the Buddha into the Christian Faith under the name of St. Jehosephat (a name derived from "Bodhisattva"). To remind you of how the spirit moves people without regard to national boundaries think of this: That story of Buddha's life was instrumental in a religious experience which Leo Tolstoy had. And Tolstoy was one of the people Mahatma Gandhi found inspiring; and Gandhi was so inspiring to Martin Luther King that when Reverend King visited India in 1959 he said that in touring other countries he was a tourist, but in coming to India he was a pilgrim, because of what Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violent, passive resistance meant to him.

### **How the spirit moves**

The spirit moves in all the regions of the world. Humanity's situation could be illustrated by the story of the Lands.

Once upon a time the Land of Sunrise boasted to her companions the Land of Sunset and to the South Land: "I'm finer than you—I'm the most loved one of the Lord Sun, who always visits me first thing every day."

The Land of Sunset disagreed: "No, I'm finer than you, I'm the most loved of the Lord Sun, for he lingers with me longest, at the end of each day."

The South Land laughed and argued: "No, I'm finer—the most loved—the Lord Sun smiles on me most warmly and that's a fact."

The Lord Sun heard this quarrel and laughed: "Why are you arguing? Better to show me, lovely countries, what you do—and whoever creates the loveliest is my first, my choice."

The Land of Sunrise chose to work on the within, exploring inner life, discovering eternal light in the depths. "I am the loved one, for in my heart I am not separate from Him!"

The Sunset Land used the power of the Lord Sun to work on her portion of earth, and to build a great city, a perfect kingdom. "I am the beloved, the Sun leads me to just order!"

The South Land smiled, glowing with the Lord Sun and ripened in unifying pure love, good and beneficent and joyful for all.

When the time came to judge who had won, the Lord Sun declared it was a three-way tie: "Each of you is right, and all together you are one in truth—knowing Light within, building God's city, fulfilling human destiny with love. Wisdom and love expressed in good works—this is my idea of success in life. My dear lands, working together you'll always share in the Lord's smiles."

Each part of earth has its talents and personality, striving toward fulfillment. We depend on each other, learn from each other and help each other in life. One finger alone cannot plant a garden or pull a turnip, but the ten fingers of the hands working together in cooperation and harmony can work wonders.

### **Universal love**

"Expand into universal love, unshaken equanimity and ever-active virtue. That is the path which will bring out the divinity in you to the fullest." (Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 5-3-73)

Praise that which is of the spirit—let us rejoice in it and take it to us and make it our own. That which draws us closer to God, expands our love, moves us to express the oneness of Spirit in service, let us practice it, grow strong and established in it. Whatever is stagnant, and repulsive to the ever-fresh spirit, let us reject.

We who have glimpsed Perfection personified now have an ideal, a hope. We have taken Sri Sai Baba into our lives, because He has taken us into His life.

Let us humbly but self-confidently cooperate in this Divine adventure, surrendering to God's will, knowing the oneness of God within and without.



This is the miracle Bhagavan Baba's three appearances perform in countless lives, in India and Latvia, Poland and America, Canada and Africa, El Salvador and Malaysia, United Kingdom and Australia.

Let us venture forth manifesting Sai Beauty's loving bliss, Sai Goodness's active peace, Sai Truth's divine consciousness (Sundaram, Sivam and Sathyam).

This miracle of our Divine destiny is eagerly awaited by the Lord of all lands. As Meister Eckhart the European mystic of the Middle Ages said, "God laughs and plays in good deeds."

Every achievement of the human race, no matter how inevitable it looks in retrospect, was once a hopeful adventure involving initiative, daring, and toughening endurance. Let us aspire and Sai will inspire. Let us harbour the adventure in our prayerful ideals, and set sail, with the strength of the grace of Sai as our sails needed wind. The miracle is "Sai Ram".

### **"Sai Ram"**

The miracle is Sai Ram; Sai the inspirer, and the delight, the person and the power, the Being and the Name-Sai Ram. We have all been in many situations where we could not sit in meditation, or do Hatha Yoga, or sing aloud; but few are the situations where we cannot repeat "Sai Ram."

Baba teaches us "Fill every moment with some constructive beneficial activity, dedicating it to God, the Master who directs the activity, invisibly but inevitably." "When there is a king like Rama again, there will be a servant like Hanuman" a Telugu saying goes. And it is true. We see Sai devotees in action and hear their lives humming with Sai Ram, serving like Hanuman. It is inspiring.

There is another saying in Telugu, which you might hear during the monsoon in South India: "Tadiste tadistaam. Mokka molichi pom, kadaa?" If we get wet, we get wet, don't worry—we're not seeds that'll sprout, are we?" Well, I hope that in the rain of Sai's grace we are seeds that will sprout, and blossom, and bring forth heavenly fruit.

*Man is the embodiment of Sathyam, Sivam and Sundaram, and it will call on all to live up to that Glory. He has to realise the Truth and demonstrate in thought, word and deed that Truth is the very basis of his existence. Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you strong, steady, kin with all, and free from the bonds of lust and hate. He has to learn the lesson of Sivam: spread consolation and comfort through speech and action, swallow the poison of anger and greed and make it ineffective in its effort to harm the world.*

—Baba

## **The Sai Sense of Humour**

**—Peggy Mason**

Someone once wrote, "God must have a sense of humour. Where do you think we get ours from? The devil?" A sense of humour is, indeed, a divine attribute and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba—our divine 'Swami'—possesses this attribute in abundance. It could not be otherwise.

Always he uplifts our spirits because he himself is in a constant state of bliss. Always, in a group interview for instance, when many are over-awed or overcome by his presence and the literally breath-taking aura which surrounds him, he puts everyone at ease immediately by his humorous or telling remarks which produce laughter and joy. Ego takes flight and the most self-important person becomes as a child at the Mother's knee.

He smiles at our stupidities with infinite tenderness and love, for are not all human beings somewhat ridiculous? The ability to see the funny side, and to be able to laugh at ourselves, separates the human from the animal; and is often a God-given safety valve, an escape hatch, when facing the vicissitudes of earthly living. It is, moreover, a sign of our innate divinity. For Man, at his present stage of evolution, can be described as 'a divine human animal'. Every individualised spark of the full Flame from which it emanated is progressing (oh, how slowly it seems!) from animal to human and from human back to divinity.

The Avatar, on the other hand, makes the willing sacrifice of assuming a human form, enduring certain necessary and painful limitations, for our sake alone. Thus he says, "The Lord has to come in human form and move among men, so that He can be listened to, contacted, loved, revered and obeyed. He has to speak the language of men and behave like a human being, as a member of the species. Otherwise, he would be either negated or neglected or feared and avoided." And so he can also say, "When I am with a man I am a man; when I am with a woman I am a woman; when I am with a child I am a child; when I am alone I am God." Thus, the Avatar can be and is, all things to all people, according to their need and their state of consciousness. He is both divinely human and humanly divine. The mixture may be unpredictable, but is always irresistible.

As a child, he sometimes indulged in impish pranks and leelas. There was the teacher of the village school, for example, who made the young Sathya stand on a bench as a punishment for not taking notes (He had no need, since all knowledge was his from the beginning). When the teacher tried to rise from the chair as the next teacher came in for the following class, he found he was unable to do so, for each time he tried to stand up the chair stuck fast to his posterior. It was only when the new teacher, who was aware of the child's divine and miraculous nature, whispered to him that he had better tell the boy to come down from the bench that he was able to vacate the chair.

There is always a hint of the Divine Child in this most glorious and unique Sai phenomenon. I am constantly haunted by a delightful incident recounted by Professor Kasturi in his memoirs, *Loving God*. Some thirty or so years ago, there were about only fifty residents at Prasanthi Nilayam, living in a small cluster of tenements near the Mandir; and every afternoon at 4 o'clock the young Baba visited them, though never in the same order. One day, Kasturi—then a retired professor—stood waiting at his window, anxiously watching for Baba to emerge from the front door of another dwelling. Suddenly, from behind him, he felt hands over his eyes, and the words, "Guess who?" Kasturi writes, "My reply was a cascade of tears." Baba had left the other house by the back door and managed to creep round unseen to Kasturi's house, also from the back, to surprise him. I find this little incident totally enchanting.

He reveals and uncovers the child in us all, stripped of ego, pomposity and pride. For, as it was said long ago, "Unless you become as little children you can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." Even when he comes in a dream for some purpose (and has confirmed to me personally that no one can dream of him without his will), infectious humour is evident on occasion, so that one wakes at once elated and with a blissful smile on the lips.

Lessons too are often taught with loving humour. I always remember the lady who was using her japamala when Swami came along. He stopped, took the rosary into his own hands and with a pious expression repeated "Rama - Rama – Rama—I must do the laundry today—Rama..." Then he returned the rosary to her with a smile. No words were necessary.

A young man from the United States received an unexpected lesson in patience, not to say in humility. Apparently he was under the impression that, having made the journey to Puttaparthi, he would or should be accorded an interview right away, oblivious of the fact that many people have waited months, even years, or have never had an interview at all. When, after three weeks, he was blessed with an interview, he told Baba he had to wait for three weeks. Smilingly, the Avatar replied, "But I have had to wait several thousand years for you!"

—*From "Chandana"*

### **Unto Sai Each Day**

Give each day a joyful start,  
Offering the flowers of your heart,  
In thoughts and words, loving and sweet,  
At Bhagavan Baba's Lotus Feet.

Make your heart a holy shrine  
For Baba's Lotus Feet Divine;  
They'll lead you safely on your way

## Still a Child

I took your love for granted  
When I was just a child  
I knew not how to lisp aloud  
I knew not how to cry.

I fondly toyed the gifts of your love  
In the playhouse of life;  
I made a mess of everything  
That you'd let me have as mine.

Yet you kept me near your heart  
For I was only a child.

I take your love for granted  
For I am still a child.  
I know not how to lisp aloud,  
I know not how to cry.

I squander away your gifts of plenty  
In the dreamland of life;  
I misuse and waste everything  
And still seek many a thing.

Yet you keep me near your heart  
For I am ever your child.

—*Sandeepan Chatterjee,*  
*Research Scholar, Vidyagiri*

## Dialogue with the Divine

*The following questions to Bhagavan by a devotee and Bhagavan's answers have been taken from a devotee's diary.*

Q: When the Avatar is incarnate on earth, can His message be received even when one is not in His physical presence?

A: Yes, God's voice can be heard by man in his heart. It may come in the form of some signs or it may be an inner experience, where God's approval is felt. More than this, each aspirant can do some introspection as to whether he is practising qualities dear to God. If he is practising, he will get self-satisfaction. When one is not satisfied with oneself, how can God be satisfied?

Q: Swami often speaks of "experience of oneness." Whatever may be the Sadhana done by a sadhaka, is it not a fact that Swami's grace alone can confer that experience?

A: God's grace automatically follows Sadhana. This is the law.

Q: But, still, is there not the factor of 'time' for such an experience to come to a sadhaka?

A: There is no such thing as 'time' (being decided earlier). Everything depends on the intensity of Sadhana, because that experience is timeless. But as long as you keep fixed hours for Sadhana (like meditation in the morning and evening), the factor of 'time' for the ultimate experience to come is there. That experience, which is 'Kaalaatheetha' (transcending time) will come, when you lose the sense of time.

Q: Swami was telling us about 'contentment'. Does it apply to one's attainments in the spiritual domain also?

A: No, one should have contentment regarding worldly possessions. Spiritual field has no end. There should be contentment regarding things which have a beginning and an end. The Spirit has neither a beginning nor an end.

Q: The spiritual pursuit will end with man reaching God?

A: You cannot call it the 'end'. It is 'merger'.

Q: Many times, I am getting intense noble emotions thinking of some situations in the Ramayana or Bhagavatam. Is there any 'dosham' involved in it?

acceptable to your heart.

Q: But it is said that one should have 'Avyabhichara bhakti' (fidelity in devotion).

A-: 'Vyabhicharam' means the mind straying away from God to worldly things. As long as the mind is concentrated on divinity, it is not 'Vyabhicharam'.

Q: But, Swami, there is change of forms (involved in such experience)—from Rama to Krishna and to Sai.

A: If you give up one form and go to another, it is 'Vyabhicharam'. Here, there is no giving up of the form (no change of Ishtadevata). All the experiences ultimately merge into one form and finally into 'divinity'.

### **“All Belongs to God”**

Often Swami has said 'God is all that exists. He is intelligence in the insect, faithfulness in the dog, latent energy in the rock.' This is brought out in this little poem by Karl Gasslander.

*I see God within the eye  
Of every living thing,  
With voices soft, melodious,  
Will God's purpose bring  
To me, and all of Nature's  
Thousand sounds shall sing.  
My thoughts mount ever high  
And with the birds lake wing.*

*A sleeping rock, a lilting leaf  
Attest the holy Presence.  
All is at peace, all makes Love  
The only perfect essence.  
Reach out, embrace your world  
In knowing, joyous reverence,  
For all belongs to you and God  
And His majestic eminence.*

When to the flowers beautiful  
The Father gave a name,  
Back came a little blue-eyed one  
(All timidly it came),  
And standing at the Father's feet  
And gazing in His face,

It said in low and trembling tones,  
With sweet and gentle grace,  
'Dear God, the name Thou gavest me  
Alas! I have forgot!'  
Then kindly looked the Father down  
And said 'Forget-me-not.'

*- Anonymous*

### **“Bhaja Govindam”**

The perennial message of Adi Sankaracharya's "Bhaja Govindam" was conveyed to a large and appreciative audience in Bangalore on March 26th, 1988, in the Chowdiah Memorial Hall, by the senior research scholars of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in the presence of Bhagavan Baba.

The performance in Bangalore was arranged by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti within a week of the successful presentation of the play in the large Shanmukhananda Auditorium in Bombay.

Bhagavan Baba, who has been the inspirer and director of the play since its first presentation more than a decade ago, gave several new touches to enhance the appeal of the play and make its spiritual and edifying message more meaningful to a lay audience.

The series of scenes were designed to dramatise the message of each of the slokas of the hymn—the transitoriness of wealth, youth and progeny, the meaninglessness of egoistic pride, the need to get out of the ceaseless round of birth and death, the futility of rituals and pilgrimages performed out of selfish motives, the bondage created by attachment to kith and kin and possessions. In each scene, Sankara and his disciples recite the relevant slokas, while Sankara expounds their import.

In the last scene, the thirteen disciples of Sankara gather around their guru along with those whom Sankara had transformed by his teachings. They hail him as the Jagadguru and offer

Parabrahma, 'Tasmai Sri Guruve namaha.'" Sankara speaks to his disciples and clears several of their doubts. To a question, "How do we know great minds from ordinary minds?" Sankara replies, "Great minds reflect on ideas, ordinary minds think of events and petty minds discuss people. Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortunes—but great minds rise above them. Only a true devotee of God can possess such a mind." To another query on the nature of a true devotee, Sankara replies: "Hands at work in society, heads resting with God in the forest is the nature of a true devotee. A person is spiritual only when he recognises the spirit that pervades all, be it a piece of shining crystal, a smiling flower, a dumb animal or a thinking man." He declares that "the highest spiritual wisdom is when you realise unity in diversity."

As Sankara sang the "Bhaja Govindam", in which everyone joined, the echoes of this mellifluous chorus reverberated in the violin-shaped auditorium, filling the audience with the richness of the music and the profound message of the hymn.

The Governor of Karnataka, Sri Venkatasubhaiah, who was the Chief Guest, congratulated all the actors on their superb presentation.

*Like underground water, the Divine is there, in every one, remember! The Lord is Sarvabhutaantaratma, Sarvavyapi. He is the Atma of every being. He is in you as much as in every one else. He is not more in a rich being or bigger in a fat being; His spark illumines the cave of the heart of every one. The Sun shines equally on all; His Grace is falling equally on all. It is only you that erect obstacles that prevent the rays of His Grace from warming you. Do not blame the Lord for your ignorance or foolishness or perversity. Just as underground water wells up in a gushy spring when a bore is sunk down to that depth, by constant Ram Ram Ram Ram, touch the spring of Divinity and one day it will gush out in cool plenty and bring unending joy.*

—Baba

## A Chain Reaction through Love

—Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, Thailand

To understand the result of our actions, we need to look at our motives. Newton, from a physical standpoint, has stated that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, something demonstrable by science. But, is there any explanation for our action in the present that causes a reaction in the future? I would like to consider this point because we need to understand this principle to free ourselves.

I have been experimenting with the power of thought for some time. Scientists now accept that thoughts are transmitted and received as some waveform, or energy. Someone in tune with



vibrations but lose this ability by the time they reach the age of fifteen. Thoughts cannot be read, but involve energy transference and require concentration. Einstein has proved mathematically that any kind of energy transmitted will eventually return to the sender. It is the same with thoughts.

There are two drivers, one has no intention of harming anyone, and the other is intentionally aggressive. A pedestrian gets killed. The first driver, who had no bad thoughts, transmitted so little energy that would later return to him. But, a lot of energy left the body of the second driver, only to return to him later. We know that hatred and anger will cause harm.

Whatever we do to others, we do to ourselves. This energy of hate and anger is extremely harmful to our surroundings. Swami once said that the dangers of pollution of the atmosphere by evil thoughts are greater than a nuclear explosion. This planet is now surrounded by negative energy and it is radiating in all directions.

### **Selfless energy of love**

If we act without any intention, the result will not return to us. But, if our action is premeditated, whether positive or negative, the energy must return to us eventually. This is Karma. In the future we may be able to measure this thought energy which radiates from a person. Every Karma (Action) has a thought and desire behind it. Swami says the mind is a bundle of desires and if we have no desires or thoughts, our actions become pure. We can then do anything in the world without being afraid of this Karmic effect.

Swami has said that His mission to bring peace to the world will not fail. His influence in motivating us into selfless action, will help us to find peace within ourselves. We become completely satisfied with what we receive in return, joy and bliss. We begin to become one with the Atma. We can transmit this selfless energy of love to neutralise the negative forces at present enveloping the world. By bringing Love and Light, this positive energy is removing darkness and fear.

Many of us doubt that the world will regain the Golden Age with peace and prosperity in the next few decades. Scientifically, it is possible. When there is enough love on earth, a chain reaction will begin. It will affect others elsewhere. We know that when we are near people full of love, like Swami Himself, the feeling of peace is immediate.

### **Chain reaction**

As we know in science, a chain reaction brings about an explosion of a nuclear bomb. In order to create this chain reaction there should be sufficient mass of material to cause the reaction. If it has not reached the 'critical mass', nothing happens. As more material is added and the critical mass is reached, a chain reaction starts suddenly and releases tremendous energy and the bomb explodes. Likewise, as our love expands, through spiritual practice—meditation, service etc.—the world will reach its 'critical mass of love' and love and peace will explode throughout the universe.

Fill yourself with God and try to pervade the atmosphere with love. Swami will bring more and more people who will be full of love and the critical mass of love will not be an unreal thing. This will be the birth of the Golden Age.

We are in this world to learn from our experiences. Baba says that life is a challenge and we must learn to overcome obstacles. Without being tested, how can we progress? We must heed the call of Swami "to see good, hear good, speak good, do good and feel good." When confusion surrounds us it is only meant to strengthen us and raise our consciousness further. Swami has assured us that selfless love and service to humanity are the means by which we can free ourselves.

Another reason for love is to create an energy that will surround us. Scientists have discovered that there is an aura around every being. Six years ago, at St. Thomas' Hospital in London, Dr. Kilner discovered that he was able to see the aura of a body by viewing it through a chemical, Diasym, sandwiched between two sheets of glass. He also wrote a book in which he described the various colours of the aura and their relationship with moods such as anger, envy etc. Other scientists have been able to measure energy fields surrounding the bodies of individuals.

By having love in one's heart the aura will vibrate at a very high frequency. It will allow similar frequencies of energy to enter its aura but will deflect the low frequencies of negative energies. So, the more love we have, the more love energy gets attracted to us. But, if we are angry and full of hatred, the energy that surrounds us will be the reverse and will attract similar energy, allowing us to receive bad thoughts from others and find ourselves filled with undesirable qualities and emotions.

We must find peace for the world and peace for ourselves without any delay.

*—From a speech given in July 1987 in London*

## **Make the Best Use of Time**

"Don't waste time! Get in. Quick! Quick!" we hear Baba telling those whom He has selected for interview when they tarry at the door to have a closer look at Him, as they slowly troop into the Room at Prasanthi Nilayam. He says, "Time lost, life lost!" Anybody who has seen Him knows quite well that Baba is the Master of Time, the past master of Timing. Since God is, according to the scriptures the very Form of Time, Kalaswaroopa, He knows how precious Time is. Everyday, every moment, He demonstrates to us how best to utilise Time. Baba never misses an opportunity of impressing on us the value of Time.

without filling it with valid activity. Everyday everyone gets as much of time as everyone else, but how few know how to use it to advantage? Baba has said, "Every tick of the clock snips away a length of the thread of life. Money unspent remains in your account at the bank, but your life-time is spent with every moment, wisely or unwisely. Time marches relentlessly on!" In His inimitable fashion Baba brings out the fundamental difference between unspent money in the bank (which even becomes more from the interest accrued) and time. But water that has flowed downstream and the life that has ticked away cannot be retrieved. They have gone once for all, never to return. Nothing we do can stop Time!

Baba emphasises that we should not 'waste' Time. Waste means to "consume, spend, or employ uselessly or without adequate return." We must now examine what it means to use time 'purposefully'. What is the kind of 'adequate return' Baba is speaking about? Baba has said, "Every passing minute is a precious gift from God which you have to use for the best and most lasting benefit." The dictionary definition of 'adequate return' is not entirely casual or superficial. Adequate return for the time spent by us is the joy we earn for ourselves and the happiness we confer on others. In fact, the two happen together. Another 'adequate return' is the knowledge we gather of the technique of 'giving joy to others'. Baba has said that God has given us not only talents but also the time to fill our lives and the lives of others with the fruits of those talents. He insists that God-given talent must be utilized to the best advantage of those around us.

Baba says, "Use the present moment best to sharpen your skills, to broaden your intelligence, to expand your heart, and to master the technique of facing the challenges of life with courage and equanimity." This is the Divine recipe for making the best use of the time God has allotted to each of us. Possessing abilities is not enough. Every capacity of ours is a source of power which has to flow through a variety of channels to turn the wheels of Life. Unless we use our skills we cannot explore their possibilities. An artist must be eager to paint or chisel or write or sing. None of these or any other talent can unfold by neglect or non-use. Intelligence will not expand unless tested on the touchstone of challenges. Every challenge must be welcomed, even enticed to confront us so that we can learn to use our latent powers of intelligence. Baba says, "Love is expansion." How can we expand without opportunities to develop love? Opportunities must be sought for at every turn; they do not flock around us on their own. How do we learn courage unless we seek situations which demand courage? How can we be confident we have equanimity if we do not plunge boldly into situations likely to upset us? If we have a choice of relapsing into inactivity or going out into the world and facing the challenges it offers, what would we settle for? When we spend time in sleep we rise no wiser. But, when we meet people and problems, scatter love and joy, we have chosen aright.

Baba has warned, "Do not fritter away the minutes in loose talk, retailing scandal, poring over debilitating novels, witnessing films, or mixing with flippant companions. Do not be enslaved by your senses, but bravely resist their demands for indiscriminate freedom." Those activities from which Baba has warned us are the ones that rob us of the precious: treasure of Time. They sow the seeds of negative thinking; they fascinate us for a moment but leave a void

happy... by serving others and catering to their needs."

Once, while speaking to students Baba said, "All moments are moments of crisis, when crucial decisions are urgently needed. Life is a struggle between the forces of good and evil, of joy and grief, of success and failure." This is a very powerful statement about the Truth of Living. All moments are moments of crisis *only* when we realise that crucial decisions are called for. Sharpening our skills, broadening our intelligence, etc., need situations when decisions as between opposite goals have to be taken. We have a choice of avoiding them or facing them. But we get added strength every time we face them, whether we succeed or not; if we fail, we learn how to avoid failure next time.

Why do we waste our time with the tawdry and the trivial? This happens because we have not taught ourselves alternative methods of deriving joy which can be most lasting. Isn't it strange that although we know that life may be terminated at any time, and without notice, we ignore the fact when we think of ourselves? We refuse to think about our death. Unless we have an overpowering sense of urgency arising out of the conviction that our life may end any day, any hour, we will not undertake really worthwhile activities. Such a feeling came to Parikshit when he knew that he had only a week more to live, and he decided to spend that week in intensive spiritual contemplation on the glory of God. He had not done so until the warning came. Baba says, that we must be aware of two certainties, the event of Death and the Grace of God. We should make use of each successive moment with gratitude and reverence as if that were the last in our lives.

We work in spurts more often. To say the truth, we wait in hope that some work will come our way and some inspiration to carry it out. But there is only one trick to make things happen. Begin! Each moment well lived gives the momentum to propel the next moment; the pressure of each moment's activity pushes the next one forward, like the drops of water which move upward from the soil through the roots, the trunk, the stems, and ultimately to the tiny tip of leaf! Each drop comes in contact with the next and is pulled up by a subtle pressure.

We suffer from the mistaken notion that our brain works best when we relax. In fact it works best under stress, and with a deadline to complete a job. Initially, the deadlines can be fixed by an external agency. As we progress, we ourselves should be happy to fix it for ourselves so that we can generate the pressure within us enabling us joyfully to fill each moment with something worthwhile.

Time is a concept peculiar to man. Time is constituted of a sequence of events. Man has the rare ability to remember the sequence. Time is also based on the law of life and its march from birth, growth and death to decay. We notice before our eyes a seed becoming a sapling, a plant, and a tree and putting forth buds which blossom into flowers resulting in seeds. Filling time usefully means watching and knowing the sequence of the steps and the significance of each. The human being is not bound as other living beings by an inexorable sequence; he can hasten and prolong, anticipate and advance. Human creativity depends on this freedom of

the cycle of life and death to which we are all subject. If our life is spent in catering to low and petty desires, which enslave us, we will be ever more ruthlessly entangled in the cycle of birth and death.

Baba has declared that 'His Life is His Message'. Watching Him and His activities is a most profitable training we can have on the subject of using Time. Every moment is spent by Baba in the service of devotees. He has said, "I am using all my time for the *Ananda* of *Bhaktas* only. I have nothing of My own. Being useful for My *Bhaktas*, that is My selfish purpose."

When Baba hastens us into the Interview room, "Quick! Quick! Don't waste time!" He actually means, "Don't waste My time by delay. If I had some more time, then I could give more *Ananda* to you and others." That is the lesson we have to learn and the inspiration we must gather from Baba.

—*Dr. M. V. N. Murthy ("From The Greatest Adventure")*

## My Search for God

O, how I searched for you, my Lord  
How I searched for you.  
In temples, in mosques  
In holy shrines and in the Church's pew  
And, sad to say, I didn't find you.

Then I came to Prasanthi Nilayam  
And I found you.  
But my heart cautioned, "Your search  
Has not come to an end."  
You have a longer way to wend.

True, you have found the Lord in  
A physical frame.  
But you've not found the Lord  
Who resides in you.

I still continued my search,  
Now resolute, now desperate.  
But, I decided I shall not stop  
Till I find you.

After much counselling and vain  
Discussions,  
I thought, let the desire lie,  
May be the Lord Himself  
Will reveal His true form to me by and by,

Let me instead devote my time for  
My brothers and sisters.  
Let me serve them in all ways  
Possible.  
Let me find my solace in the smile  
Of a living being.

And when, in that fervour I plunged  
Myself in,  
I found, to and behold!  
The smiling face of our Lord  
In every face that smiled at me,  
In every eye that looked at me.  
And in my heart of hearts, I knew  
I had found Him,  
I had found Him at last.

Lord, I pray let this joy of your  
Presence never leave us.  
Nay, I need not even pray,  
For I know for sure that  
Love cannot be content to rest

It leaps to succour all who fall  
And finds its joy in giving all,

—*P. Venkateswaran, I M.B.A.,  
Prasanthi Nilayam*

## **Tears for the Lord**

I brought to you  
no precious gift,  
not even a fruit  
or a garland  
of bright  
fragrant flowers;  
only sighs,  
and hot tears,  
and a mind aflame  
like Mt. Vesuvius.  
You wiped my tears,  
and with a tender glance,  
a few soft words,  
and your gentle touch,  
transformed my heart  
within moments  
into a veritable

ocean of milk.

I approach you once again  
with tears,  
but with tears of joy,  
and of gratitude.  
I seek only this favour,  
dear Lord,  
don't wipe these tears;  
Let my eyes remain  
ever moist  
with remembrance  
of your compassion,  
cool and calm  
like the Ocean of Milk.

—*Dr. Adapa Ramakrishna Rao*

## **"Sai Children"**

*"When I am with children, I am a child," declared Bhagavan Baba in one of His memorable pronouncements. Baba is never more happy and blissful than when He is surrounded by a group of young children—with their innocent radiant smiling faces, their hearts full of love and devotion, their minds filled with faith.*

*In the global Sai movement for the transformation of the world, nothing is so significant and potent as the Bal Vikas movement. From year to year more and more children are being drawn into this transforming movement.*

many countries. We have just received the ninth (new year) number of "Sai Children", edited by Jai (a Pre-Seva Dal member) and published by Sai Mandir, Effra Road, London.

*The journal, which is extremely well produced, contains an excellent collection of articles, stories and poems by children of the Sai Spiritual Education classes from all parts of the United Kingdom.*

*We reproduce below one of the articles written by Kartika, aged ten years, describing the participation of the Sai Bal Vikas children in a special service for Peace in the World held on December 1, 1987. The article is entitled "Candle for Peace".*

On Tuesday the 1st of December, a special service was held at Sacred Heart Church, Wimbledon. The purpose of the service was to have peace in the world and the religions that took part were asked to show how they pray for peace in their particular religion.

The Church was built on a hill and was the most beautiful I've ever seen. It was like a Cathedral and was so tall that I couldn't see the top! It was lovely inside with lovely marble statues of Jesus and Mary, stained glass windows and polished wood.

Geetha acca, Suba, Vernu, Tharaka and I were asked to sit in the front, right next to the Altar, and we were all given song sheets so that we could join in the service.

The Reverend was dressed in white robes with red and gold and he walked up and lit a huge 'Candle of Peace'. We were all given little candles and we passed the light from the Candle of Peace to all our candles so the Church looked like Deepavali at the Temple.

The Reverend said some prayers and then people from other religions said their own prayers. There were Christians, Jews, Sikhs and Hindus all praying together. As Swami says:

'There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.  
There is only one religion, the religion of love.  
There is only one language, the language of the heart.'

That is what exactly happened at the service.

When it was our turn to say the service representing Hinduism, we started with three AUMS, and then sang Asato Maa... and Sarvevai Sukhinah Santu ..... Geetha acca (elder sister) said the meanings and explained why we say Om and Shanti. She also explained about our Sathya Sai Spiritual Education classes.

Then I sang 'Allah Nama Bajo', the song with all the names of God in it. It means that all names of God are the same, be they Jesus for the Christians, Buddha for the Buddhists, Vishnu for the Hindus, Guru Nanak for the Sikhs, Ahura Mazda for the Zoroastrians, Allah for the

played the Shruti box, Tambourine and Cymbals.

The last song we sang was a song of the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which we had learnt from Elizabeth in Puttaparthi. It was a lovely song on Peace and when we finished, everyone was silent as they prayed with us for Peace for the world.

The last part of the service was really nice. In Church people shake hands with each other as a sign of Peace. But because there were so many people the Reverend said that if we held our neighbours' hands, we would form a whole chain to unite us all in Peace. I held Tharaka's hand and also a girl from the Church and we all smiled at each other. While we held hands we all sang the Jewish song:

'Shalom my friend, Shalom my friend, Shalom, Shalom  
Till we meet again, till we meet again, Shalom, Shalom.'

We all sat down and people said any prayers they wanted. We sat and listened to everyone saying their prayers. All the prayers said, 'Let us have peace in the world.' We sat there for a few minutes and after the beautiful prayers we got up and everyone came up and thanked us for coming. One of the ladies who sings at the Church said that our songs were beautiful and asked us to write down the words and meanings of the bhajans so she could teach them to her friends.

## **Sai Gospel and the Quran**

*—Zeba Bashiruddin*

The subtlest, the strongest relationship in life is between God and man. This is confirmed by modern Jungian psychology, though the Divine is termed as the Self. Yet in the external glamour of the world's rat-race and temptations how often do we forget Him who is the innermost reality of our existence, who loves us best? We forget until a need arises, a calamity breaks our defences, and a dire helplessness impels us to call out to Him: "Lord, where are You?" We remember Him only when the ugly countenance of dissolution threatens us.

Sai Gospel and the Quran affirm how God's grace unconditionally flows to every voice that calls Him in the hour of need. The Quran enjoins:

When my servants ask you (Prophet Mohammad) concerning Me, I am indeed close to them: I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls Me. (II:186)

There is a similar assurance given to the devotees in the Sai Gospel:

"I shall be ever with you, wherever you are, guarding and guiding you..." (Sai Avatar: P. 669)



Yet another significant statement the Divine Pen wrote on a copy of the Quran given to be blessed. The sentence reads

"I AM IN YOU AND AROUND YOU, BE HAPPY. —BABA"

No date was put, and of course, time was a redundant factor. The promise was eternal, for all mankind, provided they remember. It has never failed those whose psyche rises to the conscious levels of supplication.

### **The fulfillment**

Few are the chances, when we are plunged in the depths of despair, to realise that God's love is the most redeeming factor in a crisis. But for Him there is neither rescue nor help. One such incident relates to my family. The incident is ingrained so deeply in our hearts that its memory uplifts our souls in gratitude and wonder at God's marvellous love.

It was a wintry evening and three of my children between the ages of 16 and 24 had gone to execute a difficult transaction. The hazards of city life, the delay, and the fact that they were inexperienced made me sick with worry. I sat alone with my eighty-year old mother, my thoughts centered on my children. Perhaps, they might be cheated. Perhaps they would break down, or worse still there might be an accident. It was late, very late. My mother's heart was racking with a silent pain. I sat on the steps, scanning the road, as the twilight deepened into a cold night. But my old mother was praying. She is not a believer in the Saguna aspect of God but is a very devout Muslim. She has also never seen Baba. Perceiving my agony she was reciting the Name she was devoted to. After some time she put aside her rosary, and was quiet, her eyes closed. About fifteen minutes passed.

"Your Baba wears a long robe that falls to his feet?" Her voice, breaking the silence, surprised me.

"Yes-but how do you know?" I was naturally perplexed.

"And he has abundance of hair round his head?" Her hands indicated the shape of Baba's luxurious lovely hair.

"Yes-but."

"His eyes are large... and red" was her third remark.

"Yes, that's Him. But you've never seen Him. How do you know?" Her answer was even more incredible.

"Looking at your panic", she replied quietly, "I started reciting the Quranic verse of the Throne (Most efficacious for protection). But my vision revealed your three children and *Baba*

his protection.”

Gratitude, remorse, shame rent my heart. My mother was able to see fulfillment of God's eternal covenant, repeated so often in the Quran, while I sat, befogged by illusions. She was able to experience the universality of grace and oneness of divinity.

### **The divine unity**

Much later she expounded another spiritual aspect of Islamic mysticism, when she spoke of Baba:

"Baba's reference to I is not indication to the body but to the Divine Principle. His udi (Vibhuti) is a symbol of a state of total annihilation of otherness." She then added an Urdu couplet in Baba's praise.

"All faces are Yours...Thou greatest of players."

Yet she knows Him only as Allah, I call Him Baba, and we love the ONE whose two aspects we adore. Often in the evening now when we are together we recite the remarkable verse, recounting the traumatic incident

And He is never tired of guarding and preserving them for He is most High, the Supreme.

(The Quran 11: 256)

Tears wash in my heart a face with large bright eyes and dark hair haloed around a golden skin, whereas her face shows serenity of a mind fixed in the belief of ONE ever near, the ONE who is most merciful.

## **The Mother and the Lord**

*Among the six forms of devotion, "Vatsalya Bhakti"—devotion to the Lord in the form of maternal love—is one. The most notable example of this form of devotion is Yashoda. Bhagavan Baba pointed out in one of His discourses how, despite all the marvellous deeds performed by Krishna, Yashoda could look upon him only as her child and was always concerned about what might happen to him.*

*Prof. Kasturi, in his delightful and revealing book on Bhagavan's mother, Easwaramma, gives numerous instances of Easwaramma's "Vatsalya Bhakti".*

*Prof. Kasturi records that once Easwaramma exclaimed: "You (the devotees) call him Beauty, Tenderness and Joy and talk of me as the Mother of this lovely Form—but do I ever get*

*the way that is the mother's privilege?" He goes on to say: " the oncoming of this overwhelming resentment, despair and even jealousy was followed however by a surge of self-criticism and condemnation that matured in philosophical resignation." As time passed, Easwaramma developed extreme compassion and sympathy for the innumerable men and women who streamed into Puttaparthi "to benefit from the healing hand of Swami." Prof. Kasturi writes:*

Easwaramma had a soft heart towards young women who were widowed by fate and who were therefore ostracised by society as if their misfortune was infectious! She also sought out young women deserted by their husbands and left alone and helpless. Many such were brought by their parents or kinsmen so that they may recover from the shock and renew their lives afresh. She discovered that a large number of women who were brought to Puttaparthi as afflicted by 'ghosts' and as victims of spirits were amenable to softness and sweetness. The wild fury and frenzied cries of many unfortunates cooled down considerably when they received kind words and mild soothings from the Mother, for the basic cause of their malady was the denial of Love.

### **Love for the stricken**

The love with which she treated these women blossomed wider as she watched Swami healing the stricken. He showered Compassion on them and applied Vibhuti profusely on their brows. When they were restored to normalcy and taken back home Swami used to narrate the reasons why their thoughts went awry and their words were soaked in spite. Listening to Him, Easwaramma decided that she would not condemn or ridicule any woman on the basis of her apparent faults or failings for they were only, she knew, the symptoms of maladjustment or neglect or persecution and poverty.

The Mother thus became more than their own mother to an ever-increasing number of women in distress. She was a friend with a burnished mind. Contemplating the Mother among those who were rescued by Swami, I'd like to repeat Rabindranath's exclamatory poem on Women:

'Woman! You are blest!  
You have your home, your household work—  
in the midst of it you keep a little gap  
through which you hear the cry of the weak.  
You bring your offering of service,  
and pour out your love.  
Your patience is endless—  
Their helplessness calls out your mercy.'

### **Homage to the mother**

The devotees discovered in her a never failing source of strength and wisdom. They sought her out more and more often and honoured her as the Mother, assigning her distinct roles during festivals and holy days. Easwaramma did not yield as soon as the women surrounded her and pleaded that she should guide them or bless them. But how long could she keep them at bay? On

or Gowri (the Fair Consort of Siva, mother of Ganesha), she had to accept the first offering of homage from every woman who needed her. During the nine days of Navaratri, the Festival of the Mother, she was honoured for the first three days as Durga (the smoothener of the path, the provider of safety and security for Her children), in the next three days as Lakshmi (the provider of food, clothing and shelter, status, power and renown) and on the last three as Saraswati (the Teacher who implants the yearning for learning and for liberation, for material skills and moral strength).

During these days Swami directed the women devotees to assemble at the Prayer Hall of the Nilayam every morning and evening to worship the Mother Goddess reciting the Thousand and Eight Names which attempt to capture a glimpse of Her Glory. Easwaramma vehemently declined to be installed on this occasion as the visible symbol of the Divine Mother. She even wriggled out of participation since the women insisted that she must at least be seated at the head of the row. She preferred to enter unannounced, sit through the ritual unmarked and slip away unnoticed.

But on the Jhoola evening at least she had to yield to the chorus of importunity. This, the granting of darshan by Swami while on a floral swing, was the valedictory event in Navaratri. While Swami was on the swing, the women devotees placed heaps of fruits, flowers and sweets and arranged lamps in attractive patterns before Him. So, w h e n Swami indicated that He intended to leave and the camphor-flame should be readied, a series of flames were waved before Him by the women, singing traditional lilts the while. They sought out Easwaramma and brought her to the Nilayam in time to wave the first Arati, warding off her arguments and protestations that the privilege must be granted to this or that other woman who was much more deeply devoted than she was!

**—From "Easwaramma—the Chosen Mother" by Prof. N. Kasturi**

**RAMANAVAMI SANDESH:**

### **The Rama Path**

*See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil:  
Bear in mind the image of the three monkeys  
Which impart this message.  
There is no wiser counsel than this.  
Studying thoroughly the Vedantic texts  
And becoming an expert in expounding them,  
Without cultivating good qualities,  
Can a person be a true human being at all?*

has been the preceptor of mankind, promoting their well-being and setting a shining example to the world. "Let all the worlds be happy" has been the basic principle governing the Hindu way of life. The ancient rulers, sages, scholars and even women who were exemplars of chastity led lives of renunciation and sacrifice to uphold the Dharmic culture and heritage of the country.

The Ramayana story illustrates the greatness and sacredness of this culture. The Ramayana is not merely the story of Rama. Rama + Ayana is Ramayana. Ayana means "Path". The inner meaning of the Ramayana is that the path shown by Rama should be followed.

From the moment of birth, man is engaged in a variety of activities for preserving his way of life and achieving his goals. At birth, man has no bad qualities and is wholly innocent. But as time passes, because of the kind of food he consumes and the changes in his lifestyle, and the kind of associations he develops, his dress and manners undergo changes. Along with these, he develops likes and dislikes. After getting "educated", he develops ego and pride, passion and other bad qualities from head to foot. They acquire a strong hold over him. As a consequence, he starts deluding himself that he is all-knowing and that there is none greater than him. Filled with the arrogance of youth, he looks with contempt on others.

If man, however, seeks to live as a human being, he has to face many difficulties and vicissitudes in life. He has to overcome the obstacles and impediments he faces.

### **Control over desires**

Today man appears to relish only pleasures derived from the senses. Every man is filled with various desires. As he grows, the surging vigour of manhood makes him headstrong. He fails to realise the true purpose of education. He develops ambitions to become a great scholar, singer, actor or businessman. He is caught up in a bewildering maze of desires. As a result, despite his inherent divinity, he becomes a slave of his impure desires and forgets his true human worth. While birds and animals are content to live on whatever they can get, man alone has insatiable desires and is filled with greed. There should be a limit to one's acquisitiveness and desires. Excess of anything is harmful and should be avoided.

The principal message of the Ramayana is that there should be rigorous control over desires. Human life should be sanctified by control of the senses, regulation of the mind and utilisation of the intellect.

### **The example of Lakshmana**

Every notable character in the Ramayana stands out as an ideal for the world. All of them are embodiments of Dharma. Consider the example of Lakshmana. Valmiki has described Lakshmana in many ways. He has called him "Rama's other self". In the Kamba Ramayana, Lakshmana is described as the "second virtue of Rama". Tulsidas characterises Lakshmana as "Rama's right hand". Rama and Lakshmana were associated inseparably as "Bimba and Pratibimba"—one was a reflection of the other. In his great qualities, his immaculate purity and spirit of sacrifice, Lakshmana is his own example.

### **Sacrifice**

In accordance with his father's commandment, Rama had to go to the forest. Lakshmana was under no such compulsion. Making the supreme sacrifice of his, own accord, he elected to accompany Rama. Rama's path (ayanam) was the apple of his eye (nayanam). Hence Lakshmana had a key role in the Ramayana (Rams-ayana). Leaving his mother, forsaking his wife and rejecting royal pleasures, Lakshmana chose to follow Rama as the be-all and end-all of his life. By his sterling qualities and exemplary character, Lakshmana stands out as an ideal to the world.

In the forest, while Rama and Lakshmana were going in search of Sita, they came to the Rishyamooka mountain. There they made friends with Sugriva and Hanuman. A bag containing ornaments was given to Rama by Sugriva, who told Rama that the bag was dropped by a woman who was going in an aerial chariot. Rama handed the ornaments to Lakshmana and asked him whether he could identify any of Sita's ornaments amongst them. Lakshmana said: "I cannot recognise the bangles. Nor can I recognise the head ornaments in this bunch. I can identify only the anklets among these jewels. They are the ones worn by Sita. I can recognise them because everyday I had been prostrating at her feet for years."

Rama lived in Ayodhya for twelve years after his marriage. After that, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita spent 13 years in the forest. During all the 25 years he had been with Rama, Lakshmana had not looked at Sita's face even once. Nowhere in history can you find an example of one with the character of Lakshmana. He revered every woman as a mother.

### **Devotion to Sita**

Rama directed Lakshmana to leave Sita in a forest near some sage's ashram. Sita was pregnant at the time. When Lakshmana was about to leave, Sita said to him: "Lakshmana! It may be fitting for Rama to send me to the forest to appease public opinion. The duty of a king is to protect his subjects and be an ideal example to them. Eschewing completely all ideas of 'mine' and 'thine', the ruler should be concerned solely with the well-being of his people. Sri Rama's reputation is the source of my joy. I do not grieve because he has sent me away. Rama's glory and fame should be everlasting. But, you, who are my brother-in-law, how can you agree to abandon me in this forest? Pregnant as I am, how can you have the heart to leave me alone in this wilderness? Please stay with me at least for some time and then you may go."

Lakshmana replied: "Revered mother! All these years I have not even seen your face. In spite of the complete innocence and purity of your character, you have been the victim of calumny by thoughtless people. If now I were to stay with you, your good name will be subject to reproach. In these circumstances, I am prepared even to give up my life for you but I cannot suffer your reputation being sullied in any way. Moreover, I have to carry out Rama's orders. Rama means everything to me. I cannot live for a moment going against the commands of Rama. Therefore, Oh mother I forgive me and allow me to return." He prostrated at Sita's feet and entreated her to let him go.

He thereby demonstrated to the world his own great qualities.

Now, look at Bharata. Refusing to accept the kingship that was offered to him, looking upon Rama as the only fit person to rule the kingdom, Bharata set out for the forest to meet Rama and persuade him to return to Ayodhya.

Both Lakshmana and Bharata dedicated all that was theirs to the Divine. They had no trace of selfishness or self-interest in them. They adhered to Rama's path of Dharma (Rama-ayana). As all the brothers followed the path laid down by Rama, the Ramayana vindicates its title.

### **Nature of dharma**

Ramo Vighrahavaan Dharmah" "Rama is the very embodiment of Dharma (righteousness)" says Valmiki. What is Dharma? Today all kinds of worldly "Dharmas" are proliferating. When we try to find out what is Vaidik Dharma (Dharma according to the Vedas), there are confusing and conflicting opinions. "Dhaarayiti iti Dharmah", it is said. Dharma is that which sustains the world, that which upholds the world. Every object in the world has got certain unique qualities. The quality that is the vital essence of an object reveals its "Dharma". For instance, it is the basic quality of fire to burn-burning is its "Dharma". When fire loses its capacity to burn, it ceases to be fire and becomes mere charcoal. Sweetness is the inherent quality of sugar. If sugar loses its sweetness, it is no longer sugar but sand. The Champaka flower has the natural quality of exuding fragrance. If there is no fragrance in it, it is not Champaka.

### **"Do unto others"**

In the same manner, for man the quality (of Ananda) that flows from his heart is his inherent "Dharma". But man today, for the sake of external achievements, forgets this inherent nature. For all, whether they are educated or not, there is one common "Dharma": They should extend to others the same honour and regard which they expect others to show towards them so that they may feel happy. We should not do to others anything which if others do to us will cause pain or unhappiness to us. This means that we should not cause harm to others because we do not want them to do harm to us. This is the natural "Dharma" which is relevant to all people in worldly life. Not everybody can understand or follow Vaidik Dharma. Hence, in our ordinary daily life, the simple principle to be adhered to is to do unto others as you would like others to do unto you.

However, what we notice among most persons today is rampant selfishness and self-centredness. While they want to be respected and honoured by others, they will themselves show no respect or regard to others. "Dharma" is not a one-way traffic. It calls for "give and take".

Today the spirit of sacrifice is absent among the people. The foremost lesson of the Ramayana is readiness for sacrifice. It is only through *Tyaga* (renunciation or sacrifice) that one attains Yoga (oneness with Divinity). The Ramayana proclaims the ideal of sacrifice.

Obedying the commands of his father, renouncing the kingship, and wearing the bark of trees, Rama went to the forest as an exile. He was complying with what he regarded as a divine command ("Aajna"). He demonstrated to the world what adherence to truth means.

"Aajna" (command) is a great injunction. If it is disobeyed, there will be no joy. Transgression of "Aajna" leads to many hardships and difficulties. (There are many episodes in the Ramayana which point out the serious consequences of disobeying Aajna).

Before leaving the hermitage in search of the golden deer (Maricha in disguise), Rama issued a stern order to Lakshmana not to leave the hermitage *in any circumstance* or any situation. Rama told him that whatever difficulties or pressures he might have to face, under no condition should he leave Sita alone. This was Rama's command to Lakshmana. But Lakshmana, because he was subject to some extent to ordinary mortal failings, became weak in his resolution. When Sita heard the cry, "Ha! Sita! Ha! Lakshmana!" uttered by Maricha in a voice resembling Rama's, she urged Lakshmana to go immediately to the rescue of Rama. However much Lakshmana pleaded that according to the orders of Rama, he could not leave her alone, she used the harshest words to compel Lakshmana to go. Sita's words deeply pained him. Unable to bear her harsh words, violating Rama's instructions, Lakshmana left Sita and set out in search of Rama. The subsequent tragic developments—the carrying away of Sita by Ravana and all the troubles that had to be gone through to find and recover Sita—all these caused deep anguish to Lakshmana. He lamented: "Is it not because I transgressed Rama's orders that these troubles overtook Sita and us?" All his life Lakshmana was distraught by these thoughts. He often felt: "This was the only occasion in my life when I had acted against Rama's orders."

But, there came another occasion when he was faced with a cruel dilemma: whether to adhere to or to act against Rama's orders.

### **Lakshmana's second transgression**

When Rama was on his way back to Ayodhya, the Lord of Time, Yama, came to Rama. While conversing with Yama, Rama had issued a strict order to Lakshmana not to allow anyone inside during his talks with Yama. Rama said if he allowed anyone, he (Lakshmana) would lose his head.

Lakshmana was a courageous and resolute person. He was guarding the door scrupulously. At that time, the sage Durvasa arrived there. He told Lakshmana: "I have to go in urgently for a talk with Rama." Lakshmana firmly refused to let him in. Enraged at Lakshmana's stand, Durvasa angrily declared: "I will utter a curse on Ayodhya. I will destroy your entire dynasty by my curse. Beware, Oh! Lakshmana!"

Lakshmana was shaken by the irate sage's threat. He was caught in a profound moral dilemma. "If I let the sage in, my head will be cut off. If I do not let him in, not only the City of Ayodhya but my whole race will be ruined by the sage's curses." Lakshmana could not reconcile himself to the destruction of his dynasty (Raghuvamsa). Nor could he suffer the prospect of the



Rama's orders I shall be losing only my head. But, thereby I shall be saving my dynasty and the people of Ayodhya." Coming to this decision, he allowed Durvasa to go in. Lakshmana felt: "It will be a supreme good fortune to have my head cut off at Rama's hands. I will be the only sufferer. If I do not yield to this sage, my entire race will be wiped out."

Lakshmana thus deeply considered the pros and cons of his decision and chose to sacrifice himself rather than allow others to suffer.

### **Code of duties**

The Ramayana is full of such illustrious and exemplary characters. Unfortunately today those who discourse on the Ramayana, indulge in all sorts of interpretations. The Ramayana is a great text which indicates what should be the ideal relations among brothers, how the members of a family should earn the love of parents, what should be the ideal relations between husband and wife and what are the duties of any person in any specific situation. Lakshmana, Bharata Shatrughna adhered to the Rama-path and lived strictly according to his injunctions. Their example should be followed by every family in the country. Sita was prepared to face any trouble and make any sacrifice for the sake of her husband. She sought no comfort for herself. She dedicated her life to the service of Rama.

### **Lust, hatred and greed**

The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata are three monumental works which point out the disastrous consequences which result when one is a victim of Kama (lust), or Lobha (greed) or Krodha (hatred). In the Ramayana, Ravana exemplifies Lust. The entire Ramayana story happened because of Ravana's lust. Rama's advent as Avatar was for the purpose of destroying Ravana.

In the Bhagavata, Hiranyakasipu is the personification of hatred—hatred towards Hari. He went about asking: "Where is that Hari? There can be none greater than myself." Because of this hatred for Hari, the Lord appeared in the form of Narasimha (Man-Lion) to destroy Hiranyakasipu. The Lord vanquished the demon of hatred.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana symbolises Greed. As a result of his greed, his entire clan was destroyed.

Ravana, Hiranyakasipu and Duryodhana are examples of the disastrous consequences of Lust, Hatred and Greed. Besides containing these warnings, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata indicate what is Dharma and how it should be honoured and adhered to.

### **Dharma alone wins**

Duryodhana, whose avarice knew no bounds, went to his mother, Gandhari, on the eve of the Kurukshetra battle, to seek her blessings. In keeping with the ideals of the mothers of those days, Gandhari told Duryodhana: "Yatho Dharmah, Thatho Jayah" (Where there is Dharma—Righteousness—there is victory). She did not wish victory for her son.

Duryodhana then went to his preceptor Dronacharya and prostrated before him. Dronacharya told him: "Yatho Dharmah Thatho Krishnah: Yatho Krishnah Thatho Jayah". "Where there is Dharma, there is Krishna; where there is Krishna, there is victory."

The same message is contained in the last sloka of the Bhagavad Gita: "Yathra Yogeswarah Krishno Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah Thathra Sri Vijayobhutir Dhruvaaneethir mathir Mama", ("Where there is the Supreme Lord of Yoga, Sri Krishna, and where there is the mighty archer, Arjuna, there are to be found all prosperity, success and justice.")

The Ramayana relates how before leaving for the forest, Rama went to Kaushalya to seek her blessings. Kaushalya told Rama: "Your Dharma will protect you during your exile in the forest."

Lakshmana prostrated before his mother Sumitra. The noble lady told her son: "Only the place where Rama is not, is a forest. The forest in which Rama stays will be your Ayodhya. Without Rama in Ayodhya, we will be living in a wilderness. Redeem your life by service to Rama."

Because there were such illustrious mothers, fathers and preceptors in those days, the Upanishads could exhort the people to "revere the mother as God, the father as God, the Guru as God and the guest as God."

The life-stories of Rama and Krishna are indeed treatises on Righteousness. They are sacred works. They taught mankind how to sublimate human life. The message is clear: adhering to Truth, practising Righteousness, spreading Love everywhere, remaining ever peaceful, life should be sanctified.

This day should not be celebrated merely as the anniversary of Rama's birth. The day we install in our hearts the path laid down by Rama is the real birthday of Rama. Celebration of holy days should not mean having a good feast on those days. We should seek to make the teachings of the Avatars concerned a part of our lives. We should follow the path laid down by them. Only then the celebration has any meaning. Our lives also get sanctified. All studies, recitations and listening to discourses are of no value if practice does not follow precept.

### **Entry to heaven**

Once, three persons reached the gates of Swarga (heaven). One of them declared that he was a master of all the scriptures and therefore the gates should be opened to let him in. The guardians of the gate said: "You are familiar only with the texts. You have no practical experience. You may leave."

The second man said: "I have performed many yagas and yajnas (sacrifices)." The guardians told him: "You performed the sacrifices for selfish aims. You have no place here."

two acres of land. I have been offering food and drink to passersby and giving them shelter when necessary. I have shared with them whatever little I had. This is all the sadhana I have been able to practise." The guardians said: "You may enter."

The story illustrates the truth that only those who are prepared to sacrifice what little they have for relieving others in need, are entitled to enter heaven.

Many have read a great deal and listened to innumerable discourses. What effect have these had on them? Has there been any change in their lives? If they examined their lives, they will find that the answer is in the negative.

While listening to a discourse, they may be inclined towards renunciation. They welcome the teaching. But after a few moments, they return to their original selves.

Hence, the first requisite is a change in mental attitude. Without a change in the mind, other changes in man are of no use. It is one's qualities that should be transformed, not the attire he wears. Ramayana conveys a great message. It is a compendium of qualities such as Tyaga (renunciation), Daya (compassion), Karuna (kindness), Sahana (forbearance), Sahnubhuti (sympathy).

### **Namam and danam**

Man today is bound by seven types of bondages: 1) Body; 2) Karma (action); 3) Raga (attachment); 4) Dwesham (hatred); 5) Ahamkaram (ego); 6) Avivekam (foolishness); 7) Ajnanam (ignorance). These are the seven bonds which bind man. Where from has ignorance emanated? It is the product of lack of discrimination (Aviveka). Aviveka is the outcome of Ahamkara. Hatred is the cause of ego. Attachment gives rise to hatred. Attachment arises from action. The body is the result of Karma. In this chain of causes and effects, the starting point is Karma and the culmination is in ignorance. How is ignorance to be removed? Ignorance is like darkness. Any amount of struggle with darkness will not serve to remove it. But the moment a lamp is lit, the darkness will disappear. For dispelling human ignorance the lamp that is needed is the Divine Name.

Today, to acquire Jnana (the Higher Wisdom) you have to have recourse to the Name of God. In the Kali Yuga, two things are most important. The Name and Charity (Nama and Dana): Anna-danam (the gift of food) and Harinamam (name of the Lord Hari). These are the primary requisites. If you have these two basic qualities, they will serve as two wings to take you to heaven.

I desire that you should all cultivate a spirit of sacrifice and render to your fellowmen whatever little help you can give and with this I bless you all.

At the end of the discourse, Bhagavan led the gathering in the singing of the bhajan "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho!*"

## **"Where the Twain Shall Meet"**

—Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam

The relationship between science and spirituality has been a subject of interest to many a modern scientist and spiritual aspirant. There has always been a controversy whether science and spirituality can be correlated or whether they are bound to remain as completely divergent disciplines. Some assert that "science is spiritual", while there are others who are equally insistent that science can never, even in the most indirect way, fathom the nature of the spirit.

Recent developments in the field of sub-atomic physics, psychology, parapsychology and psychiatry have definitely shown that the latter pessimism is unfounded. The two disciplines share a common aim, namely, to arrive at the Truth. The two are not mutually exclusive but are complementary, the two sides of the same coin. Science, which is knowledge of the not-Self, and spirituality-the knowledge of the Self- have both to be combined to get at true knowledge. This assertion comes from no less an authority than Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. XIII-2) "Kshetra-Kshetrajnaya-jnanam yat taj-jnanam matam mama "—"The knowledge of the Field (not-Self) and of the Knower of the Field (the Self) is deemed by Me as true knowledge."

Ever since the atom was split, scientists have been striving to find the basic building block of the universe and have so far not succeeded. Even the convincing evidence of the existence of the quarks had not put an end to this search. They have concluded that there is no such matter which can be designated as "building blocks of the universe." Matter itself has now been shown to be nothing but "packets of energy" which because of the compactness create the illusion of gross forms. During their study of the sub-atomic particles, the physicists have encountered some astounding phenomena, one of them being that the particles seem to appear from nowhere, from a void, exist for a very minute fraction of a second and then disappear into the void. During the short stay they exhibit certain movements due to their mutual interactions. This activity, which has been aptly described by the scientist as a "dance", is said to be happening in the entire cosmos. This perpetual cosmic dance occurs in a continuous medium, the quantum field, which is co-existent with space everywhere.

Space (Aakasa) which is all pervasive has always been considered by our scriptures as being filled with Pure Awareness (Chaitanya) and hence described as the origin and goal of all beings (Chandogya Upanishad: I-9-(i)).

Many scientists who had cared to peep into Eastern Religions have found that the cosmic dance of particulate matter is so beautifully portrayed in the image of dancing Shiva-Nataraja-the Cosmic Dancer of the Hindu pantheon. An interesting feature of this imagery is, this form of Lord Shiva is the principal deity at the famous temple at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu, where the Lord is worshipped as the first of the five elements, namely, Aakasa or Space. Sometimes, a lucky worshipper is led into the secret of Chidambaram—"Chidambara rahasya". Behind a curtain, he is shown an empty space on the wall depicting the Aakasa that is worshipped in this temple. It is significant that this empty space, which is not void, but is considered to represent Pure Awareness, is worshipped side by side with the image of the Cosmic Dancer. This certainly is an amazing reminder of the eternal cosmic dance of the sub-atomic particles appearing from the void and disappearing into the void. In no other temple where the other four elements, namely, air, fire, water and earth are worshipped, can you see this association with the idol of Nataraja as the main deity. The ancient sages conceived that this eternal dance of creation and destruction represented in this beautiful form of Lord Shiva is occurring on the stage of consciousness, a fact so well depicted by the very name of the place—Chidambaram or Chit-Sabha, "Chit" meaning consciousness.

### **Consciousness and matter**

Scientists are getting more and more convinced that consciousness is not a function of matter, but the truth is the other way round. While till recently science had considered that matter preceded consciousness, Eastern philosophy, had always held that Pure Awareness preceded matter. The consciousness which is latent or patent in all matter is only Pure Awareness that is reflected on or involved in matter. Thus it forms the source of all manifestation. Now the physicist believes that the apparent void from which the sub-atomic particles appear and into which they disappear is filled with some entity, which may be the reality behind this phenomenon. The scriptures go one step behind the energy field and consciousness postulated by science and visualise the existence of Pure Awareness as the ultimate Reality. The Taittiriya Upanishad (III-1) describes this Reality in such words that echo what the modern physicist has discovered: in quantum mechanics. "Yato vaa imaani bhootaani jayante, Yana jaataani jeevanti Yat prayanty abhisamvishanti, Tad vijijnaasasva, Tad Brahmeti"—"That from which these beings are born, and that by which they live, and that into which they enter on departing, know That is Brahman."

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad defines Brahman as "Vijnaanaghana eva" a mass of Pure Consciousness only. It also says, "Idam mahaadbhutam, anantam, apaaram"—It is supremely marvellous, infinite and transcendental- a description which parallels the physicists' description of his quantum field being present everywhere and indestructible.

This field of reflected or involved consciousness is termed in Vedanta as Chittaakaasa or the void of the Chitta. At present this is the meeting point of modern science and spirituality, at the subatomic level. But, as already mentioned above, Vedanta does not stop there. It goes beyond this aspect of consciousness, which still implies duality of the observer and the observed. It speaks of the ONE Pure Awareness as Chidaakaasa or the void of the Chit. This Reality is con-

sustainer and absorber of all things and is the indweller of all beings is vividly described in the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. XIII-16)

*Avibhaktam cha bhooteshu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam  
Bhoota bhartr-cha taj-jneyam grasishnur-prabhavishnu cha*

“He is indivisible and yet appears to be divided among all beings. He supports the creatures, destroys them and creates them afresh.”

The same idea is seen in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad ( II: 1-20 ) and the Maitri Upanishad (VI-32) They call this Reality "Satyasya Satyam". All the energies in the cosmos are Truth and the Atman which is the source of these is the "Truth of all Truth". This indestructible all-pervasive Truth has been termed "Akshara Brahman"—Akshara meaning indestructible.

The intriguing EPR (Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen) experiment has shown that the sub-atomic particles which have interacted and are then artificially separated by great distances, instantaneously affect each other's behaviour. When one particle is experimentally subjected to a particular reaction, the other particle automatically and instantaneously reciprocates the behaviour of the first particle, irrespective of the distance separating the two. Unable to reconcile this finding with the hitherto accepted stand of Einstein that no signal can travel faster than the speed of light, the scientists had to satisfy themselves by postulating "non-local" connection between the two particles. This experiment is one of the convincing proofs that the entire universe is one whole and all parts are inter-connected, a view that always had been held by Vedanta. That the answer to this riddle of the EPR experiment lies in the consciousness filling the entire cosmos, is now more than a probability. When light itself is a manifestation and part of this Infinite Awareness, how can the speed of light place any limitations on the latter? This receives confirmation from the description of the Atman found in the Isavasya Upanishad. After describing the all-pervasive nature of Atman in terms like "Tadantarasya sarvasya", ("It is within all this") and "Tadu sarvasyasya baahyatah", ("It is outside all this"), the scripture tells about the speed of the Atman. It is faster than the mind, "manaso jaaviyo". Mind is faster than light since it can reach any far off place instantaneously. But the Atman is swifter than the mind also. "Taddhaavato anyaan atyeti tishtath" "Sitting It runs faster than all that runs after it." What else can be the non-local connection between the particles that science speaks of?

### **Materialisations**

This relationship between the subatomic particles and Pure Awareness raises interesting speculations about materialization of objects performed by Bhagavan Baba. Dr. Man Mohan Verma (*Golden Age-1980*) postulated that Swami procures the elemental components required for the materialisation and then holds them together by supplying the necessary energy, to form the required object. This view seems to place certain limitations on Swami's power to create articles de novo. This probably will fit in with the scientist's contention that "nothing can be created out of nothing." But, Swami has clarified that, "this formula is appropriate to the limited field and discussions of Science. It does not at all apply to the transcendental field and

His Universal Consciousness. Swami's own words bear testimony to this: "By My own Sankalpa, that is divine will and power; as an Avatar, this power is intrinsic, inherent, total and natural to My Will and decision." Swami, who is the manifestation of Pure Awareness, has said that the all-pervasive Universal Consciousness which is called "Shuddha Satwa" and which is the Sai Principle, is Omnipotent. It is the all-effective Will and when that Will decides, anything can be brought about. He says, "What I Will, happens; what I order, materialises." Having known the happenings at the sub-atomic level and the true identity of Swami, one need not look for other explanations for His materialisations.

### **The mind and spirit**

Another important field of science which has brought science and spirituality closer is that of psychology and psychiatry. A glimpse of this is provided by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss in his book "Spirit and the Mind." The inter-connectedness of the human mind with other minds and matter, a fact known to the mystics for a long time, has now been well established by scientists. In the realm of mental sciences, the gap between science and the spirit has been further narrowed down in that branch of psychiatry called meta-psychiatry first propounded by Stanley Dean. Swami has said: "The greatest mystery of the Universe is that of man himself, his mind and his consciousness", and "the proper study of mankind is man himself".

Our scriptures had always insisted that everything in the universe that is experienced through our senses are only concepts in our consciousness and nothing can exist for us outside our consciousness. Now the sub-atomic physicist has come to the same conclusion regarding his observations. The observed behaviour of the sub-atomic particles is entirely dependent on the way the scientist plans his experiment; thus the scientist is not just an observer in his experiments but is also a participant. His consciousness is very much involved in setting up experiments, recording observations and drawing inferences.

### **Beyond consciousness**

It is heartening to note that many scientists round the world are at present engaged in the study of consciousness, the probable existence of which has been revealed to them through sub-atomic physics. That consciousness provides the meeting point between science and spirituality is well-exemplified by Fritj of Capra's concluding statement in his book: "The Tao of Physics"; "Consciousness may be an essential aspect of the Universe that will have to be included in a future Theory of Physical Phenomena." That behind the consciousness exhibited by mind and matter lies a higher Reality has been postulated by Bohm (quoted by Capra): "They are naturally enfolding projections of a higher Reality which is neither matter nor consciousness."

Will the scientist ever be able to comprehend this Reality with his usual criteria of observation and inference? Our scriptures assert that the Reality behind all existence is not unknowable but the knowledge of it is only being obstructed by the non-Self, the matter, which is the intruder. Having succeeded in knowing the true nature of the "intruder", the scientist may not be far off in achieving the goal in his search for Reality. But will Reality be amenable to his present methods of instrumentation? Does instrumentation necessarily mean computers, printed

methods of investigation too. Swami says, "If you want to understand the nature of spiritual power, you can do so only through the path of spirituality and not science." Whatever method he may use, when the scientist finally arrives at the goal, it is almost certain that he will not be able to describe it in his usual scientific language, because, then he will find that his own consciousness has reached its source, which is not, in any sense, an object that can be seen and described.

Capra quoting a Chinese saying, writes, "Mystics understand the roots of Tao but not its branches; scientists understand its branches but not its roots." However, that the tree is one and that the very existence of the trunk, the branches and the leaves is dependent on the roots is now well appreciated by most of the scientists. It is certainly easier to climb up the tree and pluck the leaves than to dig up the earth to reveal the tip of the root. That different techniques have to be used for the two cannot be disputed.



## **The Scientist and the Saint**

The word "Manava" (man) has several meanings. One of them is that man has an ancient origin. "Ma", meaning "not", and "nava" meaning "new" indicate that man is "not new". He has had a long past. Another meaning of the word is "one who lives without ignorance" ("Ma" = ignorance; "Na" = without; "Va" = lives). The reason for this is the fact that in man there is a sacred principle composed of the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth).

If we examine the nature of the human state from the scientific point of view, it is found that the tissues of the human body are composed of the four elements: hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon. The unified expression of these four elements is the human condition. Ignoring this unity, scientists today are seeking to explore the nature of matter by breaking up the Love principle. "The Spirit of Love is spirituality." "Splitting of Love is science." Scientists are exploring matter by dividing Love. They are unaware of the nature of Love. They are ignorant of Purity. Scientists are imbued only with a sense of enquiry into matter. Consequently, today there is a complete divorce between science and spirituality.

### **Matter and energy**

Scientists are not examining in the correct way the relationship between matter and energy. Scientists hold the view that matter is convertible into energy and vice versa. But, in fact, the two are not separate. They are inseparably interlinked and are interdependent. The attempts to divide matter and energy have given rise to many doubts and confusions.

What is the new discovery which scientists have made today? All their discoveries are of what already existed. Take, for instance, gravity. Gravity has existed from the beginning of creation. Newton sought to find out the laws governing gravitation. He did not discover the phenomenon anew. He only found out what already existed. That the earth had gravitational attraction was known even before Newton investigated it.

Likewise, matter and energy have existed from the time of creation. Both are comprehended by the mind only. When the mind functions in relation to the Divine it acquires the form of energy. When the mind is turned towards Prakriti (Nature), the latter assumes the form of matter. Mind is the cause of experiencing joy or sorrow and for comprehending matter and energy. Recognising this quality of the mind, the sages declared: "The mind is the cause of liberation or bondage for humanity."

There are two concepts—"Drishti" (Seeing) and "Drishyam" (that which is seen). It is because of the power of sight that we are able to see the visible objects. It is because the objects are there, we are able to see them. There is thus an inextricable relationship between seeing and what is seen. Today, it is because we separate "seeing" from the things seen that sorrow arises. Seeing and that which is seen should become one.

What is "pavitram" (purity)? This has been characterised as "Shakti". Purity has been described as the state of desirelessness in man. When there are desires, sorrow also dogs them like a shadow. Where there is sorrow there can be no purity. The mind is the cause of both desires and purity.

### **The one and the many**

The Vedas have declared: "I am one; I shall become many." It is the One that has become the many. This is the unity that underlies the diversity. In this context, three concepts have to be understood: Sajatheeyam, Vijatheeyam and Swagatabhedam.

"Sajatheeyam": Although human beings differ in form and characteristics in various respects, they belong to the human species. Sajatheeyam refers to the oneness of a species. In terms of the human body, every human being has one thing in common regardless of other differences. Differences of race, religion, caste, language or community do not affect this oneness of humanity. This is "Sajatheeyam"—belonging to the same species. Whether one is an American, a Chinaman or an Indian, he is a human being.

"Vijatheeyam" relates to differences between different species. For instance, there is nothing in common between a human being and a tree. The tree does not belong to the same species as man. There may be innumerable varieties among trees. But all of them belong to the vegetable kingdom. There are differences between the human species and the species of trees. These differences are covered by the term "Vijatheeyam" (differentiation among species).

"Swagatabhedam": This term relates to functional differentiation. For instance, man has hands, legs, ears, eyes, mouth and other organs all in the same body. The same blood flows through the entire body. Blood is the same. The heart is one only. But each organ discharges only its specific function. The eyes can only see, but cannot hear. The ears can only hear but cannot see. The body is one but each organ and limb performs only its particular function. This functional differentiation is called "Swagatabhedam".

### **Power of the Divine**

Scientists today are accomplishing any number of things. But they are unable to recognise the divine potency that exists in the human being: Here is an example.

The earth is one. When a lemon seed is planted, the fruit that comes from the lemon plant tastes sour. If a mango is planted and a tree grows from it, the fruit of that tree tastes very sweet. If a neem seed is planted, the fruit from the neem tree is bitter in taste. The soil is the same; but the fruits from the different trees have different tastes. Likewise, although all human bodies are made up of the same elements; hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon, individuals vary in their mental and other qualities. What is the reason for these innumerable differences? What is the force that is behind these genetic differences? How do the scientists account for them? When they are able to understand the reason for these infinite differences, the scientists will achieve fullness in their knowledge. The truth is no one can determine the magnitude or range of the powers of the Divine.

## **Science and spirituality**

The fundamental difference between science and spirituality is this: Science is concerned with investigating the external phenomenal universe. Spirituality is engaged in exploring the inner workings of the Divine. The scientist is one who has an external vision. The one who has an internal vision is a saint.

Here is an example of the difference between scientific truth and spiritual truth. (Here Bhagavan drew the figure of a circle and said:) That which ends wherefrom it started in a full circle has been described as "Poornam" (the Full or the Whole) "Poornam adah, Poornam idam; Poornaath Poornam Udachyathe. Poornasya Poornam aadaaya Poornameva avasishyathe" ("That is Full. This is Full. The Full has come from the Full. When the Full is taken out from the Full, the Full still remains.") The Full Circle represents spirituality. For in it the end and the beginning are the same. Spirituality knows no difference between beginning and end. The very term "Adhyatma" means that which has no beginning or end.

To understand what is science, you cut the full circle into two halves. The left half is a semi-circle which resembles the English letter "C". "C" is science, that is, it begins at one point and ends at another. Between these two points there is a big gap, which is called "agamya-gocharam". It is beyond reach, invisible and incomprehensible.

## **Matter and spirit**

Matter and Spirit may be regarded as two semi-circles. Scientists are only investigating matter and have ignored the Spirit. The two parts have been described in Vedantic parlance as Prakriti and Paramatma.

The scientist is one who enquires into the nature of creation (Srishti). The saint is one who seeks to know the Creator: The scientist is preoccupied only with studying the creation. What about the Creator? Once you understand the Creator, you can understand the whole of creation. That was why Thyagaraja said: "Rama, if I have your grace (Anugraha) all the planets (grahas) will be within my grasp." Therefore, if you comprehend the creator you can easily know all about creation.

Creation (the phenomenal universe) is within the comprehension of the senses. All that we hear, see and experience are within the purview of our senses. We refer to all these things as "this", "this" and "this" ("Idam"). But what is beyond the senses is referred to as "That". "Poornam adah Poornam idam" "That is Full; "This is Full". The term "That" refers to something which is distant. From what is "That" distant? From what is "This" near? We use the term "This" to refer to things which are within the purview of the senses; "That" refers to what is beyond the senses.

## **Beyond the senses**

So, what is beyond the senses has been called "Adhyatmic" (spiritual). What is below the senses has been called "Bhoutika" (elemental constituted by the five elements). We are

simultaneously below the senses and above the senses. Below the senses is the body. Beyond the senses is the Hridaya (the spiritual heart). The eternal Hridaya is encased within the perishable body. It is like keeping valuable jewels in a relatively cheap iron safe. Divinity is the valuable treasure kept in the iron safe of the body. This indicates our true form.

If you wish to understand your true nature, you have to do three things: Bend the body, mend the senses, and end the mind. The first step is to "bend the body". That means, you should not allow the ego to develop within your body. Cultivate humility and do your duties sincerely. This is what is implied in "Bend the body".

"Mend the senses" calls for examining how the senses behave, whether they are tending to go astray, and correcting and restraining them when necessary.

### **The heart and the mind**

"End the mind" calls for quietening the vagaries of the mind. How is this to be done? It is by turning the mind in a different direction. For example, there is a lock and a key. When the key is turned towards the left the lock gets locked. If the key is turned towards the right the lock is opened. Thus the key performs both the functions of locking and unlocking. In man, the heart is the lock. The mind is the key. When the mind is turned Godward the heart develops detachment. When the mind is turned towards the world, the heart develops attachment. Thus both detachment and attachment result from the way the mind functions. When the mind is directed towards Prakriti (Nature or the phenomenal world), bondage ensues. When you turn the mind towards Divinity, you experience bliss (Ananda). "End the mind," means turning mind Godward. All you have to do is to dedicate every action of yours to the Divine. Then everything becomes easy and a source of bliss.

Science can offer you only temporary worldly comforts. Spirituality alone can give you enduring bliss. All the amenities which provide temporary comforts also give rise to unhappiness. A person may be sitting in an air-conditioned room. But his mind is filled with anxiety and worry. His brain is heated. One who has peace of mind will experience no, discomfort even if he is in a forest. Peace, therefore, cannot be got through science. In fact, science and technology today are leading man away from peace. Is any scientist enjoying peace of mind? No. He is leading an utterly artificial life. He is filled with worries. His mind knows no rest.

All the ills of man today are due to the fact that his mind is never restful and quiet. The mind is preoccupied with worries. Even an inanimate machine needs some periods of rest. But no rest is given to the mind.

If we desire peace for the individual, for society and for the nation, it can only be achieved through spiritual means. Hence, recognising this truth, without attaching excessive importance to worldly comforts, we must make every effort to acquire peace of mind. No doubt physical comforts are necessary up to a point. But they should be limited to meeting the basic demands of nature. For instance, man requires sleep. Is it to be got by taking pills? It will not be natural

sleep. Similarly peace of mind should be got through natural means. The spiritual path is the only way to achieve "the peace that passeth understanding".

—*from Bhagavan's discourse at "Sai Shruti", Kodaikanal, on 6-5-88*

### **"Intimations of Mortality"**

*One merchant who was very much afraid of death worshipped the God of Death, Yama, for many years and offered elaborate Puja to Him. Yama was pleased at the special attention and adoration shown by him and promised that he will not pounce upon him all of a sudden, but will give him advance intimation, so that he can put his affairs in good trim before leaving the world. When at last, his end came and he was about to die, he got wild with Yama and in his anger, he charged Yama with falsehood, ingratitude and cheating. He said that he was not given any advance intimation at all. But, Yama said, "Why? I had sent you not one but four intimations, well in advance of this consummation." The merchant said that he had not received any of them. But, Yama said, "Your hair turned grey. That was the first intimation. But, you dyed it and forgot its lesson. I made you bald, but, you wore a wig and slighted the notice I gave. Then, I had all your teeth fall off; you wore a denture and pretended I was far away. The fourth intimation I sent was folds all over your skin. You did not pay heed to that warning, too." Indeed Yama had kept His word.*

—**Baba ("Chinna Katha")**

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

### **Brahmacharya**

The edifice of life is a four-storeyed mansion. In this mansion the ground floor is the most important one. The upper three storeys are based upon this. It is known as Brahmacharya (continence or celibacy). In everyone's life childhood and youth are extremely important. This period of life should be regulated by practising purity and tranquility is "Brahmacharya".

The basic characteristic of Brahmacharya is that one should be full of pure thoughts, all one's actions should be sacred and one should be engaged in selfless service. Brahmacharya is not confined to the early years of one's boyhood and adolescence. Brahmacharya is a state that is implied in all the other three stages in life (Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa). The base is Brahmacharya. The second stage (or storey) is that of Grihasta (the householder). The third is Vanaprastha (retirement to the forest). The fourth is Sanyasa (complete renunciation of all attachments). Brahmacharya is present in all the other three stages like an undercurrent: Brahmacharya in the Brahmacharya state, Brahmacharya in the Grihasta state, Brahmacharya in the Vanaprastha and Brahmacharya in Sanyasa. In all the four states, Brahmacharya is immanent

in equal measure. It signifies purity in all the states. Only when there is purity Brahmacharya has any meaning.

Brahmacharya means leading a life of pure thoughts, pure actions and pure aspirations. Unfortunately today people tend to regard Brahmacharya as living somehow in an unmarried state. The term Brahmacharya carries within it its sacred import. Brahma-charya means whatever thoughts we entertain, whatever actions we perform, whatever enterprises we undertake, they should all be filled with the consciousness of Brahman (the Divine). Conducting ourselves with the awareness that the Divine is present everywhere

"Manava" (Man) means one who is pure. "Man" means one who is noteworthy. It also means one who has faith. These are the various meanings of the Sanskrit word "Manava" (man). Delving into the meaning of the word "Manava" further it will be noted that it consists of two terms, "Ma" (ever) and "Nava (new)—that which is ever new, that is always fresh. In this freshness there is purity or sanctity (pavitrata).

### **Student's life—the foundation**

Hence, in this sacred human birth, to lead a life filled with pure thoughts and pure actions is characterised as Brahmacharya. So, the real meaning of Brahmacharya is not confined to the corporeal discipline of celibacy attached to it in the physical sense, but it implies recognition of the Divinity inherent in man and leading a life based on that recognition. Therefore, for the life of the householder, the recluse and the renunciant, Brahmacharya is the foundation.

The period of a student's life is a crucial stage in life. All the other three stages in life are based upon one's life as a student (vidyarthi). Whatever purity or sanctity you develop during your student days will determine the degree of purity in the other three stages. Life as a student is thus the foundation for the rest of one's life. Hence a strong foundation must be laid for the ground floor. If the ground floor is weak and gives way, the whole edifice will collapse. Hence, the entire human existence should be sanctified by observing Brahmacharya. This implies that, by practising purity and recognising the omnipresent Divinity, one should regulate one's daily life by spreading purity and sacredness everywhere. Purity of mind, purity of Chitta (consciousness), purity of the heart and purity in action—this four-fold purity constitutes Brahmacharya. Whatever you do, you must act with the sense that it is an offering to the Divine. This is the real significance of Brahmacharya.

### **From "annam" to ananda**

Food is the primary requisite for life. Without food one cannot live. Hence life has been described as "Annamaya" (composed of food). But man is not content to live on food alone. The mind is not satisfied if the stomach is full. Although food is essential for the body, the mind craves for Ananda (bliss). Life can find fulfillment only if Ananda is experienced. Hence, man cannot rest content with being merely alive. He has to be active and ever on the move. In this process he has to ask himself the questions: Why am I restless? Why am I active? What for do I engage myself in actions? When the right answers are found for these, questions, all actions become sacred.

"What for am I performing these actions? How am I doing them? What is the sanctity attaching to them?" It is when one enquires into these matters, he will realise their true purpose and meaning. This enquiry has to be conducted in the proper way. He should ask himself whether the enquiry is purposeful or futile. Once he comes to the conclusion that certain action is right, he should do it with earnestness. Brahmacharya is the primary requisite for developing pure thoughts and performing pure actions.

Moreover, in practising Brahmacharya, it is essential to cultivate sacred thoughts. The heart should be filled with sacred feelings. You must eschew from your mind any thought of causing harm to anyone. Only then, the life that starts with food ("Annamaya") will culminate in a blissful life ("Anandamaya").

### **Why there is no peace**

Man should not consider that happiness consists in having a house full of children and equipped with all the amenities for comfortable living. Nor can peace be realised through wealth, power or position. Peace is the outcome of our actions and thoughts. If our thoughts are pure, our actions will also be pure. When the actions are pure, life itself becomes holy.

The primary reason for the lack of peace in the world today is that the thoughts and conduct of people have gone astray. The first step, therefore, is to make our thoughts pure. We need not bother about the past or the future. Concentrate your attention on your duty in the present. Dedicate all your energies to the fulfillment of this duty. This was the basis on which our ancients directed their lives, according to the injunctions of the Vedas and Shastras. Today there is a wide gulf between the lives led by our ancients and the prevailing modes of living. What is the reason for this difference?

Admittedly, food is essential. But there is scarcity of food today. What is the reason for this shortage? The fact is, people have given up the practice of yagas and yajnas (sacrificial rites) which used to be performed in the past. Yajna is not merely sitting in front of a fire and uttering some mantras. "Yajna!" really means the spirit of sacrifice or renunciation (tyaga). Today this spirit is totally absent. Instead, the desire for enjoyment (bhoga) has grown limitlessly. Because of this, the fascination for external objects has developed, leading to a forgetting of one's true nature. As a result, man has become a prey to numerous sufferings.

Divinity is ever present in man in all its purity. But man is unable to recognise this because of his attachment to transient pleasures like the black bee. This bee has a proboscis with which it can bore a hole through a strong bamboo or even through the human body. But when it enters a lotus flower and the lotus folds itself, the bee is unable to get out of its tender petals because it is immersed in the enjoyment of the honey in the lotus and forgets its own real strength. Likewise, man today, forgetting the Divine that is present within him and in everything he beholds, immersed in worldly concerns and intoxicated with mundane pleasures, is oblivious to his own true Divine nature. Man forgets his inherent capacity in the involvement with the mastery of the external world.

### **The power of faith**

The youth of today should get away from these involvements and develop confidence in their true selves. Whatever difficulties they may confront, whatever obstacles may come in their way, they should regard them as passing clouds. Nothing in the world is permanent. Only one thing is permanent and unchanging. That is the Divine. Install firmly in your minds the Divine and regard it as the only permanent entity that can confer enduring bliss. All others-whether they be relations, friends or possessions-cannot give you lasting bliss.

One of the students had spoken about how in one year both his parents, had passed away, leaving eight young children, of whom he was the eldest. In this tragic situation, Swami alone could offer solace and courage to the bereaved children. From that time to this day Swami had been looking after the children, who have looked up to Swami as "Sai Mother" and "Sai Father". No kith or kin could have looked after them in this manner. The Divine does not give up anyone who has faith trust in the Divine. Difficulties may come in succession like mountains, but they will disappear like snow if Divine grace is there. What is required is firm faith in God. Strengthen your faith in the Olivine."

Another devotee (an American businessman) was once faced with such difficulties that he wanted to wind up his business. But Swami advised him not to do so. Because of his past experiences with Swami, he had firm faith in Him and carried on his business. He was able to get over his difficulties. No one has suffered in this world who has had firm faith in God. Many have come to grief because of lack of faith.

### **Disbelief in mahavakyas**

Today you believe in what you see in the films or what you read in the newspapers or novels. You believe in what you see in a play or what is said in an almanac. But you have no faith in the Divine pronouncements of the Vedas: That-Twam-Asi (That Thou art), Ayam Atma Brahma (This Atma is verily Brahman), Aham Brahmasmi ("I am Brahman"). Prajnanam Brahma (The Constant Integrated Consciousness in man is Brahman), People have no faith in these Divine affirmations, but are easily misled by the meretricious declarations of worldly men. This is the lamentable degraded plight of man today. The reason is man has abjured faith in God. He has become a victim of faith in worldly things.

The first requisite is for men to develop faith in God. This is even more essential for the youth. Whatever plans you may draw up for the future, base them on faith in God. They should be righteous. You will then achieve success.

*From Bhagavan's discourse at "Sai Shruti", Kodaikanal, on 23-4-1988*



## **Easwaramma Day at Kodaikanal**

May 6 became a red-letter-day for Sai devotees at Kodaikanal,, when they were privileged to take part in the observance of Easwaramma Day in the presence of Bhagavan Baba and receive His blessings and Prasadam, besides listening to an inspiring discourse on the role of mothers in shaping the lives of children.

Bhagavan's residence, "Sai Shruti", was specially decorated for the occasion. Besides the local devotees, a large number of devotees from neighbouring areas, as well as many from overseas, were present.

After Darshan in the morning, the programme for the day began in the assembly hall attached to Bhagavan's residence with Vedic prayer by Bal Vikas children—boys and girls—who had come from Palani with their Gurus. Bhagavan appreciated their invocatory chants and patted them

After bhajans by the M BA students of the Sathya Sai Institute, whom Swami had taken with Him to Ooty and Kodaikanal, there were speeches by Sri Satchidanandam, Coordinator of the Coimbatore District Seva Samiti, and Sri Vasan, an MBA student. The former spoke on the significance of the Bal Vikas movement, launched by Bhagavan, for the moral and spiritual training of the younger generation Vasan explained the supreme importance of Bhakti in the realisation of the Divine.

Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His discourse, stressed the role of the mother in moulding the character of the child from the earliest years. The mother led the child to the father and the father took him to the guru, whose duty it is to lead the boy to God. This was the reason why the mother the father, and the guru are to be revered as God.

Later in the morning, there was Narayana Seva. Besides distributing food, Bhagavan presented saris, dhotis and blankets to the old and the needy.

After the Narayana Seva, Swami conferred an unexpected blessing on the large number of devotees who were remaining outside "Sai Shruti" by offering them sweet rice and lemon rice as "Prasadam". All the devotees greatly relished the prasadam, coming as it did from the hands of the Divine.

May 6 became significant in another respect. Bhagavan inaugurated on that day, the Kodaikanal Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, with Mr. Rajasekharan, Municipal Engineer, as convener. Swami permitted the Samiti to hold bhajans and other meetings in the newly constructed assembly hall. He blessed that the Samiti should become an active force for spiritual development in Kodaikanal.

—N.

## Join Hands

The years, the years, the lonely years that I searched in vain,  
The hopelessness, the misery, the heartbreak and the pain,  
I searched for GOD everywhere hoping that I'd see,  
Just one small glimpse of the DIVINE but I forgot to look in me,  
Tears I've shed, heartache I've felt, the pain caused by my lies,  
Deeds I've done to my fellowman that even I despised,  
Yet through it all he showed he cared, standing right there by my side,  
Pouring out his gentle love like the ever-flowing tide,  
To see his glow, to hear his voice, to see his loving smile,  
To know he loves us all the same has made my life worthwhile,  
Come, brothers and sisters of the world, let's join hands and pray,  
And thank LORD BABA for giving us the part in which we play.

—Bernadette Corbett, Perth, West Australia.

*Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquility of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquility. The Upanishads have proclaimed in a full-throated voice that sacrifice alone leads to immortality. Sacrifice is the chief trait of the pure. Therefore, every student must imbibe and display the spirit of sacrifice in his life.*

—Baba

## Memorable Days with Bhagavan

*For everyone who was with Bhagavan during His stay in Kodaikanal (from April 18th to May 8th), every day was an unforgettable blissful experience. Bhagavan gave freely of His time to the students, whom He had taken with Him to Ooty and Kodaikanal, addressing them as often as possible—quite often three to four times a day—giving them new insights into the life of the Spirit, exhorting them to live up to the high ideals of Bharatiya "Samskruti", and inspiring them to high endeavour by relating stories from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Bhagavatam. Nor were stories and parables from everyday life lacking. The matchless raconteur that Swami is, He endowed every parable and incident He related with dramatic appeal and poetic charm. It is no wonder the boys yearned for His discourses with an insatiable appetite.*

### ***Raimata's Message to Swami's "Angels"***

*The Rajmata of Nawanagar, a veteran devotee of Swami for many decades, was one of the few select devotees who were privileged to attend Swami's discourses. She was present at all the evening discourses in "Sai Shruti"—Bhagavan's residence—during her ten-day stay in Kodaikanal. Before leaving Kodaikanal on May 3rd, the Rajmata sent through Bhagavan the following message to the students (which was read out to them in the evening):*

It is always so very hard to leave the (physical) presence of the Lord. Somehow, Sai Himself makes it possible; otherwise, no one would ever leave. With a deeply rooted confidence that He will continue to guide, guard and guarantee all our pilgrimages to His very own resplendent presence within our hearts, I leave these few words of love and thanks to the golden angels that are all Sai's Vidyarthi, the most blessed ones of the present generation.

In a way, it is not right to thank the Lord, but my heart is overflowing with humble gratitude, and I do not know what else to do May Sai forgive such clumsiness and frailty.

All the angels will soon have to descend into the world to lead lives full of purpose, high purpose. I pray that all your lives will be as clean, straight and accurate as the flight path of each one of Lord Rama's arrows. Meanwhile, I must alert you to the fact that the world is full of winding, twisting and turning mazes.

#### **The power of maya**

When I was a child, growing up in my father's house, I used to wonder at the infinite variety of Maya. How was it ever going to be possible to know everything, or to choose what to know and do from the thousands upon millions of things there are in the world to do, see, hear, know? The beauty of the world is undeniable for, when all is said and done, what is Maya? It is the shadow of God, so there is not the slightest possibility that it can be anything but beautiful. It is we, mankind, in our misguided efforts to find happiness, who make it anything less than perfect. Ugliness, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. So, it is most certainly not to be despised, but it is also undeniable that the power of Maya, though it emanates from our own subjectivity, does delude, does veil the truth and cause needless confusion. What can we do about Maya? Our so beloved Bhagavan once told us a "chinna udharana" on this very dilemma.

One day, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were walking in the forest. They walked in single file: Rama first, then Sita, then Lakshmana. Lakshmana could not get a good view (Darshan) of Rama with Sita in between them. In this small example, Sita represents the Maya veiling the truth that is Rama, and Lakshmana is the seeker, or the worshipper. There were two choices for Lakshmana: he could take a swipe at Sita and knock her out of the way, so that his view of Rama would be unhindered, or, he could humbly and lovingly beg Sita to move aside, just a little, so that he might now and then glimpse the Lord. In the former way, not only would Maya have turned upon the seeker and taught him a jolly good lesson, but the Almighty would also have been mightily displeased. No, we do not have the right to ill-treat God's creation or His creatures.

Now, I simply do not know what the qualification M.B.A., means as a degree, but from mentions made in talks during these past days, I surmise that the subject matter includes business, possibly, management or marketing and could the 'A' stand for administration? These are among the most confusing activities in today's world, Maya within Maya, producing deeper Maya. You will have other people's needs, dreams, ideas to deal with. You may have to make decisions affecting many hundreds of people.

### **"Use only the Sai currency"**

So, with MAYA'S infinite variety in mind, there is only one thing to do. In your dealings in the world, use only the Sai currency, and you will never go wrong. Do you know what the Sai coin looks like? On one side, there is the majestic profile of Sai, the King of Kings, with His aureole of divine authority; on the other, there is the Sarva Dharma symbol, with the words 'Sathyam vada Dharmam chara' inscribed all around it. As Bhagavan said on Sunday evening, if you hold fast to these two, all the rest will follow. Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa can only exist where there already exist Sathya and Dharma. Indeed, the rules that bring success in God's shadow are the same that you have learned in His shade.

There may be trials and tribulations ahead, or only smooth sailing through the ocean of Samsara. Either way, it cannot matter to those whose spiritual muscles have been well stretched.

We look to you, angels of Sai, to usher in a kinder, gentler, more just world. And this you will do if you live as you have been taught by your Divine master, the universal father and cosmic mother, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

May you all live in peace and prosperity and bring harmony I all wherever you go. Jai Sai Ram.

## **Sai Blossoms: One to Ten**

*Sai's so close to you at One;  
Your life is full of real fun;  
Give a cry and all is well;  
You're in heaven, not in hell.*

*As you cross the River of Two,  
You marvel at the things you do;  
How joyful to walk and talk  
And to scribble with a chalk.*

*When you're in the Valley of Three,  
To talk and walk you feel more free;  
With your steps, if you say, "Sai Ram",  
There's no danger of any harm,*

*Now opens the magic door  
For the fun in Wonderland Four:  
As you run and play your game,  
On your lips keep Sai's Sweet Name.*

*Swimming in the Sea of Five,  
For pearls and gems you should dive,  
Sathya, Dharma, Shanti are fine;  
Prema and Ahimsa also shine.*

*Guard your stay in Playground Six;  
Take good care with whom you mix;  
Friends will come and go each day;*

*But Baba's Always there to stay.*

*Curtains open for Scene Seven  
And to! Now you are in heaven!  
When Baba dwells in your heart  
You can safely play your part.*

*Now life opens a new Gate  
As you walk on the Path of Eight;  
Let Baba be on your side,  
In Him you can fully confide.*

*Working in the Garden of Nine,  
Get closer to Sai Divine;  
Keep your garden free from weeds;  
Plant good thoughts, words and deeds.*

*Climbing the Mountain of Ten, sing  
And hear Prasanthi's Bell ring;  
Watch well your steps, lest you fall;  
See Sai in you and Sai in all.*

**—Chandrabhan Singh**

## **Teacher and Friend**

Sai, standing at the edge of the world,  
gliding over sand in your red robe,  
come to my heart where I sit and pray,

Alone in my room,  
candle weeps wax  
but the flame is steady.

You whisper words  
on the wind of compassion  
that guide and uplift.

God was once just a word  
but in you there is certainty,  
constant teacher and friend.

Far from your physical form

you abide in our hearts.

The fire that refines  
shaping us, moulding us,  
making us thine.

Pain the creator  
that causes a change.

Free us from chains  
of the flesh and the mind.

Yours the great heartbeat of the world  
In the flame of love  
forge us anew.

**—A. S. (U.K.)**

**AMRITADHARA:**

### **“Seek ye First...”**

All worldly pleasures are transient and temporary. Very often they result in sorrow and disappointment. God alone is the source of enduring bliss. The purpose of human birth is to realise the inherent divinity in man. This message was brought home to students of the Sathya Sai Institute, whom Bhagavan had taken with Him to Ooty in April last, by an interesting story. Swami said:

Once a great Maharaja (ruler) held a big exhibition of paintings and art products. The finest works of art were on display. The exhibition was open to one and all. The Maharaja announced that anyone could walk in and take away whatever one liked. Large numbers of men and women went to the exhibition and took back with them whatever they fancied. Among them was a lady. She saw everything in the exhibition. She came out through the main door without taking anything with her.

The Maharaja noticed that of all the persons visiting the exhibition she was the only one to come out empty-handed. He was curious to know what the reason for this was. He asked the lady: "Madam, how is it you have found nothing to interest you in the exhibition? There are so many attractive things on display. Was there nothing that pleased you?" She replied: "There are innumerable desirable things in the exhibition." The Maharaja asked: "But, was there nothing which you wanted?" "No," she said. The Maharaja said: "If that is so, tell me what you desire and I shall give it to you." She said: "Maharaja, will you promise that you will give me what I want? Is your offer genuine? Will you keep your word?" "Certainly," replied the Maharaja. "If that is so, I want only you," said the lady. True to his word, the Maharaja surrendered himself to her. When the Maharaja himself became hers, all that was in the exhibition automatically became hers.

This cosmos is a vast exhibition. It is the creation of the Lord. All entering this exhibition and are taking whatever they choose. Some seek jobs, others wealth, and so on. They are content to take the objects of their choice. But no one asks the question: "Swami! If I take away one thing or another, what is it that I gain? If you become mine, all these will become mine." When you have entered the cosmic exhibition, you must seek the Divine. Then, the whole universe becomes yours. You must seek that which is lasting and unchanging. There is no meaning in going after one thing after another. There is no end to that process. There is no satisfaction in that. What you acquire today, loses its charm the next day and you desire something new. But once the Divine is attained, all things are obtained.

In this cosmic exhibition, you are seeing, hearing and experiencing innumerable things. You experience depression, confusion and disappointment. You have no contentment. "Asanrupto nijo nashtah". "Lack of contentment is the true loss." The man who is not contented is continually experiencing loss. There is no Limit to desires. One feels hungry, another is thirsty. If the thirsty man is offered water, he is not satisfied, he wants a cool drink. When he is given a cool drink, he is not satisfied, he wants ice cream. And so on. He is not satisfied with anything.

There is no end to desires for material things in the world. To get rid of these desires, man must turn his mind towards God. That is the way to achieve contentment and lasting bliss.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse at Nandanavanam, Ooty, 16-4-1988*

## SRI SAI SONNETS

*The memory of you is fresh as dew  
Shared-joy's immortal spontaneity  
Though suns of change revolve, Your precious news  
Is always told within my heart's life-story:  
Bliss undiminished, fragrant, nectar-sweet  
With petal-rays of grace dispelling fear,  
A polestar guiding those who sail the sea  
Of death and birth tempestuous with tears.  
Remembrance, Sal, of You is nourishing  
The Light You are, all-present and all kind;  
You made us what we are today-joy-singing  
You live within this well of joy inside,  
And when we recall You and pray Your Name—  
First, last, between—Your perfection is the same.*

*The present You have made a paradisal,  
Savannah sweet of caring and compassion;  
Your devotees seem to have no cares at all—  
For others' needs You've these tools well-fashioned  
Their hearts melt at the sadness of another  
Although the real Self's perfect—nought's amiss;  
Identifying-with-the-body suffers  
But knowledge of the soul divine is bliss.  
You told us work is worship, duty's God,  
And we have striven to put this into practice;  
When all's one and Your will, why, even odd  
Surprises are as welcome as Your best-wishes  
You teach us to think of all of "them" as You—  
Where "me" and "mine" once were, love of You grew.*

*Not afraid of action and no stranger to repose  
The way to You is like a river, serving as it goes.  
Meandering and pandering to every thirst's bad taste  
Bogs souls down, and in swampland causes life's sad waste.  
To reach the endless ocean of Your Bliss, this is the goal—*

*All water tables feed one sea of milk—the waves are souls.  
Our attention always flows to reach that sacred End  
To end up there is the origin of being saved and spent.  
If all we do is offered up to the most holy Lord  
Sai receives and frees us, "against" and "for" unscored.  
Sai, Yours is the Peace our lives will empty into—  
And the emptier we are the more to know You we begin to.  
Sai, Thine is the Glory, Thou art the High Clear Source;  
Grant us strength of patience, and do Thou guide our course.*

*The changing of the guard, and leaves, and mind-forms—  
Are all witnessed by the constant Light eternal.  
Our outlook must be tempered till the storms  
Are ridden safely by the Seer internal.  
Unturning burning yearning of the lover  
For the all-perfect pure Intended One  
Will ripen finally so to uncover  
Sai-sown peace nourished by patience's sun.  
The seasons' songs end shows all come and go,  
With birth and growth and modifying passage;  
Devotion's fruit of bliss will grow and glow  
As we work and wait for our prayer-answering message.  
Especially in this wild age of strife  
His Nectar Name can give immortal life.*

*Is immortality a thing so cheap  
Mere words can buy it with their richness, rhyme  
And sentiments? No, friends, it is more deep  
Than drama which but takes us out of time.  
To live forever is the nature of  
Not nature but the spirit. Who would want  
A living death devoid of life and love  
Dragged out within a world the senses haunt  
The Evermore is yours, it's the true You  
But you still revel in the ego's lie  
"I am body, and I am not You,"  
Thus you cling to lifeless things, and die.  
Rightness of Heart shall always be—  
This Sai Truth is Immortality.*

**—Bill Jackson, Indianapolis, U.S.A.**

**(The sonnets were composed after a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam, while climbing the Bald Mountain in Vermont, B. J.)**



## **The Alchemy of the Spirit**

—*G. K. Damodar*

The life of Bhagavan is the greatest story ever told. It is the story of the most luminous life ever lived of "God as man". We are blessed by His presence amongst us. As I understand His teachings, in my own humble way, He came to show us how to live not for a few years but eternally. He explains great truths in a simple way, so as to make our souls joyous and gay. He shows us the path of Love and Truth and takes us to the glory of the Kingdom of God.

I am tempted to quote here a few lines of a great thinker which have great relevance now: "No one is relatively healthy who is spiritually weak, though physically robust, who is emotionally vigorous but ethically paralysed, who is alive in his animal nature but dead to his Angelic one."

These lines, though in a gentle way, remind us of our spiritual degeneration and hold out a promise to take us all to the glorious Sai Era, if only we follow His teachings. The first astonishing change which Bhagavan has slowly but subtly brought about is in the minds of innumerable young children at the grassroots level. Bhagavan sets much store on this part of His Mission to create a Brave New World, which will scrupulously observe ethical standards.

### **Children's Vedic chant**

He exhorts us to have the pure heart of a child radiating innocence. As Gurudev Tagore has sung, "The wondrous eyes of a child and the morning dew drops on a Lotus leaf" transport us to Heaven. I must mention an incident which happened in the auditorium on New Year eve. A band of young school children came in an orderly fashion and sat in the front part of the hall. A few of them in a small group sat near the steps. A little later, Bhagavan arrived and there was pin-drop silence. After walking on the edge of the platform, Bhagavan beckoned to the children group sitting below to chant the Vedic prayer. What a wondrous chanting it was! The young children put the elders assembled in the hall to shame by their sonorous and impressive Vedic chanting. After the chanting was over, each one touched Bhagavan's feet and walked back in an orderly fashion. If one can read the secret thoughts of the elders including me, they should have moaned inwardly: "Have we not wasted our years?"

The second change which Bhagavan has wrought both in the young and the old is in their behaviour towards others. A Sai devotee can easily be spotted out. He speaks softly and has no sense of ego. He is ready to help the old and the handicapped. There is a spontaneity in his action. I have to point out that this attitude is a little more pronounced among the foreign devotees, who have captured the heart of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan openly told the audience in His inimitable way that people coming from a distance of twenty thousand miles, meaning the overseas devotees, come and sip the honey from the lotus

flower, whereas people near Him, meaning the Indian devotees, are content to hop and croak on the lotus leaf like frogs. I feel it is a direct call to Indian devotees to do some self-examination and improve their attitudes and behaviour.

A third change which Bhagavan has wrought on the minds of the devotees is in the manner of greeting each other when they meet. The colonial contraption of "Good Morning", "Good Evening", "How do you do?" has given place to the sweet resounding form of "Sai Ram!" This has become a universal "Mantra". Every time we use this purifying "Mantra" we are chanting the names of our Ishta Devtas, Sai and Rama, and it is common knowledge that devotees use this sacred name very frequently in the course of a day. I leave it to my readers to imagine what great blessing this "Mantra" confers on the one who utters it and the resultant peace he experiences, not to mention the purification of the atmosphere around. I wish to make it clear that the changes mentioned above are only illustrative and not exhaustive. There are many other changes in the life pattern of devotees who have come under the divine and benign influence of Bhagavan. Meat-eaters have turned vegetarians, drug addicts have given up drugs and many who were victims of one or other pernicious habit have changed their ways beyond recognition. This transformation in the lives of men and women is the continuing miracle which Bhagavan is performing every moment.

I wonder whether there can be a better alchemy of the Spirit than what I have mentioned above. May Bhagavan's mantle of protection be ever on us and may He lead us on the onward path.

## **The Ego Barrier**

**—Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam**

In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says that one of the qualifications for a devotee to earn His love is "*nirmemo nirahankaarah*" (XI I-13), without *mineness* and without *egoism*, free from the feeling of "I" and "mine". The scriptures of all religions consider egoism as the only major hurdle between man and God. "Man minus ego is God," so goes the saying. Swami in His discourses frequently denounces this ego and stresses that it is the only obstacle that stands between Him and ourselves.

What is this ego and how did it come about? Man exhibits two natural traits in all his activities, namely, protecting and expanding his individuality. This conceited individuality instills in him the idea of an autonomous entity, a subjectivity responsible for his actions and for the enjoyment of the fruits there from. How did man conceive himself as an individual?

The Omnipresent Pure Awareness got reflected on matter to produce the individual consciousness. This consciousness is the basis of all cognition. Cognition is possible only when the cogniser and the cognised are separate entities. The perceiver and the perceived cannot be

one. Thus the cogniser consciousness assumes the role of the subject and objectifies everything else. In this continuous process of objectivisation or conceptualisation an individual pseudo entity has arisen, using the body-mind complex as its abode. This assumed individuality that had come up soon after birth gets an identifying name and considers itself as separate from everything else. The functioning of this duality, the "me" and the "other", is the original sin of man referred to in the Bible.

This whole process has thrown up a phenomenon called man, which has three aspects in itself, first, the real "I" or the true Self, the second, a reflection of the first giving rise to the consciousness "I am", and the third an individuality, "I am so-and-so". Thus each person, as Swami says, is really "three in one", "the one you really are, the one you think you are and the one others think you are."

### **Ego and evolution**

Why did this ego develop? If we analyse carefully it appears to be a necessary part of the evolution of life. How else could a conscious individual have cropped up? Having evolved, its dissolution is, interestingly, the only means to reach the Divine. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "as for the lower life, the development of ego; so far as the higher life this reverse movement of elimination of the ego is indispensable." The why of it all is beyond our comprehension and can only be termed as the play of the Divine.

However, this ego with its deluding power is the source of all man's problems. The real illusion man suffers from is his mistaken identity with the body which is only a part of the phenomenon. "Viveka Choodamani" (V-73) says, "Aham mameti prathitam sariram mohaaspadam"—the body is known to be the source of the delusion of "I" and "mine". "Deho ahamithyam moodho dhrtvaa thishtatyaho janaah" says Aparokshaanubhuti (V-23). "It is strange that a person ignorantly remains contented that he is the body."

### **The body and the soul**

What is a body? The common definition will be that it is the physical frame of a man or an animal. But our scriptures provide an extended definition which considers the body as any substance which consciousness is capable of supporting and controlling for its own purpose and this is subordinate to consciousness. In other words the soul possesses the body and not that the body has a soul.

What is the purpose of having a body? It is an instrument for righteous living. "Sariramaadyam Khalu dharmasadhanam" (The body is the primary requisite for realising righteousness). This task of the body has two components, to carry out physical actions which are external, and, second, to achieve Realisation which is inner action. But blinded by egoism the individual forgets that he is only an instrument Krishna says in the Gita (111-27), "ahamkaara vimoodhaatma kartaaham iti manyate"—one who is deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer." Sankara says, "ahamkaarah sa vijneyah karthaa bhoktaa abhimanyayam"—it is the ego which identifies itself with the body and becomes the doer or experiencer and "sukham

duhkham cha taddharma"—happiness and misery are its characteristics. (Viveka Choodamani, 104 ft 105)

### **Liberation from ego**

Giving up this ego or annihilation of the pseudo-entity is the greatest achievement expected of man. "Nirmamo nirahamkaarah sa saanthim adhigacchati" says Krishna (Gita II-71)-devoid of possessiveness and egoism, that is, giving up the feeling of "I" and "mine", a man attains peace. Such a non-egoistic person is called a satwika: "anaham-vaadi saatvika uchyate" (Gita XVIII-26). This mistaken identity with a particular transient phenomenon, the body, is the real bondage. As *Viveka Choodamani* (V. 299) declares, "so long as one has anything to do with this wretched ego, there can never be any talk about liberation," because liberation is from the ego, from the dualistic concept of "me" and the "other". Liberation is from the "person" and not for the person. Swami declares that purity leads to unity and unity leads to Divinity. Identification with the body is the basic impurity and all other impurities follow it. It is basically this impurity which an Avatar wants to remove from us. It is this "person" in us He wants to destroy, because it stands in the way of our becoming one with Him. Lord Krishna categorically states (Gita XVIII-53) "ahamkaaram Balam darpam kaamam krodham parigraham, vimuchya nirmamam saanto Brahmabhooyaya kalpate"—"Giving up egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, possessions, without the feeling of mine and becoming peaceful, one is fit to become Brahman."

A major step in abandoning the ego is to give up body consciousness and abiding in the Self. This does not mean developing a contempt towards the body. This body is a part of the intended manifestation of the Divine. It is wrong to subject it to mortification and self-torture. Lord Krishna denounces this in Gita (XVII-6). "Karshayantah sarirastham bhootagraamam achetasah maam cha eva antah"—"They are fools who torture their bodies and Me who dwells within the body." The body itself is not an obstacle to spiritual progress. It is the identification with the body that is the stumbling block on the path.

### **Wiles of the ego**

Complete annihilation of the ego is a slow process and the most important step is surrender to the higher power within for which faith is the prime requisite. But here one has to proceed with caution because the ego tends to take refuge behind this term "surrender" and consider itself as the greatest devotee of the Lord and does not hesitate to go about saying so. Even if one claims to be performing Nishkama karma (action without desire for the fruits thereof) the ego far from being annihilated may continue to consider itself to be the doer of the work that is being dedicated to the Lord.

Thus every attempt made to destroy the ego is accompanied by the ego putting up several disguises and finding for itself many hideouts. Two of its deceitful disguises are a vain show of regard for others and putting up a garb of indifference to worldly matters. The former presents the individual as a great Sevak and philanthropist while the latter makes him put up a false appearance of a poor or simple man or even of a saintly person. The most important hideout for the ego is to take shelter behind the true Self and behave as if it were the Self. Then a spiritual

superiority is assumed by it and thereafter all that remains to be done is to guide others in the path!

Practically every Sadhaka faces these problems. As Sri Aurobindo says, "the form of ego has to be dissolved, it has not to be replaced by a bigger ego or another kind of ego." The best example to illustrate this is Arjuna's behaviour on the battlefield. First, he came to fight with the egoism of strength as demanded of a Kshatriya. Soon the ego manifested as a selfish fear and inaction for selfish ends. Identifying himself with his body and bodily relationships with his cousins and Acharyas he was reluctant to fight. This was egoism of weakness. But the same was posing as a virtue. He said: (B.G. I-31), "na kaanksha vijayam Krishna na cha raajyam sukhaani cha" "O Krishna, I desire not victory, kingdom and pleasures." Even refusing to do one's duty under the misconceived pretext of compassion and perverted argument about dharma, is egoism. Here Arjuna assumed doership in his duty of slaying the wicked. Hence Krishna had to remind him; (B.G. XVIII-17), "yasya na ahamkrto bhaavo hatvaa apt sa imaan lokaan na hanti"—"He who has not got the notion of egoism, though he kills these people, he does not kill." Again, (B.G. XVIII-59), "yad ahamkaaram aasritya na yotsya iti manyase, mithyaa esha vyavaasayah"—"If you take refuge in egoism and think that you will not fight, it is an empty resolve." Moreover, "rte api tvaam na bhavishyanti sarve yevasthitah pratyaneekeshu yodhaah"—(B.G. XI-32)—"Even without you these hostile warriors lined up here shall not live." Because, "mayaa eva ete nihataah poorvam"—"They have been already slain by Me", and "ova nimitta maatram bhava" (B.G. XI-33)—"You be merely an instrument."

Thus the greatest lesson that emerges out of this episode in the Mahabharata is elimination of the sense of doership and complete annihilation of the feeling of "I" and "mine", which is based on the identification with the body. That is the only means to attain the state of Satwic "anahamvadi," "nirahamkarah" and to qualify for the status of the beloved devotee of the Lord. Then, as Swami says, you become like the hollow flute, fit to be taken by the Lord to play upon and produce Divine music.

### **Lesson for a King**

*There was a king who sought a teacher who could take him to heaven. He was so conceited and drunk with power that he felt he deserved it. When any one came forward, he plied him with such impossible questions that they were aghast at his impertinence. But the king did not leave them at that. He threw them into prison.*

*At last, one man came promising to show him the way. He was brought into court and seated before the king. The man, however, took no notice of the king, but began conversing with the courtiers and the pages and attendants inquiring after their health and wishing them well. The king was incensed at this neglect of his high authority and he asked the soldiers to lead him out and give him a thorough beating.*

*The man said, "Before I am led out, let me tell you this I am to be given a thorough beating because I did not respect you first, but bypassed you and talked to these servants of yours. Well, God is the King of Kings, the Lord of all the worlds; you have neglected Him: you are bypassing Him; you talk only to these servants; consider what punishment you deserve for this."*

*The king realised his blunder and thanked the teacher for removing the veil of conceit.*

**—(From Baba's "Chinna Katha")**

### **The Power of Grace**

Can a canoe sail on land?  
Or a new moon reflect your handsome face?  
Yet I've seen cripples walk  
With Sai Almighty's power of grace.

Can a rainbow abandon its colours?  
Or a bird its wing? The peacock its plume?  
The rising sun its golden beams?  
The vernal flower its charming perfume?

Can the sweetest song be sung  
Without the notes of music and time?  
With multidirectional concentration  
Can one land in meditation's clime?

Can you condemn a part of the *WHOLE*  
Or its entity forlorn deem?  
In the depth of translucent silence  
Conceive the *unity* with esteem.

**—K. Chowdhury, Calcutta**

### **Limitless Sanctum Sanctorum**

Eons, eons, Sai Baba!  
Oh! perennial fountain of Love,  
Artist of Mother Nature,

Grammar of grace,  
Grace personified—  
Music of the world,

Emperor of the heart,  
Lover of mankind,  
Source, solace and succour of life.  
Life of the Universe.  
Eternal light,  
Embodiment of patience,  
Rock and rock-hearted men melt at Your  
Sight,

Eons, eons, Sai Mata!  
Womb of the Universe,  
Womb of void,  
Conceived rnan in mind, with mind:  
Oh! inalienable archetypal Mother,  
You suckled man with substance of life;  
Oh! Nurse eternal Eternity, death, birth and  
breath abide in You.

Eons, eons, Sai Pita!  
BLISS—  
Day and night,

You spread the beauty of divinity,  
With glowing eyes of compassion,  
Chanting Your name is our ablution.

Oh! Sai Premaswaroop!  
Actor-Director of the Cosmic-stage!  
You are the One in all  
You are All-in-one—  
Exemplar, Avatar, Friend and Teacher,  
Trier and tester of human nature,  
Never ending, ever beginning,  
All pervading life of the universe;  
Engulfer of space and time,  
Limitless emperor of limitless hearts-  
HRIDAYAVAASI SATHYA SAI BABA  
The pure heart is Your abode.

*-Vasan Venkataraman, II M. B. A.,  
Prasanthi Nilayam.*

#### **STUDENTS' CORNER:**

### **Baba: The Architect of our Lives**

*—Ananta Rao, II M.Com.*

"Yatho vaacho nivartanthe apraapya manasaa saha"—"That from which speech and mind turn back, unable to reach it"—this is how 'Brahmam' is described in our Vedas. And this applies equally to Swami. Words cannot adequately describe even a minute fraction of His infinite glory, nor can the human mind comprehend Sai's real nature. Since He transcends all limitations of time, space, etc., I shall not attempt the impossible task of describing His resplendent personality with all its distinctively divine attributes.

Though I have immensely benefited from His bountiful mercy, I admit that I cannot explain Him. As Swami Himself has said, "Your worldly intelligence cannot make you understand the ways of God. You may benefit from God, but you cannot explain Him!"

During the last few years of our stay with Bhagavan, there has been a change in our thinking. Our thoughts have become more definite, authenticated by real experience and reinforced by faith and conviction. By His infinite grace our thought processes are modified, our value systems are enriched and our intellects are illumined. He takes care of us like the eyelids

that guard the eyes. In Him, we have found our 'ideal'. If we are what we are today, we are convinced, it has all been by His infinite grace.

We can ask any devotee among the millions that gather in the Presence and each would claim that there is something special between himself and Bhagavan. Each one's experiences with Bhagavan have been unique and each may feel that he has had the singular good fortune of gaining His special grace. He has a different approach, mode of dealing and an appropriate message to every individual who comes within the ambit of His grace. To the thousands who see Him, Bhagavan every day offers solace and succour in a myriad ways, to each according to his need. Quite a few are disappointed that their wishes are not fulfilled, but they cheerfully submit to the superiority of His wisdom and offer grateful obeisance to Him. No matter what one receives out of His divine munificence or what one does not apparently receive, everyone continues to love Him as fervently as ever.

Few can doubt His divine powers which have conferred joy on thousands of people from all over the globe. Yet the greatest miracle which Sai is performing is the transformation He brings about in the people. We have seen how hundreds of young students are transformed in a matter of minutes. The transformation He brings about in the youth in particular augurs well for the world. The transformation He works in us makes us better students and more dutiful sons and citizens of this great Bharat.

It is very well known to everyone that nobody gets as much of His attention as we, the students of the Sai Institute. We are fortunate to be an integral part of His daily routine. I don't think Bhagavan enjoys anything more than transforming indifferent, wayward juveniles, into sincere, disciplined, resolute youth. For His special attention to students, there can be another reason. The young minds are not polluted by the foul winds of the world. At our age, it is easy to correct the mental aberrations and perversions, which have not yet struck deep roots.

Setting right the present-day faulty educational system is an important part of Sai's mission. With this task in mind He has brought all of us here, with love as His instrument. He has been imbuing the student community with a high sense of duty, devotion and discipline. His boundless grace and mercy turn vagrant youth into sincere seekers. Swami's Institute has been a haven of refuge for the young against the terrible onslaughts of materialism. We cannot even conceive of the magnitude of debt that we owe to Bhagavan. Bhagavan has not only changed the life-style of all students, but conferred on us a fresh new life. His Love and Mercy have turned those, who were not even worth the dust of which they are made, into persons who are worth their weight in gold.

Our achievements may be falling short of the ideal, but nevertheless we are progressing gradually towards the goal. We are sure that, by His grace, we shall be able to attain Him. Swami has chosen us as His humble instruments in the glorious task of regeneration of the ancient spiritual traditions of this sacred land of Bharat. When we follow His teachings and put them into practice in our daily lives, we will be moving closer to Him.



*Manava is of the nature of Madhava; he is the imperishable eternal Atma! Just as rain falling in various parts of the world flows through a thousand channels and reaches the ocean at last, so too, creeds, rituals, religions and theologies, all derived from man's different forms, fertilising many fields, cooling many communities, refreshing tired people in many ways, at last reach the Ocean of Bliss.*

—Baba

## **What the World Needs Now**

—*Barbara Bozzani, Editor,  
Sathya Sai Newsletter of America*

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has come to re-establish Dharma (righteousness) in the world. No one who is familiar with His teachings would doubt that. However, re-establishing Righteousness in a world riddled by greed, envy, pride and avarice is a large task. How does He change all the mean-spirited hearts and purify them?

Not everyone will know of the Avatar and His Divine Love. The world needs good examples to look up to. Where will these leaders come from? Our Swami has already begun a magnificent project for educating the young. There are the two programmes of Education in Human Values and Bal Vikas being taught to children on a worldwide basis. He has established the unique Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning for young men and women in India. All of this is common knowledge among Swami's followers.

What was not known to me is the superb quality of the education which is offered to young people who will be the exemplars of His teachings.

On a recent trip to India my husband and I were privileged to witness, firsthand some of this quality education in action. We were able to travel to the hill station campus at Ooty where Swami has established a school for young boys, from the first to the eighth standard.

### **Children's love for Swami**

As Bhagavan Baba arrived in Ooty the youngsters were lined up, hands folded in prayer, and greeted the Lord with a Vedic chant. The discipline manners and deportment of the young lads were impressive. Their spiritual training is part of the curriculum. Their secular education is unsurpassed. But with all the discipline, they still had a sense of high spirits and fun which is typical of small boys everywhere. What impressed me most was their deep and abiding love for Swami. It was touching to see the way their faces would light up at the sight of Him. There was a feeling of playfulness between the Lord and the boys, as if they shared some marvellous secrets. Swami was both mother and father to each of them, always correcting, but also assuring them that they were "good boys".

Upon leaving Ooty we travelled, caravan style, to another hill station called Kodaikanal where there is a lovely home, on the banks of a lake, for Swami's use. Swami had travelled to Kodai with about forty students, most of whom were first year M B A (Master of Business Administration) students. The boys, in their early twenties, represent another generation of potential leaders. It was another opportunity to observe the interaction between the young students and the Lord.

### **Learning to serve**

Although some of the students will become business executives and captains of industry, they must first learn to serve. Some of them come from aristocratic families, still they must learn to serve by serving, cleaning up after meals, or doing any 'menial' task that needs to be performed. They are quiet, efficient, well mannered, and always immaculately groomed in white shirts and trousers. Their knowledge of a variety of subjects was impressive. But as in the case of the little boys of Ooty, their education goes far beyond academic or secular knowledge.

Swami would often gather them around Him and discuss great spiritual concepts. He would point out the unity in diversity of practical and spiritual life. Swami made it very clear that "the end of education is character," and that "education without character is dangerous."

In Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume XI, Baba has told all students, "You should not confine yourselves only to the study of books. You should expand the love latent in your hearts and translate it into service to mankind. Service to society is the worship you offer to the Lord. Do not lead barren lives, concentrating on your own advancement. Live for others, for the promotion of the welfare of society, for the progress and prosperity of the country."

As these young, eager students take their places in society it is this kind of teaching that will bring about, through them, a better and more righteous way of life. Surely this is the kind of education that is urgently needed throughout the world. Jai Sai Ram.

Those who wish to be close to Sathya Sai Baba must maintain an open heart even in the most difficult circumstances. Take what He gives as His gift—a tough lesson for one to learn. Then He pulls you ever nearer, inch by inch, just slowly enough so you don't get fully consumed in the flame of adversity. In this way, the ego is diminished. You find that the important thing in life is love, *Prema*. That's what one should have asked for all along. I am convinced of it. Has He not said His greatest boon is love? How foolish I felt asking for a cure for this or that. Let it happen through love, not through anxiety over the body or a job. Of course, I don't begrudge others their blessings—I must learn about my own blessings. The Lord is greater than the greatest, but you must crush your ego and realize Him. Coming to God is what is happening. Loving God is the answer. Of course, this means you must love yourself too—these are synonymous. Am I willing to give part of myself to save another, or all of myself in service to God? How much am I willing to sacrifice for my Lord? He knows best, not me. He knows what

it takes to let this heart become *Premaswarupa* (the embodiment of Love). Can I not learn to enjoy this love He shares with me? Must my eyes continue to deceive me to the point where I separate myself from God?

—*David Lenhoff, Honolulu, Hawaii*

*Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Life is fraught with vicissitudes, trials and tribulations. The world looks attractive but is the abode of suffering. Life is like a water bubble on a lotus leaf. The lotus is born in water, grows in water and depends on water for its existence.

"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma"—"Being, Awareness, Eternal—the Omni-Self." This is the Lake of the Eternal Divine Spirit. From this arises a lotus in a subtle form. Thoughts and feelings are the fragrance emanating from this lotus. Maya is the lotus leaf. Life is the water bubble on this leaf of Maya.

The Atmic principle is the basis for everything in creation—its origin, growth and dissolution. Considering the evanescent body as permanent and real, and leading a life devoted to worldly and mundane pursuits, man is lost in delusions which cause sorrow and suffering. Ignorance of his true nature is the root cause of all sorrow. When this ignorance goes, there will be freedom from sorrow.

Man is compounded of two basic constituents: one which is permanent and the other which is transient. They are: the Atma and the Anatma; the body and the indwelling Spirit; the Kshetra (the Field) and the Kshetrajna (the Knower of the Field). As one who is essentially Divine, man's primary duty is to enquire into what is permanent and what is impermanent, what is real and what is unreal, discard what is false and adhere to what is true. This is the theme of the Gita in the cantos devoted to "Kshetra-Kshetrajna Vibhaga yogam" and "Gunathraya Vibhaga yogam". The Gita lays stress on enquiry into the eternal and the evanescent as a primary requisite for man. The aim of education should be to enable one to discover his true nature.

By concentrated effort and by sacrifice of every kind, different paths have been discovered for experiencing Divinity. The Upanishads have declared: "Not by rituals, or progeny or wealth can immortality be attained. It can be got only through renunciation (Tyaga)." What is it that has to be renounced? What is it that has to be sought? Man should be engaged in a perpetual enquiry to find out from the myriad objects in the universe, from his varied experiences and his multifarious activities, the means of achieving bliss (Ananda).

Today the world is plunged in chaos and conflict. What is the reason for this? All the joys and sorrows experienced by man stem from his actions. The actions themselves are the result of thoughts arising in the mind. It is only when the thoughts are good that the actions will be pure. When man's actions are pure, society will be healthy and peaceful.

**Lessons from nature**

The secret of true renunciation has to be learnt from the trees, the cows and the rivers.

*Rivers flow for the good of others;  
Cows give milk to nourish others;  
The human body is for rendering service.*

When trees, rivers and cows are setting such an example in unselfish service to others, human life will have no meaning if it is not devoted to selfless service.

When we start enquiring, "Where is God? Who is God?" Nature as the vesture of God provides the answers. It is well known that the earth spins round itself at the rate of 1000 miles an hour. It is ceaselessly doing its duty without rest. Because of this rotation you have night and day. Moreover, the earth is going round the sun at the speed of 66,000 miles an hour. As a result, we have changes in seasons conducive to cultivation of crops. The earth, the sun and the moon are providing a lesson to man, regarding the fulfillment of one's duties. They are also demonstrating the importance of activity for mankind. All of them-trees, rivers, cows, the earth and the sun- are acting unselfishly. At the same time, what they are doing is essential for man's existence.

When these are rendering such selfless service, what kind of renunciation (Tyaga) is man displaying? Man is enjoying the benefits provided by Nature, but is showing no gratitude at all in return.

### **Misconceived magnanimity**

Despite all the progress in scientific knowledge, man has not learnt the real purpose of education and has not developed the sense of gratitude. One without gratitude is worse than a wild beast. Doing good in return for the good done to you is nothing to boast about. Real goodness consists in doing good even to one who has done you harm. But in applying this principle, discrimination should be used. History is full of examples of misconceived generosity and forgiveness. Mohamed Ghorī invaded India several times and was defeated by Prithviraj, who let him go back from his spirit of magnanimity. Ultimately, Mohamed of Ghorī conspired with Jaichand to take Prithviraj as a prisoner. Instead of showing gratitude to Prithviraj for his magnanimity, Ghorī Mohamed gouged the eyes of Prithviraj. History teaches that no quarter should be given to wicked persons who are treacherous and ungrateful in rendering service to needy people, students should remember these lessons from life and use their discrimination and intelligence.

### **Intellectual conceit**

In the pursuit of education, students should take note of three things. One: You should not talk about matters of which you have no knowledge. It is a mark of foolishness. Two: It is dangerous to pretend that you know something when you are really ignorant. Three: You must strive to acquire knowledge and impart it to others only after you have mastered the subject.

Today many pretend to be all-knowing. This is a sign of egoistic conceit (Ahamkara). Egoism can bring about the complete downfall of a person. It is like a pest that destroys the very

enough to ruin the life of any person. Hence, the primary need is to get rid of egoism, which is fostered by ignorance. Education can become meaningful only when you have developed humility and right behaviour.

### **Maniben patel's example**

Today much effort is wasted on ostentatious living. Students should learn the value of leading a simple and unostentatious life. You may be aware of Sardar Patel, who was Deputy Prime Minister in the Government formed after Independence. One day, a colleague of his, Mahavir Thyagi, went to Patel's residence. While talking to Patel, Thyagi noticed Patel's daughter, Maniben, doing the household chores. She was wearing an old sari, patched up in some places Thyagi asked her: "Maniben! You are getting a bad name for your father. What high position is he holding in the government. He is the Deputy Prime Minister of the country. Being his daughter, if you are like this, you will be taken for a beggar. The dress you are wearing is not befitting at all." Maniben was indignant and told Sri Thyagi: "Thyagiji! It is only those who have earned money by foul and unjust means that should feel sorry for the clothes they wear. I am not ashamed to wear the clothes made out of my own labours while I am carrying on my legitimate duties. Those who spend lavishly on their comforts the money earned by their parents have to feel ashamed about themselves. I have nothing to be ashamed about. In looking after my aged father, I do my work, wearing the clothes I choose. I do not hanker after anyone's wealth. I know how to maintain my dignity and self-respect. No one need teach me how to conduct myself." Maniben left after saying these words.

Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who was seated on the same sofa as Sri Thyagi, told him in unmistakable language: "Thyagiji! You do not know Maniben well enough. From the time she wakes up in the morning right up to going to bed in the night she is ceaselessly working without any rest. Although her father is the Deputy Prime Minister, she attends to all the household work herself. She cleans the vessels and washes her father's clothes herself She spins on the charkha whenever she has some spare time. She stitches the clothes for her father. She makes saris for herself out of the discarded dhotis of her father. It is difficult to find anyone to equal her in the ideal life she is leading."

Such was the dedicated life led by Maniben in those days. It is hard to find today any young woman or man who can live like that. Most, young people lead ostentatious lives, wasting the hard-earned money of their parents. Students! Realise what you owe to your parents and act in a manner which will not grieve them. Avoid waste of money, of food, of time and energy.

### **Get rid of bad traits**

Having come to the Sathya Sai Institute for your studies, you have to set an example to others. You have to get rid of all bad traits. This is the sacrifice you have to make for acquiring good qualities. Real enjoyment does not consist in wearing expensive clothes and leading a luxurious life. You must experience joy in the control of your desires and in leading a tranquil life. Do not poison your minds by excessive desires.

Buddha was once asked: "Who is the richest man in the world?" Buddha replied: "He who has much satisfaction (with what he has) is the richest man." To the question, "Who is the poorest man?" Buddha replied: "He who has many desires."

A Maharaja, who was listening to Buddha's sermons on contentment and renunciation, wished to earn the approbation of Buddha.

Buddha used to keep with him always a rattle-drum. His disciples once asked him: "Master! Why are you always keeping this rattle-drum by your side?" Buddha replied: "I shall play on this drum the day a person who has made the greatest sacrifice approaches me." Everyone was eager to know who this person would be. Such persons are often the forgotten men of history.

Wishing to attain this distinction, a Maharaja loaded his elephants with considerable treasure and went to Buddha. He hoped to offer the treasure to Buddha and earn his praise.

On the way, an old woman greeted the Maharaja and pleaded: "I am hungry. Will you give me some food?" The Maharaja took out a pomegranate fruit from his palanquin and gave it to her. The old woman came to Buddha with the fruit.

By then, the Maharaja had also come to Buddha and was eagerly waiting to see when Buddha would sound the rattle-drum. For a long time Buddha did not use it. The Maharaja stayed on.

### **The greatest sacrifice**

The old woman approached Buddha, staggering on her legs, and offered to him the pomegranate fruit. Buddha took it and immediately sounded the little drum.

The Maharaja asked Buddha: "I offered so much wealth to you. You did not sound the drum. But you rattled it after receiving a small fruit. Is this a great sacrifice?"

Buddha replied: "Maharaja! In sacrifice, it is not quantity that counts. It is the quality of sacrifice that matters. It is natural for a Maharaja to offer gold. But what great sacrifice is made when a hungry old woman offers the pomegranate fruit to the Guru despite her hunger. She did not care even for her life and gave the fruit. What greater sacrifice can there be? It is not sacrifice to offer what is superfluous for you. True sacrifice means giving up that which is most dear to you, that which you value most."

Students! You must give up your selfishness and strive to please the Lord in whom you have faith by dedicating your lives to the service of the Divine. The whole universe is permeated by the Divine. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and all-knowing. Be conscious that He is not confined to any place. He is everywhere and in everything including your body. He cannot be seen by dissecting the body. But when the mind is directed towards God He can be experienced. The men

machines (Yantras). He can be experienced through Mantras.

### **What Swami wants**

Students! This Sathya Sai Institute has been founded to train ideal students who would be able to change the world which is today plunged in chaos and corruption. Bharat, which was the fountain-source of righteousness and spirituality, is today divorced from, Truth and Right Conduct and is plagued by evil forces. Swami does not seek anything from you except that you should develop into ideal citizens who will bring good name and fame to Bharat. This is the sole purpose for which Swami brought the Institute into existence. All education is free here. You have all the facilities needed for your studies. You have to transform yourselves and help to transform the country. In olden days, people regarded everything as given by God. They placed God first, the world next, and themselves last. Today all this has been reversed. The "I" comes first, the world next and God last.

The Mahabharata shows what it means to place God in the forefront or otherwise. Both Arjuna and Duryodhana went to Krishna to seek His help in the impending war. Krishna said they could make the choice between himself and his army. Arjuna opted for Krishna and Duryodhana chose Krishna's army. In the ultimate outcome the Pandavas, who placed God in the forefront, achieved victory, while the Kauravas, who had faith only in arms, lost everything:

**—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute Hostel, Vidyagiri, on 26-6-1988**

*The Divine aspect of your personality will encourage humility, truthfulness, love, fortitude, detachment and eagerness to serve. Cherish the manifestation of these qualities in your life and practise these whenever you get a chance. The innate brotherhood that sanctifies the human race is destroyed by the weeds of envy that grow in the mind. These weeds ruin one's personality.*

**—Baba**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **"Bhakta Sakha Bhagavan!"**

"You are the friend of your devotees, oh Bhagavan." This epithet ("Bhakta sakha") is applied to Bhagavan in one of the bhajans. How does Bhagavan regard the devotee as a friend and why should the Lord look upon the devotee as a friend? The answer to these questions was provided by Bhagavan Baba in one of His recent discourses at "Trayee Brindavan".

Many call themselves devotees, said Bhagavan, but this claim means nothing by itself. It is like addressing a letter to someone. Unless it is acknowledged by the recipient, you cannot be



devotee or not should be declared by the Lord Himself.

Swami said: This was what Krishna declared regarding Arjuna. He told Arjuna: "You are my devotee and you are my friend." Arjuna did not declare to Krishna, "I am your devotee." Krishna was not content to declare: "Arjuna, you are my devotee." Why did He go on to say: "You are my friend." Would it not have been sufficient if Krishna had declared, "you are my friend"? Why should he say, "you are my devotee"? In this declaration, there is a profound spiritual significance. This will be clear only when we practise the spiritual life.

If merely the Lord were to say Arjuna, "you are my friend" his ego will get inflated and he will take undue liberties with Krishna. If He were to say, "My dear, you are my devotee," he will be extremely submissive. A kind of fear will be instilled in him. Fear should not be instilled; nor should he be encouraged to take excessive liberties. Hence, the terms 'devotee' and 'friend' were used by Krishna. "You are my friend. You may be free with me upto a point. You are my devotee. So observe certain restraints. Exercise control over yourself in your devotion."

### **How the Master teaches**

In dealing with devotees, the Lord has to maintain a balance. Here is an example from the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Whether in olden times or nowadays, there have always been some persons who indulged in calumny against good men and derided the good actions done by them. Ramakrishna's disciples had to go by boat across the Ganga to get whatever was required for his ashram. Ramakrishna used to assign different tasks each day for the young disciples in the ashram. One of them was a gentle youth known as Brahmananda. Vivekananda was an aggressive and short-tempered youth. One day Brahmananda went by boat to bring provisions for the ashram. As soon as they saw an ochre-robed person in the boat, the other passengers got very indignant. They started abusing Ramakrishna Paramahansa in various ways. They remarked: "He is a pseudo-sanyasi. He is spoiling all young men," and so on. Brahmananda silently shed tears, remembering the teachings of the Master. During the trip, he was apprehensive about what might happen. On the return trip, the earlier story was repeated. He listened silently to the abuse levelled against Ramakrishna and did not venture to quarrel with them. After his return, Ramakrishna asked him to relate what all had happened. After listening to Brahmananda's pathetic story, Swami Ramakrishna burst out: "How could you remain silent while your guru was being reviled? You have committed a sin. You are not fit to remain in the ashram." Narendar (Vivekananda) who was standing nearby, listened to the angry words of the Master.

Brahmananda fell at the feet of the Master and pleaded for forgiveness.

The next day, it was Vivekananda's turn to go by boat to buy provisions. As soon as they saw an ochre-robed youth in the boat, the other passengers started abusing Ramakrishna Paramahansa. One rich man accused Ramakrishna of spoiling young men by his teachings. Narendar remembered what the guru had said the previous day, rose from his seat and gave a

"Will you keep your mouth shut? You may have your likes and dislikes and we have ours. What right have you to condemn us? If you do not keep silent, I shall hurl you into the Ganges." Everyone in the boat got alarmed that the irate youth might actually carry out the threat. All of them became silent. Vivekananda bought the provisions and returned by boat to the ashram. On the return journey no one ventured to open his mouth.

Ramakrishna asked Narendar to relate what all had happened during his boat trip. Narendar narrated the events as they had happened and said: "All of them kept their mouths shut after I had slapped one of them for criticising the guru." Immediately Swami Ramakrishna observed: "Chi! Chi! How unbecoming of you to dishonour the robe you are wearing by losing your temper, exhibiting hatred and causing hurt to person. You are unfit to stay in my ashram. What does it matter what anyone says? How does it affect us? Their praise or censure will not touch us."

Narendar pleaded: "Swami! I was listening yesterday to what you had said to Brahmananda. Because of that, I behaved in this manner. You took him to task for remaining passive. You take me to task for retaliating. I am unable to understand what is the proper thing to do."

### **To each according to his needs**

Ramakrishna explained his divergent reactions by an example. He said, "There are four tyres for a car. What should be the pressure in the front tyres and the rear tyres have been laid down. If there is excessive pressure in some tyres, it should be reduced. If some tyres have low pressure, they have to be inflated. Only then the car will run smoothly. Narendar suffers from excessive pressure. He requires to be deflated. Brahmananda is excessively weak, so he has to be inflated."

The teachings of the masters vary according to the condition of the disciples. Likewise, in the Bhagavad Gita or other scriptures, statements might appear which seem to contradict each other. These differences relate to differences in circumstances and requirements of the persons concerned. You should not contrast one statement of Swami with another and ask why there is a contradiction between the different statements. In the Gita itself, at one place, Krishna stresses the need for action, at another the adherence to Dharma, and in another place commends renunciation of all Dharma and urges complete surrender to the Lord. These apparent contradictions are not contradictions. The teaching varies according to the state of spiritual development of the person concerned and the situation in which he is placed.

### **Truth and love**

The inner significance of the great teachings of the avatars and sages should be properly understood before any criticism is attempted. No room should be given for logic chopping or verbal controversies. You have to observe only two things: Adhere to Truth. Cultivate Love. Develop the feeling: "Love is my Supreme Lord. Truth is my sovereign. I do not need anything else." You have to recognise that these divine attributes, Truth and Love, exist equally in all beings. Develop the sense of equal-mindedness and equal regard for all. This is the true sadhana. Cultivate love for the Divine and share that love with all beings.

## His Own Rock

*There was a monk near Haridwar who had given up for many years both hearth and home and was living on alms; he used to heap all the food he collected on a flat rock that jutted out of the Ganga and use it as a plate from which he took his meal. One day, he came to his rock and found another monk sitting there, taking food! He got enraged at this trespass on his 'property'. Then the new-comer said, "Alas! You yearn to be free from all bonds; but, you have tied yourself up with this rock! How can you swim across this Sea of Samsara with this Rock round your neck?" That opened his eyes to the error.*

—Baba ("*Chinna Katha*")

### STUDENTS' CORNER:

## A Lesson to Lessen

The sun was setting in the late February sky enveloping the Mandir in a golden hue. Prayers from the hearts of the waiting throng had already saturated the air with divine peace and calm.

Amidst the serene setting, I was sitting restless and anxiously waiting for Him to bless the application form (for admission in His Institution). I had a deep-rooted feeling that He would bless it and thus give me a sign that He would take me. It was my last darshan, as I was to leave early next day. But till then He didn't even look at me and it appeared to me that He was asking me to wait. How long and what for? He did not say. And this engaged me in a good deal of introspection as I tried to figure out the possible answer. At that time I didn't realise that this is one of the ways the Lord puts us into the repair shop and unearths all our defects, tightens a few screws, gives a new coat of paint and polish so that our journey would be faster, smoother and more pleasant.

I thought about all my bygone years, the amount of grace He had showered on me, all my bad habits and so on. I recollected how He had brought about a total "metamorphosis" in me and took me towards a better life; for instance, He had converted me from a careless arrogant lad, who celebrates the news of his, passing in the exams, to one who secured the first rank and maintained it for full two years. And all this what for? To fulfill a great dream, which He kindled and fanned, the dream to join His Institution. He fostered it to such an extent that I took it for granted that I would get selected.

If all this had really happened and if I had really had so much confidence, why should I ask for a sign and moreover why should I fear and worry while I was sitting on the sands? As I was

everything, I realised that I was still concerned and worried about the result. Then I could clearly hear Swami's sweet voice explain, "My dear, once you desire a thing and pray whole-heartedly, leave the rest to Me, not merely the action but also its consequences. Do not have any worry or concern about it. Empty yourself, lessen your luggage and feel light and don't let anything disturb your calm or shake your faith that I will fulfill your heart's desire. For am I not your Mother who takes care to keep Her children ever happy...

With the dawn of this beautiful assurance I pulled myself together and waited. Soon bhajans started. Before long there was an excited hush announcing that Swami had come out. Slowly He floated towards the men's side. He stopped here and there taking a letter or speaking a word or two. He finally stood before me and signed the picture held out by my neighbour, but appeared not to have noticed my outstretched arm. Then, with a teasing smile playing on His lips, He moved on as if asking me to see for myself how well I understood the lesson. (I must confess, however in that state of excitement I scarcely kept anything in my mind.) Then (perhaps taking pity on me) He came back two or three steps and touched my paper and raised His hand, showing "Abhaya", smiling all the while. Mercy of Saimata!

—*Rama Rao, XII standard, Prasanthi Nilayam. (November 1987)*

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

### **Conquest of Desire**

*Do not go after wealth and possessions, oh Man!  
With good sense, control your desires.  
What you get is the result of your actions.  
With right means regulate your mind.  
Chant the name of Hari and Govinda  
Oh dull-witted man  
When Death knocks at the door  
Kindred and scholarship will avail naught.*

*Embodiments of the Divine Spirit!*

"Trishna" has two meanings "Desire" and "thirst". It is natural in daily life to have desire for certain necessities and comforts. Among the necessities of daily living, three are most essential: food for sustenance, garments to wear and shelter for dwelling. The desire for these is natural for man. Even in this there are two kinds of desires: One is natural. The other is excessive and misdirected desire. "I want a house" is a legitimate desire and one should seek it. But it is greedy to desire to possess two or more houses.

man is afflicted with grief and worry. He has become a stranger to contentment. He is steeped in discontent on account of insatiable desires.

The other meaning of the word "Trishna" is "thirst". Whenever one is thirsty one has to drink water. When will this thirst end? Thirst will not cease as long as life lasts. Even at the moment of death people feel thirsty.

How is the thirst (for material things) to be quenched? It is possible through efflux of time to get rid of iron shackles when they get rusty, but it is not easy to get rid of "Trishna" (desire). "Trishna" is the cause of limitless desires. If desires are fulfilled, one's ego gets inflated (Ahamkara). If they are not realised, hatred develops.

### **Three gates to hell**

There are three doorways to hell for man: Kama (lust), Krodha (hatred) and Lobha (greed). Desires tend to get out of bounds. Hence it is essential to try to curb them as far as possible. The process of controlling desires is called sadhana.

The literal meaning of "Sadhana" is the effort you make to achieve the object you desire or to reach the goal you have in view. Sadhana is thus the primary means to realise your aim or objective. A second meaning of the term is "Sadhana", that is, the wealth that is associated with Divinity. "Dhana" is described in three ways as "Aishwarya", "Sampada" and "dhana" (material wealth). All of them refer to the same thing. This wealth will not accompany us when we give up the body. If wealth is lost, it can be regained. If strength is lost, it may be recovered. But if life is lost, it cannot be got back. Hence, while life still remains, one must strive to acquire the divine wealth that is imperishable and everlasting. Your conduct constitutes this divine wealth. It is only by the way we live that we can acquire this divine wealth.

### **Divine wealth**

Good conduct alone is our real wealth. Good qualities alone constitute our real treasure (Aishwarya). An unsullied character expressing itself in a pure and perfect life constitutes the most precious riches one can possess. Good conduct, good qualities and an exemplary character are the most valuable riches one can possess. But men today have given up these three and are seeking worldly goods and, immersed in their own concerns, are imagining that they are leading pious lives. The Divine cannot be attained through such delusions. All the teachings one listens to, the books one studies and the education one receives are only serving to nourish these delusions and not helping men to seek the Divine.

### **Ungodly education**

To realise the Divine, one has to get rid of these delusions. Today education is said to be advancing by giant strides. Students! Nothing much will be lost if we have no education at all. All education today aims only at preparing students for worldly purposes. Think of the great sages and renowned men of the past who did not have this education but who led such exemplary lives! What great things are you going to achieve by pursuing these studies all during your

are better than the "educated", who are ruining the country. It is the educated who are responsible for plunging the country deep into the mire of insolvency. The illiterate may not be doing any positive service to the country but they are not doing it any harm. But the educated are doing more harm than good to the nation. It is better not to have such deleterious education than allow it to cause havoc.

Man today is trying to master every kind of knowledge, but is unable to discover his own true nature. This is what Prahlada told his father Hiranyakasipu when he said that although Hiranyakasipu had conquered all the worlds he had not conquered his senses. By conquering the worlds one may become a supreme sovereign over them. But one who has mastered his senses is supreme over all rulers. He is the king of kings, the kingmaker.

### **Humility**

True education should induce humility in the student. Without humility education will lack lustre. Humility will bring out the true qualities of the educated man. It will proclaim the virtues of the person. Reverence for elders, loving regard for parents, discriminating between right and wrong, adoring the Lord—these are the hall-marks of humility in an educated person. This is the essence of good character. It is the fragrance of human life.

We should realise that One who gave us this human birth may be expected to take care of us in one way or another. It is needless to aspire after wealth, position, fame or power. If you do your duty, all these will come to you of their own accord. Enthroned in your heart the love of God. Once that love is enshrined in you, the whole world will be yours. If you are a slave of desire, you are a slave of the world. If you have conquered desire, the world will be at your feet.

### **Truth and love**

Recognise this truth and pursue your studies on this recognition.

*Whatever learning one may acquire,  
Whatever degrees one may flaunt,  
Whatever power or position one may wield,  
Whatever japa or worship one may perform,  
One cannot achieve Liberation  
Unless one has deep love of God.*

Therefore, cultivate that love first. Love is everything. Truth and Love should be regarded as the two eyes of every person. If we have these two eyes, we can master the world.

Truth and Love should be regarded as the distilled essence of all the Shastras. Love is the quintessence of all the Dharma Shastras; it is the goal of all religions. If we drink the nectar of Love and Truth, we do not need anything else to sustain us. Love and Truth cannot be taught by gurus or learnt from books. They may be set forth in books (Granthas), but you will not experience their fragrance (gandham). They can be acquired only by living them in life. We must

way to love God is to love all. Love all, serve all. Hating everyone, caviling at everyone, feeling jealous of everyone, if you want to experience grace, how can you have it? Only if there is water in the tank, you can get water in the tap. If the tank is dry, how can you draw water from the tap? If you fill the tank of your heart with divine love, you can have love towards everyone and receive love from everyone.

### **Watch your actions**

Whoever it may be, whether he is a devotee or a believer, an aspirant or an unbeliever, his actions will determine what rewards or punishments he gets in life. You sometimes think: "The Lord has protected me in this manner or punished me this way." It is not the Lord who has protected you. It is not the function of the Divine. It is your prayer that has protected you. Your good actions have saved you. Your good behaviour is your shield. If you have experienced difficulties, calamities or sorrows, they are the consequences of your thoughts and actions. Hence whatever happens to man, good or bad, is the result of his own deeds. God is a witness. Current is flowing in an electric wire. When you switch it on the light burns, when you switch it off, the light goes. But it is not the light that is coming or going. It is the operation of the switch which brings the light or turns it off. The current is serving you and also punishing you. God is the cause of creation, protection and mergence. Likewise the current has the powers of creation, protection and destruction. How does the current create? Drawing energy from a generator, it provides power for lamps to burn, for fans to work and for various other instruments to function. The current is one, but the uses are many and diverse. In all these ways, it discharges a creative function. It also gives protection to man in various ways through light, fan, etc. But if, out of a mistaken sense of gratitude, you touch a live wire, it will give you a shock, which may even prove fatal. Thus, it has also the capacity to punish.

God acts as creator, protector and destroyer. You must show your gratitude to God by your actions, not by words. You have to learn how to make proper use of the things provided for you. God is omnipresent. He is within you. Your good conduct, in the form of God, gives you protection. He is present in you as Prajna (Constant Integrated Awareness). The Vedas have declared: "Prajnanam Brahma." (Prajnanam is Brahman).

If the students ask themselves, "Where is God?" they will get the answer in the prayer which they utter before every meal. You utter the mantra, "Brahmaarpanam" and recite the sloka "Aham Vaisvaanaro Bhootwaa Praaninaam deham Aasritah". The latter sloka means: "I (the Divine) have entered all bodies of living beings in the form of Vaishwanara." This means that the Lord who is within you is giving you protection (by digesting the food you eat and nourishing the entire body). If you act against the dictates of your heart and conscience, God will punish you.

### **Plus and minus**

All that you see outside is only a reflection of your inner being. The good or bad you experience are the reflected images of your feelings. Do not delude yourself that by merely offering worship in a temple, you have earned the grace of God. If you worship God, but harass

spiritual balance-sheet. By causing harm to people, you have earned a minus. The result of this plus and minus is zero. It is, therefore, of primary importance that you should develop a consciousness of the divinity present in all beings.

Today the Bhagavad Gita is being preached from street to street. It is revered as a sacred book. Similarly the Quran, the Bible and other sacred books are worshipped as scriptural texts. But is anything being done to practise what the sacred books teach?

Many eminent persons have declared their belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The Brotherhood of Man is considered a great ideal. But the Gita has presented a higher ideal. Brotherliness is considered as a great quality. But we know how brothers fall out, take their differences right up to the Supreme Court and ruin their families. How can the mere fact of being brothers be considered a great virtue in itself? The Gita commends the "Ekatma Bhava", the feeling that the One spirit dwells in all beings. It declares that the Atma residing in all beings is one and the same. "Eko vasi bhootaantharaatma" declares the Gita. "The indwelling Spirit in all beings is One." Nor is that all. It also declares that all human beings in the world are a fragment of the Divine. How many are aware of this truth and how many are living upto this pronouncement? Very few, indeed. In spite of prodigious propagation of the Gita, how many are practising its teachings? How many are leading exemplary lives? Few. In this situation, it is enough if you adhere to one thing. You have no need to study any books to contemplate on God or earn God's love. There is nothing wrong in studying the scriptures. But you have to put into practice the teachings which you value. Continuous study merely clutters up the brain with lumber. Confusion results from studying the views of different authors. The first requisite is to strengthen faith in one's self. Hold fast to one belief and adhere to one path. If you persevere in this manner, divinity will manifest itself in you spontaneously in due course.

Students have to cultivate along with education, humility and observance of right conduct (Samskaras). It is only when the heart is purified through Samskaras that education will also get saturated with purity. Spirituality is the only way to purity.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse at "Trayee Brindavan" on May 29, 1988*

### **For the attention of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and devotees**

*It has come to our notice that the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in an Indian State issued an "Appeal" for funds for drought relief in that State, without reference to the Central Office at Prasanthi Nilayam. The "appeal" was circulated to Sai devotees in India and abroad. Such action is highly irregular. Soliciting funds from anyone in any form is totally opposed to the Rules and Code of Conduct of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.*



*against taking any such action.*

*Reports have been received from Guntur (Andhra Pradesh), from Karnataka and Kerala of claims by certain individuals that they have been invested by Bhagavan Baba with special powers. All such claims are totally false. Bhagavan Baba has repeatedly declared that He has no intermediaries between Himself and His devotees.*

Central Office,  
Sri Sathya Sai Organisations,  
Prasanthi Nilayam.

## **Dialogue with the Divine**

*The following questions to Bhagavan and His answers to them are taken from a devotee's diary*

Q: Swami, can I get *moksha* (liberation) in this very birth?

A: You can get it this moment, if you have the required purity of mind (Chitta-Suddhi). The only criterion is purity; birth is not important. God is beyond time—(Kaalaateeta). The time-factor is applicable only to the universe (Jagat) and not to the Lord.

Q: Swami, the mental tendencies (vasanas) of many lives hinder the progress.

A: Vasanas can be changed by discrimination and effort (Viveka and Sadhana). You have to examine every tendency of your inner being, whether it is good or bad, before translating it into action.

Q: Swami's grace must come .....

A: The grace is always there; it neither comes nor goes. You have to tap it with effort.

## **Dana and Tyaga**

Q: What is the difference between Dana (charity) and Thyaga (sacrifice)?

A: Charity is giving of money, time or energy for a good cause; sacrifice is giving up of one's bad traits and weaknesses. If sacrifice means just the giving up of hearth and home, many people will do it very easily!

weaknesses. A true devotee should not be deterred by adversities in life. The difference between true and false devotion can be discovered only in times of adversity. A ball of iron and a dry leaf look alike when there is no wind. But when the wind blows, the leaf flies away and the iron ball is not even swayed a little. In times of adversity, false devotion disappears; but a true devotee will think, "My difficulties and problems are in no way connected with my devotion to God. These difficulties are like passing clouds, but God is eternal and so is love for God."

### **Krishna and Arjuna**

- Q: On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna threw away his bow and arrows with a decision not to fight the war against Bhishma, the grandfather, Drona, the preceptor, and other kith and kin. But Arjuna had fought against Bhishma, Drona and others to protect the cows of Virata Maharaja, towards the end of the Pandavas incognito term in exile. What accounts for the difference in Arjuna's attitude?
- A: The purpose of the earlier fight was only to protect the cows. It was not a decisive battle. There was no intention on the part of Arjuna to kill Bhishma and Drona. But in the battle of Kurukshetra, the stakes were very high; he had to kill them to win the war. In this situation, attachment to kith and kin plunged him into sorrow.
- Q: Was Arjuna overpowered by the fear of fighting against the mighty heroes arrayed against him in Kurukshetra?
- A: No, Arjuna was never afraid of fighting against anybody. It was only the delusion of 'I' and 'mine' (moham) that overpowered him.
- Q: On the battlefield, Krishna taught Arjuna many aspects of the science of the Spirit. What was the path practised by Arjuna later?
- A: The purpose of Krishna was to make Arjuna fight the war and save him from misery and infamy. The knowledge of 'Atma and Anatma' and the truth about the body-principle are essential for the performance of one's duties (Kartavyakarma). The most important thing that Arjuna learnt was to perform all actions with a sense of surrender to the Lord. This is the secret of Karma Yoga. This was practised by Arjuna.
- Q: The Bhagavad Gita says, "There is no killer nor killed!" On this basis Arjuna is asked to kill men on the battlefield. On the same logic, can anyone kill anybody he likes to kill?
- A: Bhagavad Gita exhorts all men to follow their Dharma. Arjuna, being a Kshatriya, had to protect Dharma by killing the evil men. It was his duty. Arjuna was made to know the immortal nature of the Spirit and this enabled him to do his duty with efficiency and perfection. One who has the awareness of the spiritual truth will not enter the wrong path

code of conduct.

There is the story of a murderer, who argued with the magistrate, "There is neither any killer nor killed (according to the Gita). Therefore, why do you propose to hang me?" The magistrate paid him back in the same coin, telling him, "You also cannot be killed. Only your body will be hanged!"

## **Human Values in Daily Life**

Sathya Sai Baba has said, "The inner meaning of all spiritual disciplines is to make man realize his true nature."

What is this true nature?

Baba says that we are God, not different from God. "I am the indivisible, supreme absolute. I am SAT-CHIT-ANANDA (being, awareness, bliss). Grief and anxiety can never affect me. I am ever content; fear cannot enter me."

Many of us understand this intellectually, but do we reflect this in our daily lives? It seems such an easy task. Why, then, are we forever seeking?

Perhaps we may find some answers in a short piece written by Robert Fulghum, a minister in the Unitarian Church in the state of Washington. It is entitled, "All I Ever Wanted To Know I Learned In Kindergarten."

"Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at the nursery school.

"These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

### **"Stick together"**

"When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seeds in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

"Think of what a better world it would be if we all had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and clean up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together."

How did we understand this in Kindergarten?

Jesus said, "Be ye like children and you will know the Kingdom of Heaven."

What happened to us? How can we regain our innocence and reawaken to what Swami says is inherent in us—"I am God, I am not different from God."

### **EHV is for all**

Baba has created for us a programme called Education in Human Values. Do not be misled that this is only a programme for children. It is a programme for all of us, teachers, devotees and all others who may have the privileged experience of EHV.

Baba says that the end of education is character. Education goes on beyond school. And so all of us are engaged in education and thus in character development. And the end of character is the control of the mind, to learn discipline.

Let us examine the road that Baba has offered to help us develop. He has proposed five teaching techniques for EHV. Compare them to what we as devotees do in our Sai Centres. Quotations are used in EHV. In our Centres we use prayers. Silent Sitting is another component, comparable to the Centre meditation. The glory of Group Singing is experienced by members through bhajans and Story telling is similarly shared when we tell Baba experiences or conduct Study Circles. Lastly is the use of Group Activities. Is this not the service projects of the Sai Centres?

Thus I view EHV as the three wings of the Sai message: Sadhana, Service, Education, S S E—Sathya Sai Excellence. Therefore, we are all experiencing EHV. But do we go beyond the Centres? Do we sing and pray and meditate at home, or as we ride the trains or in our workplace? Do we go beyond feeding the homeless and serve our families—our husband or wife, our children—or our friends, with the nourishing food of kind words, a smile, patience?

Let us go to more specifics of daily life, beyond the intellect and generalities.

Do we want TRUTH? Then we have to know that we can change tomorrow by making today different.

than to avenge it." That is something for us to follow.

And there is the old Mother Goose rhyme:

"A wise old owl sat in an oak  
The more he heard, the less he spoke.  
The less he spoke, the more he heard.  
Why can't we be like that wise old bird?"

That too is truth.

Do we want to conduct ourselves RIGHTEOUSLY? Then we have to be responsible, we have to fulfill promises. We have to cease gossiping.

### **"Do it with love"**

A devotee who has seen the qualities inherent in EHV is Carl Hirsch. He is a teacher of ceramics and though he does not teach a standard EHV lesson, you can hear its essence as I read from an article he recently wrote called "Teaching Clay—Taught By Clay." He tells how students when first learning the clay process, "...feel themselves fighting the clay, having the clay resist their intentions and desires. The students find that even though a skill was taught, making it happen requires multiple effort and practice. In this way, persistence and endurance are taught." He goes on to point out that we must learn to respect the qualities of the clay and that failures in using the material "are considered to be positive and necessary steps in learning and never as sources of embarrassment." Carl often tells his students to "do it with love", ... "to enjoy the process." "Do it with love points directly to craftsmanship, that quality of doing something with dignity and grace and a rightness which is so lacking in our society..." This craftsmanship is based on "faith in one's own ability to accomplish a given task."

Do we want PEACE? In a recent interview Baba asked a group of us, "Who Am I?" and He went on to remind us, "You are the master, not the servant. Do not be a servant to your senses, be the master." Pointing around the room, He said, "My table, my property, my chair, my body, No, No, not mine! Comes and goes, comes and goes." We will not find Peace until we understand this. And so when life hands us a lemon, what should we do? Make lemonade! Peace has to be outside and inside.

In Chinese, the word crisis has two meanings: danger and opportunity May we face our crises and view them as our opportunity to learn.

Do we want LOVE? What can I say of love, except to remember to think of Baba, to remember how He says to each of us: "I will take care of you. I bless you." Think of Baba as He walks on the sands of Prasanthi Nilayam seemingly above us all and yet piercing each of our hearts. We call out to Him with our worries and problems, with love, with fear and disappointment, questioning and sometimes resenting and yet He loves us! Think on Swami each

world in Love.

Do we want NONVIOLENCE? Then we need to practice more self-awareness. We need to become more conscious of our reactions when someone rails at us, when we feel threatened, when someone disagrees with us. Just as the Kings used to send out heralds prior to their visits, we constantly send out messages; concretely by letters, phone calls, conversations but also even perhaps more devastatingly by our thoughts. What kind of messages are we sending out with our minds each day?

Nonviolence also means to stop dropping candy wrappers, tissues or the dirty car rag on the streets. It means to stop wasting food and to stop filling our minds with TV violence.

### **3HV: love in action**

You may call these little stepping stones, but it is these little stepping stones that will carry us across the ocean of life, without the turbulent waters pulling us down.

Baba told Dr. Goldstein that EHV is really 3HV. (Here once again, we see the magic in the way Swami uses words.) 3HV—HEAD, HEART, HANDS. Baba says that all information is taken in by our senses and then goes through the mind. We must not act impulsively through the mind, He says. Instead we must take our thoughts, desires and decisions and filter them through the heart. Then in love, we shall take action. That is EHV for all of us—from the Head, through the Heart, to the Hands.

### **Baba's first-aid box**

Let me conclude with the advice Baba once gave a devotee. He told the man to carry a first-aid box. "Carry in it a few tablets of discrimination and detachment, an ounce or two of self-control, a packet of love, a bandage strip of fortitude. Only then can you effectively render first-aid to people suffering from a stroke of ego or a bout of greed, a jaundiced vision or an allergy to serving others."

I like to think of this as an EHV box. Discrimination and detachment—a part of TRUTH. RIGHT ACTION through fortitude. Sense-control bringing PEACE. A packet of LOVE and finally serving others—NONVIOLENCE.

Let us all begin to carry Swami's first-aid box and come to know our true nature. Being-Awareness-Bliss-Atma B-A-B-A BABA!

*- Bea Flaig, New York*

*THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:*

**“Let Your Light Shine”**

nation," observed Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in the course of His discourse, inaugurating the new academic year on June 23, in the Institute Auditorium.

*The Auditorium was packed to capacity with students and staff of the Institute, besides a few special invitees.*

Earlier, Bhagavan went from the Prasanthi Mandir to the Institute Library building to inaugurate the new Sai Computer Centre located in the basement below the Library. Bhagavan was received by the Vice Chancellor and others. Cutting the ribbon at the entrance to the Centre, Bhagavan lit a lamp in the foyer and went round the Centre, viewing each of the computers installed in the Centre with keen interest. Swami switched them on to watch their operations.

### **Computer centre**

The Computer Centre is equipped with a variety of computers for multiprogramming, primary and secondary memory storage, a 600-lines-per-minute printer and equipment for providing training and experience to the students of the Institute. The Institute proposes to conduct Computer Awareness courses for the students, besides setting up fulltime and part-time academic programmes for trainees in the computer area.

From the Computer Centre Bhagavan proceeded to the Institute Auditorium where He was received with Vedic chants by a students' group.

Welcoming Bhagavan Baba and others, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Saraf, said that under Bhagavan's inspiration and guidance the Institute had been growing in every direction steadily from year to year. Following the launching of B. Ed. and M.B.A. courses, a new dimension had been added to the Institute's activities by the setting up of the Computer Centre. The Institute was unique among universities in offering completely free education at all levels.

### **Bhagavan's Discourse**

After formally inaugurating the commencement of the new academic year by lighting a lamp, Bhagavan delivered His discourse. In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:

This is the age of science and technology. Its civilisation and culture are bound up with knowledge of the physical universe. What the students have to learn today, however, are the culture of the soul, the broadening of the Spirit and purification of the heart. This knowledge leads to the unfolding of the Spirit and sublimation of life. Along with the development of the intellect, the blossoming of the heart should also be promoted. Only that education is total and full which comprehends enlargement of the Spirit (hridaya). It should serve to promote ethical values. Only then will it be possible to lead a well-regulated and disciplined life.

Bharat is based on righteousness and justice and an inherent goodness of character. The edifice of right education rests on four pillars: Self-control, Self-confidence, Self-support and Self-sacrifice. Students today are totally oblivious to Self-support. How, then, can they achieve Self-control? Education should aim not merely at making men human, but should try to make them perfect human beings. We may not have all the physical means necessary to protect the country. But if we adhere to Truth, that will confer on us all the strength we need. If we stand by Truth, we shall be saving the whole world.

### **Do's and don'ts**

Students have to observe some do's and don'ts during their educational career. Foremost among these is the cultivation of good company. "Smara sajjana samparkam" ("Welcome the company of the good.") Then comes avoidance of association with bad persons. "Thyaja durjana samsargam" Run away from evil company. By association with bad persons even a good student turns bad. "Kuru Punyam Ahoraathram" ("Do meritorious deeds night and day"). You must be ever engaged in sacred actions. You must participate in service activities, serving with patience and sympathy the sick and the destitute. You must be always prepared to render any kind of help people in distress may need.

### **The six disciplines**

Man is subject to the vagaries of the mind. Hence students should try to cultivate the six virtues of Sama, Dama, Uparathi, Titiksha, Shraddha and Samadhan. "Sama" means control of the external senses. "Dama" means control of the internal senses, namely, mind, intellect, Chitta and Ahamkara. It is on account of the promptings of the internal senses that the external sense organs operate. The internal senses are not visible. They are like the steering wheel in a car. The wheels that are external cannot turn unless the steering wheel is turned. The mind is the steering wheel. It is only when the mind acts that external organs like hands and feet can function. Hence, students should try to control the mind, using the intellect and the discriminating power of the Chitta.

"Uparathi" is the process of turning the mind inwards and purifying one's thoughts and feelings. By these means of self-control and self-regulation, one should try to get self-satisfaction. This comes when one lives up to the dictates of his conscience. Make your conscience your master.

Then comes "Titiksha"—equal-mindedness in the face of happiness and sorrow, victory and defeat, loss or gain. You must cultivate this equanimity from your student days. You should not give way to depression owing to failure or get unduly elated over your success. Without equanimity your entire life may be seriously affected by lack of balance.

### **Right use of time**

"Shraddha" (earnestness) is essential for accomplishing even small things in life. Through "Shraddha", you develop the capacity to make proper use of your time and opportunities. Maintaining a proper time-schedule for all your daily activities will help to keep your heart in a



which we witness today is due to the failure to observe the rules relating to time and place.

Education today has taken the wrong road. There is no spirituality or excellence in it. The accent is all on getting some book knowledge by rote, scoring marks in the examinations and getting degrees to earn a living. Education should be for acquiring knowledge and not for earning a livelihood.

### **Aptitudes and talents**

The aptitudes of students for specific subjects like mathematics or literature should be ascertained by teachers and students should be encouraged to develop their special talents. Instead, what is being done today is to make students take up courses which will enable them to have lucrative careers. Jobs and not a good life have become the aim of education. Education should comprehend development of the body, the mind and the spirit. It should be concerned with Prajnana (Constant Integrated Awareness).

### **True freedom**

There is a great deal of talk about freedom. Largeness of heart, refinement of sensibilities and purity of the mind constitute true freedom. Freedom does not mean living as you please. Self-control, self-satisfaction, and self-knowledge constitute together the supreme expression of freedom. Freedom today has been equated with licence. This is a travesty of freedom.

Every student must become a light unto himself and a light for his home, his city and his nation. Unlike other educational institutions, the Sathya Sai Institute lays equal emphasis on scientific, economic and spiritual education. You should pursue your studies having regard to the unique environment obtaining here. You have to adjust yourselves to the conditions here and make the best use of the facilities and opportunities provided for you. Develop fraternal feelings towards your fellow-students.

### **Heart and speech**

I only want men whose hearts speak for them. I have no use for words divorced from the heart. You must put into practice human values and prepare yourselves to play your role in any sphere of life in a spirit of universal love and compassion.

## **Narayana Seva**

It is a wondrous paradox of life  
That to feel the pain of others as one's own.  
To sense the pangs of their gnawing hunger,  
And the shame of their unclad, unkempt bodies,  
Opens the flood-gates of our love

From a free and joyous heart,  
Lights up the gloom of pain and sorrow.

A starry smile-in-haze, uncertain but not unreal  
Streaks down slowly from sunken eyes  
And plays on palsied lips, to say  
"Thank you," when food is lovingly served  
And clothes are caressingly offered  
To God's children for His Love's Glory.

That grateful smile-that incandescent glow of hope,  
That feeling that someone truly cares,  
That awakening of faith in human love and Grace Divine  
That resurrection of self-esteem  
From the depths of dire distress and fear  
Delights the hearts of those that serve.

There arises in them a vibrant wave of joy  
In which the seeming infinite distance between man and man  
Suddenly becomes infinitesimally small  
And both the giver and the taker  
Are blessed.

—*D.S. Nakra, New Delhi.*

### **To Sai Students**

O Sai Angels in Uniform White,  
Torch-Bearers of the Divine-Light,  
Worthily you play your role,  
Pursuing Excellence, your Goal.

The sheep are worth their weight in gold,  
When they gather in Baba's Fold,  
The Shepherd keeps watch round the clock,  
Over His Fine Hand-Picked Flock.  
O! Lucky, Lucky students all,  
At the Lotus Feet by Divine Call,  
The Lord Himself, now your Guide,  
Is seen so often at your side.

O Singers of Sai-Celestial Song,  
He has laid your foundation strong  
What Gifts Sai has for you in store,  
To self-realise and self-explore!

You're the Instruments in Sai Hand,  
Chosen to transform your Motherland,  
And Humanity as a whole,  
Through the Universal Soul.

May you play your future parts,  
Duty bound with devoted hearts,  
And may you serve where're you are,  
Each shining like a Guiding Star.

## **Pathway to Divinity**

For those who are seeking to understand the meaning and purpose of life, Sri Sathya Sai Baba says that there are three main pathways. An awareness of these pathways in others and ourselves promotes tolerance and understanding.

These pathways are as follows:

- the pathway of devotion to an ideal (Bhakti Yoga);
- the pathway of action which is dedicated to a high purpose (Karma Yoga);
- the pathway of intellectual pursuit as applied to the acquisition of true knowledge (Jnana Yoga).

The natural inclination of the individual determines which of these pathways is most appropriate for that individual and it is helpful to isolate that pathway for ourselves so that we can more easily determine our direction of travel.

Although one pathway may be more apparent to a person than another, all pathways are found to be of equal value and importance. All pathways finally lead to a better understanding and satisfaction with life.

The pathway of devotion to an ideal may be found to predominate in those people who need mostly to love and be loved.

For those people dedicated to a high purpose which requires physical expression, the pathway of action is considered by them to be appropriate. On this pathway there exists the requirement to act, to promote the cause of justice—right action—the action being both discriminating and spontaneous and without consideration of personal satisfaction or reward.

For those whose pathway is the intellectual pursuit of true knowledge there is a paramount need to understand. There is a relentless enquiry into the meaning and purpose of life with the predominant question: 'Who am I?' demanding an answer.

Each of these three pathways and their characteristics are intimately associated with the other two in varying degrees and make up the character and temperament of the individual.

### **Self-discipline**

endeavour—or 'one-pointedness.' This self-discipline is the basis for success for each of the three paths. Without it progress is minimal. We must be true to the path.

Without the knowledge of the existence of the three pathways, and to some degree an understanding of them, our state of awareness as to our true identity is unknown to us—happiness is unknown to us and also the meaning of life.

A knowledge of the three pathways end our own individual pathway finally dispels the self-imposed hypnotic state of ignorance in which we find ourselves. Dedication to our chosen pathway gives greater understanding of the other two pathways and ultimately unravels the mystery surrounding our true identity, our origins and our destiny, giving meaning and purpose to life.

A close study of the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba proves that He is not only the path but also the destination. "Come, see and experience me," He tells us. "Take one step towards me and I will take ten towards you," is His promise. The path has been cleared of all obstacles by Him—"the way is made plain." We are assured of His ever-present guidance and protection as we proceed towards a greater understanding of ourselves and of life. We find by the signposts of intuition that we are heading in the right direction—and understanding of our true identity—Beingness, awareness and bliss—whichever pathway we travel.

—"*A and B*", *Australia*

### **“Sai is always with you”**

When the whole world turns dark,  
And all your hopes have turned dupes,  
Just remind yourself wherever you go;  
"Sai is always with you."

When loved ones have left you alone,  
With your follies to brood over,  
Just remind your broken heart...  
"Sai is always with you."

When your mind runs far and wide  
And keeps chasing light and shade  
Just keep reminding your suffering heart...  
"Sai is always with you."

For help, from anyone who loves  
You will find the gentle hand and the loving voice  
"Sai is always with you."

—*T. Arulselvanathan, II M.Com. (November, 1987)*

### **The Mission**

There's never a flower in all the world  
But makes some green spray sweeter,

There's never a wind in all the sky  
But makes a bird's wing fleeter;

There's never a star but brings  
To heaven some: silver radiance tender,

And never a rosy cloud but helps  
To crown the sunset splendour;

No robin but may thrill some heart  
His dawn-light gladness voicing;

God gives us all some small sweet way  
To set the world rejoicing;

But greater is Sai Messengers' duty  
when from School they depart  
That is to fill Sai's golden words in heart.

—*Indreshwar Sirohi, XII Standard, Prasanthi Nilayam. (November, 1987)*

### **An Avatar of Love**

I Heard...

He is the Avatar of Love  
A thousand questions in me ...how?  
But still I gave Him a bow.

The Lantana Gardens with yellow flowers  
I patiently waited for hours  
There He came—a little distance He covered  
Many a blessing He showered.

I saw...  
The glow of His radiant face  
My Atma felt a Divine Grace  
While at Him I did Gaze.

Baba...  
The Avatar of Love—I didn't know at start  
But now I have nailed "Om Sai Ram " in my heart.

—*R. R. Neeraja, IX standard, Salem*

## **The Correct Address**

The search for God has been before mankind in all ages. The sages and saints who fathomed the depths of their beings had glimpsed the Reality in their own ways and have presented their experiences to humanity.

Many are the paths chosen by man to realise the Self. But nearly always he misses the target. He finds himself tied to some imaginary point, as it were, at the end of his search. The Self is so near, and yet so far!

Hinduism abounds in literature on spiritualism; but these are the outpourings of mighty saints and sages in their attempts to reveal their findings on the Self (God) to man. To the layman they are a mystery. Is there such a way? Indeed, there is one, as shown by Bhagavan Baba.

The people of Bombay were lucky on Yugadi day—March 18, 1988—when they saw the Avatar in front of them in all His Glory! The New Year for Bombayites was indeed a real day of rejoicing. They were able to feast their eyes on Bhagavan Baba on the very first day of the New Year, Vibhava. Baba said that in this year, five out of the nine Grahas (planets) were favourable to India. However, He added, it is not the Grahas that make the life of the people fruitful, but the people themselves. The only Grahas that really should be conquered are two Raga and Dwesha

### **Futile pilgrimages**

The succeeding Sunday, March 20, Baba gave a scintillating sermon on the subject of service. Seva is Param Dharma, He said. And in the course of His discourse, He made a sudden pointer to God's address—the place where God really dwells. He said that people wander in the

considered holy to find their "Gods". However, these pilgrims return disenchanted. At the most, these acts of pilgrimage could be considered as good deeds and never a step forward in the search for Divinity. He said that all these holy places, rivers and temples are only "care of addresses" of God.

Then, what is the correct address? Baba said that the correct address could be found in the address-book—the Gita—where the Lord Himself declares His address in the 61st verse of the 18th Chapter. Baba was specific in pointing out the reference number of the Sloka. The address is "Eeswarassarvabhootaanaam hrudde Arjuna tishtthati" "The Lord, O Arjuna, is seated in the heart of all beings." The word "hrudayam" does not refer to the biological heart which pumps blood to the system. It is the centre of feelings in man—the spiritual heart. Continuing, Baba presented the next verse which says: "Tameva sharanam gachcha sarva bhaavena Bharata" "In Him take refuge in every sense of thy being."

Baba said: "You surrender to your Self." Therefore, man should find Him in his own Self only—nowhere else. There is no need of strenuous pilgrimages and wanderings.

We do know that the two verses mentioned above by Baba are in the Gita. But, these two verses appearing almost towards the end of the Gita are specially brought to our attention by His benevolence. How good of Him to quote even the reference numbers to facilitate our search! These two verses have been presented to us as real gifts for our supreme benefit. Man need not fret and fume in his wild search for God. The wild search is an outer search, while the Divine is there in our own selves.

### **Surrender to the self**

Man spends colossal amounts of money in raising imposing edifices for God only to limit Him to the walls! Could man imprison Him there? Are all these practical ways of finding Him? Life is hectic and mechanical and man, who is busy either earning his livelihood or idling, has neither the time nor the energy to go to temple and pour out his heart to Him. Is it not easy and practical then just to think of Him in one's own heart—the real dwelling place—whatever may be the work in which one is engaged? The *address* pointed out to us by Baba is most practical and appropriate. Where else does man like to find Him? He is nearer than the nearest—just within the mind which is itself enlivened and activated by His presence within it but not known by it. What is needed, as Baba points out, is surrender to one's own Self.

Let us invoke the Divine that is present in ourselves and surrender with all our being (sarvabhaavena)—with the mind, intellect, ego, body and all else—to that Supreme Spirit.

**—S. Ram Nath Rao, Bombay.**

*Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are also equally liable to grief. But, it is infinitely*

*rain is in the wetness of the ground; the proof of Bhakti is in the Santhi the Bhakta has, Santhi which protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame and dishonour, gain and loss.*

—Baba



*Men run hither and thither  
In search of food, of worldly goods,  
Of position and pelf, name and fame;  
But few seek to realise God.  
This is the truth, declared unto you.  
Men pursue intensively mundane studies  
But do not seek to study the path to Liberation.*

*Dear Students!*

The cosmos is the magnificent manifestation of the Divine. When you direct your vision on this vast creation you are filled with awe and wonder. True education consists in understanding the inner meaning of this creation.

At first sight what we see are inert objects like mountains and hills. We cannot see any sign of consciousness (Chaitanya) in these objects. The second category of objects are trees. There is consciousness in them, but they cannot move from place to place. They are stationary. The third category are living beings. Besides consciousness, these have the capacity of motion. Man belongs to the fourth category. He has not only fully developed consciousness, but has another extraordinary, marvellous quality. That is the supreme gift of speech (subhashana).

Starting with the inert, we have the conscient, the mobile beings and the human species with the power of speech. If this progression in the creative process is rightly understood we can realise how important is the advent of man.

### **Akshara and ankhyā**

The ancient sages, after performing severe penances and making profound enquiries, realised and declared how unique is human birth. "Vedaaham etam Purusham mahaantam Aadithya varnam tamasah parastaat" "We have known that there is a Supreme Purusha who is effulgent like the sun and who transcends darkness." By their penance, meditation and intuition, they recognised two things: One is Akshara (the alphabet) and the other is Ankhyā (numbers). In the alphabet, the primal letter is "Om". All other letters have emerged from the Pranava ("Om"). "Om" is the first letter among all letters. It comprehends within itself all other letters of the alphabet.

During bhajans, when the harmonium is played, the bellows are pressed and the reeds are manipulated, we have the musical notes, "Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni". What is the source of these seven notes? It is the same air that produces the notes. That air is filled with "Om-kara" And it is that "Om" which produces the separate notes, "Sa, ri, ga, ma, etc."

is the primary number. All the other numbers are multiple variations of one. If you take away one from nine you have eight. If you add one to eight, it becomes nine. What comes and goes is one alone. What remains is also one.

### **Nature and divinity**

From this the sages drew the inference that the beginning and the end are One, which is Divine. They declared that this One is the seed (beejam) of the cosmos No seed exists without husk. Because the grain is covered by husk its parts are not visible to us. For the cosmos, Prakriti (or Nature) is the husk. The seed of divinity is within it (and enveloped by it). We cannot experience the seed of divinity within as long as it is covered by the husk of Nature.

We have to endeavour to get at the truth about Nature. The Upanishads declared: "Isavasyam Idam sarvam" ("All this is permeated by the Divine "). That means, there is only one thing that is immanent in the entire universe. If the truths declared by the Upanishads are to be understood, we have to seek the truth of every thing in our daily lives. For instance, what for has Nature come into being? Nature's role is to help man, the crowning achievement of the evolutionary process, to realise the Divinity immanent in creation.

Mountains help man to build houses by using stone slabs, quarried from them. Trees provide the timber for constructing houses and also firewood for domestic use. Among animate beings, every creature, from an ant to an elephant, is of assistance to man in one way or another. Cows provide nourishing milk to man. Bullocks are useful for ploughing the fields and helping to grow food crops. All other creatures like birds, fish, sheep and others are serving man in their different ways.

Seen in this light it will be clear that all things in creation are helpful to man in leading his life. Even the sun and the moon are serving man. The sages regarded the Sun as an important deity and worshipped him through the Gayatri mantra.

### **Man's debt to nature**

Thus man is deriving innumerable benefits from Nature, and enjoying the amenities provided by Nature in various ways. But what is the gratitude he is showing to Nature? What gratitude is he offering to the Divine? He is forgetting the Divine who is the provider of everything That is the reason for his becoming a prey to various difficulties and calamities. While he is receiving countless benefits from Providence, he is offering nothing in return to Nature or God. This shows how unnatural and heartless is the behaviour of man. When we are enjoined to return good for evil, how unbecoming is it to fail even to return good for good? Man is not learning the great lessons Nature is teaching him. The foremost lesson is doing service with no expectation of return.

### **Nature and God**

People ask, "Where is God?" The answer is provided by Nature. Who is it that has created the five elements, the five life-breaths, the five sheaths, the five external sense organs and the

their prescribed roles. The seasons in their regular cycle are teaching a lesson to man. Therefore Nature is the demonstrable proof for the existence of God. Nature is not under any obligation to any man, it takes no orders from any man, it operates according to the will of the Divine.

The artificial instruments produced by man function for a time and then become useless. Scientists today have launched many satellites in space. Sooner or later they cease to function and drop away. No one knows how, when and in what circumstances the planets in nature were created but they have been going round in space ceaselessly and unfailingly for billions of years. These planets have been created for the welfare of mankind and not for destructive purposes. God is the creator of the world for man's good. All the planets created by Him are serving mankind. Many of the missiles and space instruments produced by scientists are for destructive purposes. Science is being used more for destruction than construction.

### **No cause for pride**

What is the reason for this? The ego is the cause. The sense of egoism and the conceit arising from it is the root cause of the destructive tendencies in man. Man today is placing more faith in his physical and mental strength than in the strength coming from faith in God. How long can this last? In a mere fit of sneezing, life may leave this body. What meaning is there in regarding it as permanent?

Let no one be proud about his beauty, strength and youth. The ravages of old age are ahead and will overwhelm him. Even while you feel puffed up by your strength and energy as a youth, age creeps on you irrevocably. With the body bent, wrinkles on the face and bleared eyes, the old man becomes the butt of jokes for juveniles, who call him an old monkey. What is lasting in all this? Everything is subject to change and decay in this world. Whether it be physical objects or individuals, all are transient and impermanent. Nothing is lasting. Only your purity is permanent. Purity is the essential nature of man. But if man leads a polluted life, he is degrading himself.

### **Purity and love**

Man's purity is manifest when human relations are based on heart to heart and love to love. Love has the form of a triangle, with three arms. Love (Prema) does not seek any return. Where an individual offers love in expectation of a return, fear overtakes him. The one who loves with no expectation of any return is totally free from fear. Love knows only to give, not to receive. Such a love is free from fear. For true love, love is its own reward. Thus, love seeks no return, is free from fear and is its own reward. These are the basic features of true love.

Love today is based on desire for a return benefit. It is filled with fear and anxiety. Thus love is motivated. When love is based on the desire for transient and perishable objects, life will be futile. Love must be its own reward.

Love is eternal. You are the embodiment of Love. You are the embodiment of Peace You are the embodiment of Truth. You are the embodiment of God. It is only when this supreme truth is realised and our life is based on it that our love and life can be sanctified. Then love can make

actions, all that you see, hear and think—all these should be regarded as offerings to the Divine. This is the true meaning of "Sharanagati" (Taking refuge in the Divine). All that is seen, heard or experienced should be considered as intimations of the Divine.

### **Gratitude to God**

Have firm faith in the reality of God's existence. You have to show your gratitude to God for the benefits showered on you. Consider, for instance, how the Divine has filled the atmosphere with life-giving oxygen to enable you to live. The biggest fan made by man can provide breeze only for a small area. But the winds caused by Nature can blow over the whole world. Who is the cause of this wind? There are three kinds of lamps in this Mandir. They illumine a small space. But the sun created by God illumines the whole world. We pump water with the help of pump-sets. Can all the water pumped by these sets equal a fraction of the water got from a heavy downpour of rain which can inundate the Ganges? Who is it that is providing this air, this water and this illumination? We are enjoying all these, but we show no gratitude to the provider of these benefits. We express thanks to those who render trifling acts of service. But what thanks are we expressing to God who is providing such essential life sustaining amenities for meaningful human existence? Can this be a virtue in a human being? Is it a sign of right education? Is it the mark of a scholar? No. You must show your gratitude with humility and sincerity to whoever has done you any good. Education that does not promote gratitude is worthless. It is the parents who give you education. The guru is the educator. The Divine has given you the capacity to get educated. Hence the mother, the father and the guru are to be revered as God, as enjoined in the Vedas. You must show your gratitude to your parents, offer due respect to the teacher, and base your life on faith in God. You may feel proud that you are getting on in life by your own abilities and intelligence. This is utterly foolish. You must cultivate a wide appreciation of Nature. You must shed your narrow outlook. Realise, for instance, how small is the eye. But it is able to see the whole universe. Even your eye is teaching you a lesson. "What a fool are you? In spite of my minuscule smallness, I am able to see the whole universe with my wide vision. But your mind has a very narrow outlook." You must try to broaden your heart and enlarge your mind. You must dedicate your will (Chitta) to the Divine.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Chitta chora Yasodaa ke baal*").

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in Prasanthi Mandir, on 12-7-1988*

### **Free Will and W.A.T.C.H.**

We are told that even very small acts (like moving a glass of water) are predetermined, and that "freewill" with which we are endowed is limited to a freedom in regard to the degree of our ego-involvement. Not a leaf falls, except by God's will.

we are the actors. We can choose to *identify* ourselves with the roles we have been cast to play (the "ego" option), or we can choose simply to witness the action (the "surrendered" or "ego-less" path).

At its face value, it looks as if this kind of "freewill" offers no choice at all. It looks as if the end product, in terms of manifest action, is already packaged as a foregone conclusion.

This interpretation would seem to make a mockery of all our striving. What can be the incentive, if our contribution to the action is zero?

On the other hand, Baba exhorts us to put into action at least a part of his teaching, and invites us to seek to play *higher* and *higher* roles. Yet how can we take initiatives of any kind if our only freedom lies in varying the degree of our ego-involvement in an otherwise fixed play?

How to resolve the apparent contradiction?

Could it not be? —does it not *have* to be? —that the play is continuously being re-written in response to the way in which we exercise our free will (to be ego-involved or not) from moment to moment, day by day.

### **The ego-less path**

It would follow from this that we have not only an allotted part as actors in the unfolding play, but—by "surrendering" our ego and remembering our real (atmic) identity—we can, and do, make a real contribution to the play itself become co-authors with God. That, surely, should be incentive enough! But, there is a catch: we can only do this if we opt for the ego-less path. Which is why it is so important to follow Baba's maxim—"start the day with love, spend the day with love, and fill the day with love." Not only, as Baba says, is this "the way to God"; it must also be the way towards co-authoring the play with God... by being "as God" in the moments of our love.

Instances of the play-in-flux are sensed in one's own life as answers to prayer. The play-in-flux is also very publicly demonstrated on those occasions when Baba suddenly changes route or schedule and acknowledges that the changes have been in response to the prayers of his devotees. He has "melted" because of love's yearning. Such examples should give heart to us all, for they can have nothing to do with the Playwright's indecision (with Baba, that would be unthinkable!) and can only be interpreted as re-structuring of the action in response to love.

The realisation that "the play is His" carries the implication for me that I can—and should! —stop being anxious about whether I am making the best use of my time and what I should be doing next.

What I am doing, and what I will do next, are all parts of a properly scripted play by a master Author. I need have no anxiety about whether or not the world will fall to pieces in the

a witness to all the strange gamut of thoughts, words and actions that fall to my allotted role in the cosmic play.

But, Baba says we must WATCH our Words, Actions, Thoughts, Heart and Character and that we must fear to do evil. Does this not imply that we need to be very strongly concerned about what we have done, are doing and might do? So, shouldn't I be anxious about whether I am making the best use of my time and what I should be doing next? But, if I don't relax my continuous egocentric stewardship, how can I ever be a true witness?

One recalls that Arjuna too was deeply concerned about his role in the Battle of Kurukshetra. Krishna exposed and condemned the egoistic basis of Arjuna's concern and affirmed the Nishkama Karma road to deliverance ("the renunciation of the fruit of action, and not of action itself." —Geetha Vahini, p. 51)

This surely gives understanding to the way in which we *should* WATCH our own thoughts, words and actions: Our concern must be, not to avoid the actions demanded by the play, but simply (1) to avoid identifying them with the ego (and all the ego's desires for the fruits of action). The more we do this, the more we can expect to qualify for those "higher and higher roles" mentioned earlier.

In the meantime, as Baba has so often reminded us, the important thing is not so much to do the work we like to do as to like the work we *have* to do; and if our free will guides us to play our role in that work as an actor, we will have no difficulty keeping our character role separate from our basic reality. There is no place for anxiety in such a scenario: I should indeed always identify myself with the witness.

—*L. S., Tasmania*

#### *STUDENTS' CORNER:*

### **"My Years with Baba"**

When I was only a sapling, Baba picked me up from the ditch of illusion (Maya) where I was caught in the web of blindness. I was mentally undernourished and ready to be caught in the tweezers grip of delusion, hallucination and drudgery. Taking it for granted, I accepted His love. He caressed me like a thousand mothers. I was only a child when I accepted His Divine Guidance.

Once, He lovingly patted me and asked, "How many religions are there in this world?" I promptly answered, "Baba, 15." Then Baba the Divine teacher said: "No, 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." Baba again asked: "How many Gods are there

told some unintelligible number. I remember that Baba was not satisfied with my answer. He Himself said: "There is only one GOD—He is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent."

Each day He filled my mind with new flowers of thoughts, words and action, making the light of my heart glow. He enriched me with the golden vitamins—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. I also remember that Baba looked after our physical health as well. He very often gave us apples, bananas, oranges, laddus, chocolates. There is no limit to this list.

The very thought that now twelve precious years of my life with Bhagavan have passed boggles me. I doubt whether I have esteemed each golden moment, when living under the direct guidance of Baba. But I can say with full courage that He has never failed in His bountiful love for me. He has kept me safe in His arms and watched me as I grew. He has tended me with His Divine love. Sometimes, forgetting His divinity, like Judas, and yielding to temptations, I betray His trust in me. But still He loves me because He knows that one day I will learn.

God's wisdom is within us showing us the way to live each day for HIM alone and not to stray away from the golden path to our goal: GOD. He desires nothing from us except that we should be more than a copy, a loving example, pure within, and reflecting the image of HIM.

It is in our hands to become the true messengers of BABA. We should fulfill His high hopes on us and make HIM happy. It is in our heads, hands and hearts to show to the world that we value Divine knowledge acquired here as a greater treasure than anything in this world.

*—Sarmishtha Sahoo, Class XII,  
Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School,  
Prasanthi Nilayam*

### **A Prayer**

When you take me on your wings  
Into the skies of glory,  
Give me the humility  
To bow to you in all men.

When you lay me under your feet  
To shake off all my unlikeness to you  
Grant me the resolve  
To cling to your feet with love.

When you take up the cudgel  
To strip me of all my selfhood

To surrender to your will.

When you lift me up  
Into the haven of your bosom,  
Grant me the courage  
To disown the bonds of Earth.

—*B. N. N. Murthy.*

## Love's Triumph

Love is the judge—the preceptor and the goal  
Thou art the embodiment of love  
And perfect thou must be.  
He knows what to give and when to give;  
How long to let the fire burn.  
He doesn't judge by outward signs,  
By failure, nor by sin.  
Each earnest pledge of thine  
Each humble attempt to win;  
He weighs it all, and reciprocates a thousand fold.

He knows your blemishes and  
The surest way to perfect thee  
For He says; "Marks or no marks,  
But there shouldn't be any remarks."  
Thou art His and He is thine,  
And this is His desire.  
That with His beauty thou may shine.  
In splendid splendour  
And this will be when you surrender  
To Him and say;  
O Lord! Thy will be done.

—*Yuvaraj Suri.*

*When Tukaram was asked how man can keep the monkey mind from running after sensuous pleasures. He replied to the enquirer, "let the monkey run; you keep quiet where you are; do not let the body go along with the monkey-mind." Tell the mind, "I shall not give you the body as your servant." Then, the mind will desist and it can be defeated. Just as there is a*



## **Sai Vision Vs Television**

It is doubly hard today raising children in our respective cultures according to Bhagavan Baba's principles. We have witnessed the steady decline of morality, ethics and integrity. Television and films are among the contributing factors to this decline.

In the evening news, we view worldwide cases of fraud, theft, murder, cruelty, neglect and terrorism. In the songs the themes are sex, divorce, gossip, jealousy, greed and egoism. In the drama shows, we view crime, violence and animal behaviour. In the commercials, we are entertained with jingles and showy pictures enticing us to desire everything seen on the screen.

The Bal Vikas and Human Values programmes that Bhagavan Baba has instituted for the enrichment of our children's character and heritage are being diluted by the examples of characters they see and hear on the T.V. screen. Instead of supporting Baba's ceiling on desires programme, we are taught to consume more and more and misuse things. How can we, Sai Parents, stop this unwanted, negative influence that invades the privacy of our homes? By controlling whenever possible our children's environment.

### **Then and now**

Television entered my parents' home when I was in high school and had very little influence on my development, but it did play a major role in my children's lives. My generation was the first to raise children under the influence of world-wide communication in our homes. It was the beginning of the "age of information." Frankly, I was not aware of the T.V. disease until it had infected the minds of my children. What worked for my mom and dad, was not working for me! Not until I studied my childhood did I become aware of the major difference less control.

I lived a block from the Catholic church, all my after-school activities took place on the Parish School grounds. I studied and played within the boundaries of our neighbourhood. My parents knew most of the people in the community. They were born there, married school mates and their friends became parents of my school mates. My grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were in the community, an extension of my family. What was taught in church was supported by our family and friends. My parents raised me in a controlled environment. There was virtually no outside influence to contradict or disturb my parents' values and beliefs.

### **Worst offenders**

I regard films and television as the worst offenders for teaching the youth in our society that immodesty, divorce, crime, drugs and violence are adequate norms. I feel so strongly about this

behaviour acceptable to our children. The effect is subtle, but nevertheless it seeps into their sub conscious sprouting weeds that feed their actions.

Baba says, "You must bear in mind that the years of youth are the most precious years in one's life, and they should not be wasted or misspent. To let children watch television from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. is to make them forget all that they have learned at school or college. In addition, they learn many evil things. If television is used for teaching good things, it can serve a worthy purpose. But that is not the case. The younger generation is being ruined by undesirable films and television programmes. Their minds are being poisoned. It is not a sign of parental love to let children be ruined in this manner. Even parents should avoid going to cinemas. All the crimes and violence we witness today are largely the result of the evil influence of films on young minds."

Parents: Turn off television and tune in to Sai Vision!

—*Rita Bruce, St. Louis, U.S.A.*

### **That Memorable Id Day**

It was the last day of Ramadan, and sitting in my room in Brindavan, Bangalore, as I opened the Quran a significant verse met my gaze.

"Indeed to the Lord is the return of all" (XCVI: 8)

The return, I thought, is often confused with death, but this could not be the only meaning. I could not find a satisfactory answer. When a wave dashes against the shore, water and not the wave flows back the sea. When illusions fall off, the soul alone in its sublimity merges with the Supreme Consciousness—ALLAH of the Muslim mind.

But these were only explanations and I had no experience or proof of it. Little did I suspect that I was to witness a brief moment of a "return" on that memorable Id day.

It began as not a very happy day, that morning of 18th May 1988. I was sad knowing very well that over the world Muslims must have spent the month in worshipping HIM—the One and only ONE. And what had I to offer? Nothing, no nightly prayer, no self-discipline of fasting, no soul-pleasing recitation of His revelation. I had simply wasted the month.

The previous night I had washed and filled with cloves, cardamom, and sugar candy the betel nut box Baba had consecrated years ago in our house. "What a poor offering" I thought, as I carefully wrapped it in white silk and sat waiting in the darshan line. Would He accept?

Interview. As the small group of Anantapur teachers got up each one had the same feeling. He knew where we sat, what we had to offer. And this was a chance for a brief Return to Him.

The same assurance indicated to us that He knew what was in the box, perhaps even more. He had watched me as I went buying the contents from shop to shop. He opened the box, took a clove and blessed the offering. It was a gesture at once human and divine.

I sat opposite Swami's Chair and quietly resolved not to say anything but be content with feasting on the beauty of His Face and the soft tenderness of His mellow Voice. Then from the mosque, outside the walls, came the call for prayer—"Allah-ho Akbar." Saluting His greatness, His formless majesty, I became aware that He too was singing, as if softly to Himself, an old Telugu song. The song celebrated Radha's devotion, its steadfast courage, its fearless resolve. So that Love for God became Faith itself. The two sounds rose and merged in one, became ONE in the golden light that filled the room. Yes, the room was lighted as if by a self-illuminated yellow splendour—not too bright but soft and pleasant. The two voices, now one, surged and floated, like a golden ocean, blissful of Its own beauty.

Perhaps my colleagues were talking, yet their voices were outside the silence in whose centre the ONE as a sonic image pleased ITself; nothing else lived.

Then suddenly, just as it had started, the moment was over. Images, words, faces returned. I was back to the world of the many.

It was Baba's Id gift.

That brief moment of "the return" was His silent gift of love. It left behind a tearful memory of a togetherness that was not physical but, as the ancient covenant describes, was before creation and for which all objects yearn. This was the theme of the Sufi song we had sung many a time on ceremonial occasions,

What's the meaning of this paste, O friend! Merge in SAI, be one with Him.

The ancient Sufi from Bijapur knew Him as SAI, who is also known as Al-Ahad.

### **Al Ahad: the One**

Head bent, and overwhelmed, I found my way out of the room. My tears would not stop. I just wanted to be alone and gather the moment to myself again. In that moment of brief "return" a veil was lifted, and a glimpse, a very fleeting one, was shown, a principle was affirmed which the Muslims describe as Al Ahad: The One. Elsewhere it was also written—I wondered where—and the lines came to me:

of blue light came rolling towards me and I fainted and fell. I felt it glided into me." And Baba answering a question of Mr. Rama Sarma added: I WAS NOT BEGOTTEN.”  
(Kasturi: EASWARAMMA page 20)

The same principle is repeated in the mystic words of the Quran:

He begets not  
Nor is He begotten.

And there is none  
Like unto Him. (CXII: 3-4)

Thus, unawares, the Majesty of the Giver enriches the supplicant from His fountain of abundance.

—*Mrs. Zeba Bashiruddin,*  
*Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur*

## **The Satwic Will**

All humans engage themselves in actions. Before performing any action we think about it, then decide and then act. Thus there is a will preceding the action, and this will we call our will. Unless we had been forced by someone else to perform that action, we say we did it out of our own free will. How free is this so-called free will of ours?

How did this will originate? Pure Awareness, which is all-pervasive, gets reflected on or involved in matter. This reflected consciousness identifies itself with the physical body and in between the two arises a pseudo-entity which calls itself "I". This entity considers itself separate from others and feels solely responsible for its actions.

Thus, there are two aspects of consciousness in each human being, the Pure Awareness or Atman, common to all, and the individualised egoistic consciousness, which is a reflection of the former. Each of these exhibits a will of its own. The first one is the Divine all-knowing will while the latter is limited because it functions through the mind. It is this second will that we claim as our own.

### **The self and its shadow**

The pseudo-entity is deluded to believe that it is the real Self and considers itself to be the centre of all existence and that everything else exists for its sake. Thus the second will, which belongs to the pseudo-entity is a delusion. It is only a broken and distorted image of the true will

shadow, the pseudo-entity, as free is a myth. Only the Divine will operating in us can truly be designated as free.

Nature always confronts us with certain possibilities which fall under two broad categories, namely, Shreyas and Preyas, the good and the pleasant. When the choice is made, the crucial question is: does our mental will act in unison with the Divine will or does it distort the latter and act on its own, calling itself the free will?

### **The holistic view**

Independent of the world the will of the pseudo-entity is not capable of performing actions and achieving the fruits thereof. The scriptures assert that we are not individual entities but are an inseparable part of the whole. This holistic view of the universe has been confirmed by science. All forms of matter are inter-connected, interrelated, and inter-dependent. They cannot be viewed as isolated entities. Scientists now believe that the multi-levelled organisation of beings also implies different levels of mind. Logically this led to the postulation of a universal or cosmic mind which integrates and influences the individual minds at all levels.

Our scriptures consider that the entire universe exists in and for the sake of the Atman. When the mind of an individual has its own will, it stands to reason that the cosmic mind must be exerting its own will on all the constituent parts of the universe. We being a part of the whole, our role in the entire set-up of things must be determined by that cosmic will. But our mind, having veiled off this oneness with the whole, also distorts the Divine will and calls it, its own will. This will from the ego point of view may appear to be free but from the cosmic point is by no means free.

### **Actions and the will**

There is another aspect to this question. Before conceding that we have free will of our own, are we really free ourselves? Biologists say that our nature is determined by heredity and are bound by the laws of nature, which influence all our actions. The karmic theory may say that all our actions are based on past karma. A Bhakta may swear that we are governed by the will of God and that we are allowed only a limited freedom of action as a cow tethered to a peg by a rope. However in all cases certain previous actions must lead to certain results. Swami calls this as the general law. Thus we are bound by many factors, physical, mental, hereditary, karmic and environmental. Under these circumstances our personal will is influenced by our emotions, wishes, desires and preferences and hence it is often perverse. It not only prevents the true will from exerting itself but also distorts it and having twisted it, invariably justifies itself.

But the so-called free will is up to a point a blessing in disguise. It is a necessary mechanism to goad man into action and ensure his progress in the world. Swami says, "The individual must act, and the action is a function of his mind. There are thoughts; thoughts are seeds: they sprout and become actions. The actions then appear to be free will to the individual. Everyone has been given talents such as intelligence, reason, and energy and they must be put into life action." (quoted by Hislop in his "Baba and I"). So no man can afford to lose this so called free will

can raise himself towards higher possibilities.

### **Pure awareness**

However, this argument should not be taken to mean that we submit meekly to the dictates of this distorted will. There has to be a constant attempt to find out the true will in us, that which is the manifestation of Pure Awareness. This illumined will or Kratu, has been personified in Vedic literature as Agni, the all knowing "Jaataveda". "Sa hi Kratu" says the Rg Veda. It calls him "the Immortal in mortals." He is the seer-will in the humans, the Vaishwanara fire in us. He is the "Lord within," the Bhagavad Gita speaks of. Zoroastrianism calls it "Asha", the Divine will. It is eternal, omniscient and omnipotent. It is stronger than our conscious will. It manifests itself as Divine Grace. To quote Paul Brunton, "Divine Grace is the manifestation of the cosmic free will in operation. It can alter the course of events in a mysterious manner through its own unknown laws, which are superior to all natural laws and can modify the latter by interaction. It is the most powerful force in the universe." What is true of the macrocosm is true of the microcosm also. When our conscious will is surrendered to the Lord within, it attains new dimensions and becomes the Satwic will. In the Kathopanishad (II-9), Yama praises Nachiketas as "satyadhrtirbataasi"—one whose will is yoked to truth, a qualification which is by no means easy to acquire. Lord Krishna defines this Satwic will in the Bhagavad Gita (XVIII-33)

*"Dhrtyaa yayaa dhaarayate manah Praanendriya kriyaah  
Yogena avyabhichaarinyaa dhrtih saa paartha saaihiki."*

"The will that controls the actions of the mind, prana, and the sense organs and yokes them to the Self, that will, O Partha, is Satwic." Swami says, "at first the will is your own, which has to be strengthened by the thought of God until you convert it into the almighty will of God." (quoted by Hislop).

### **Linking the two wills**

The linking of the two wills is the greatest thing a human being can achieve. Such a will only can lead man in the true path. The distorted mental will cannot take us along the right path. In this context the prayer offered to Agni in the last verse of the Isavasya Upanishad is significant. "Agne naya supathaa raaye"—"O Agni, lead us along the auspicious path to prosperity." But how to achieve this Satwic will? The first step is to pay more and more attention to the Self. Then one has to put aside or keep in abeyance the distorted personal will till the impersonal in us manifests as an intuitive will, from deep within. The Lord within will prompt our actions and we in turn should dedicate the actions to Him. Then we will be released from the consequences of such actions.

How does all this relate to our dealings with the Avatar? When we have a problem, how often do we ask Him, "Swami, what shall I do?" Instead, we often make up our mind on a particular course of action and then ask Him, "Swami, shall I do like this?" That means we are only asking for His concurrence with our decision or for His blessings as we call it. His answer is invariably "yes" because Swami says, "I only reflect your mind." So the right thing to do is to set

the physical form of the Avatar is not available before us what shall we do? Then we should put the question to our own Self in the proper way and wait for the intuitive answer, because the Avatar is only our own Self, the Pure Awareness manifested in the physical form of Sai.

### **The karmic factor**

This still leaves one question to be answered. What about the Karmic factor influencing our mental will? The answer is very simple and straight. The above process involves the elimination of the pseudo-entity, the ego, When the egoistic will is fully and finally replaced by the Divine will, the past karma and its influence are automatically nullified, No more karma accrues since there is no pseudo-entity to acquire new karma and suffer its consequences.

—**Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam, Brindavan**

**GURUPOORNIMA SANDESH:**

### **Three in One**

*Man's foremost duty is to make  
The stream of Divine love  
Flow throughout the world.  
It is not for living for himself  
That every man has been born;  
Only by having the noble thought  
That he has to serve society  
Will he ennoble himself  
And achieve Self-satisfaction.*

*Of what avail is human birth  
If you cannot get rid of narrow feelings  
And resolve to serve all mankind?  
What greater message can the Guru give?*

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Forgetting his inherent eternal divinity, man today regards life as intended only for the pursuit of selfish aims. It is this divinity that should be manifested in man's life.

Creation is the projection of Divine Will. It is called Prakriti (Nature). In every object emanating from Nature the Divine principle exists and must exist. It is to proclaim this immanence of the Divine that man has evolved.

Consciousness in Nature is not purposeless. When it is filled with ego, it gets deformed; when it is turned towards the Atma, it becomes Divine. To whom is this consciousness to be

up so much in selfish pursuits that he has degraded himself to the level of animals and is displaying demonic traits. At every step he is violating Dharma (Righteousness). Every desire is turning into greed. Large- heartedness is on the wane. Man's vision has lost the light of love. Truth is a casualty in man's speech. Spirituality has become a form of ostentation. Qualities like Kama (lust) and Krodha (anger) are having a free rein. Consciousness has become dormant in man. Human relationships have become mechanical and artificial. In fact, humanness has virtually disappeared.

### **Why the Divine incarnates**

In this situation, what is it that man should seek? How can he attain peace and happiness? The first requisite is the cultivation of the love of God. The Puranas and the ancient sages have declared that the Divine incarnates to punish the wicked and protect the good. This is not correct. The Divine incarnates to inculcate love in mankind and teach how love should be promoted and practised. Only when such love is developed will man be free from sorrow and trouble. Sins will be wiped out and fear will cease to haunt men.

Where there is love of God, there will be fear of sin. When both of these are present, society will experience morality. Man's primary duty is to foster these three. (Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Samaja Neeti). This has to be done by developing devotion (Bhakti) on the basis of faith and love. Actions have to be performed with devotion. Love (Prema) is Bhakti (devotion); the faith generated by love is jnana. The actions done on the basis of Love and Faith are Karma. The combination of jnana and karma leads to Upasana (worship). Upasana is the combined outcome of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma.

### **Develop love**

The dualistic attitude is rampant in man today. Dualism can never eliminate sorrow. It can only increase it. It takes man far from bliss. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate the sense of oneness (ekatwa). Love alone signifies that oneness. For this love, there is no path, no reward, no discipline other than love itself. The more you develop this love, the more you experience bliss.

Today love is cribbed and confined. It is limited to one's kith and kin. Our love should transcend these narrow limits, embrace the whole world and extend to every living being. Love is present in everyone in varying degrees.

In Nature everything functions according to its specific qualities. ("Swabhavasthu pravarthathe", declares the Upanishad. Everything behaves according to its specific nature). It cannot be altered or destroyed by anyone. This is the inherent attribute of Nature. It manifests the Divine principle, which is eternal, immutable and unchanging. To bring out this divine aspect in Nature and make it manifest, all things have been endowed with certain qualities (gunas). They are Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. To endow Nature with these qualities, certain media are necessary. These have been described as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara.



Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara are not entities with forms. The Trinity represents the deified expression of three qualities. The Puranas have misrepresented Brahma as a four-headed deity engaged in cosmic creation. This is not correct. In fact, the Trinity represents the three gunas.

There are five elemental powers in Nature—the earth, water, fire, air and space (ether) (Bhumi, Aapa, Agni, Vayu and Aakasa). If you want to understand the process of creation, the order of describing the elements has to be reversed. Starting from Aakasa (space), we have in succession air, fire, water and earth. Nature has to be understood in two ways: one, in relation to the process of creation; the other, in relation to everyday experience. Likewise, when the order of Brahma, Vishnu and Easwara is viewed in relation to creation, it has to be reversed; we have Easwara, Vishnu and Brahma in that order.

To begin with, what does the principle of Easwara signify? The Gita declares. "Easwaras sarvabhootaanaam hriddese Arjuna thishtathi" ("Easwara dwells, O! Arjuna, in the heart region of all beings.") Easwara, therefore, means the Lord of the heart. He illumines the heart of every being. This means that the Divine power of Easwara is present in every heart. The other name given to Easwara as Lord of the Heart is Atma.

### **The supreme guru**

It is from the heart that the mind has emerged. The mind corresponds to the Vishnu principle. Vishnu means one who is all-pervasive. The mind is equally all pervasive. "Manomoolam idam jagat," it is said. ("The mind is the basis of the cosmos "). The mind pervades the entire universe. Hence it signifies the Vishnu principle.

Brahma is traditionally described as arising from the navel of Vishnu. It is from the mind that speech ("Vaak") has come. "Vaak" is the embodiment of Brahma. Hence Brahma has, among other names, "Shabda Brahmayee" (Shabda, or sound, as Brahman).

Thus Easwara, Vishnu and Brahma symbolise the heart, the mind and the faculty of speech. The combination of all the three represents the Atma. Hence each of the three should be revered as the one supreme Guru in three forms.

*"Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu,  
Gurur devo Maheswarah.  
Gurur sakshat Parabrahma  
Thasmai Sri Gurave namah."*

This sloka, which has a profound and sacred inner significance, has been given a distorted meaning, elevating the role of the ordinary teacher, fragmenting the Divine and missing the basic truth of oneness expressed in it.

"Gurur-Vishnu" refers to the all-pervasive mind, which is present in all beings. This is the Vishnu principle. "Gurur-devo Maheshwarah": This refers to the seat of the heart. "Gurus-sakshat Para Brahma tasmai Sri Gurave namah": This means that the unity of speech, mind and heart represents the Supreme Atma, which should be revered as the Guru.

### **The gunas and the cosmos**

What is the role of the Guru? It is the total removal of the darkness of ignorance. As long as there are the three gunas, there can be no freedom from darkness. It is only when one transcends the three gunas that one attains the state of the Guru. Alternatively, when one realises the unity of the three gunas, the message of the Guru is comprehended. The import of the unity of the three gunas is indicated in the Gita declaration: Mama-atma Sarvabhootaatma" ("My Atma is the indwelling spirit in all beings"). That which dwells in all beings is the One only. "Eko vasi Sarvabhootaantaraatma" (The One that is the inner Spirit in all beings). Forgetting this basic principle of Oneness and lost in the wilderness of multiplicity, men are having no peace.

It is on account of the varied functioning of the three gunas that the process of creation, growth and dissolution takes place. The three gunas are the primal source, the basis and the life-breath of the Universe. They are responsible for the manifestations and transformations in Nature. The permutations and combinations of the three gunas in varying proportions account for the infinite diversity in the Cosmos.

### **The trinity and their colours**

Three colours have been ascribed to the three gunas. It is commonly believed that Vishnu represents the Satwa Guna. It is not so. The Satwa guna is really the attribute of Easwara. It is not subject to Maya. In the state of yogic sleep (Yoga Nidra) it acquires the chit-shakti (the power of Awareness) and appears as Shuddha-Atma (the Pure Absolute). Hence Satwa represents the Easwara principle. Its colour is white.

The Rajo Guna manifests itself in likes and dislikes. It used to be associated with Brahma. But this is wrong. It is a quality associated with Vishnu. Vishnu has been depicted as a deity bearing the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. Vishnu has also been described as "Alankaraswarupa"—one who is embellished by decorations. Vishnu also bears the name, "Vishwambhara", one who protects and rules over the Universe. As a ruler (Raja), he has the Rajo-guna. The colour of Rajo-guna is red.

Then, there is Brahma. The Rajo-guna has been attributed to Brahma. This is incorrect. Brahma represents Tamo-guna. Tamo-guna is associated with Murkhatwam (irrationality) and the darkness of ignorance (andhakara). It is filled with "Mamakara" (the sense of possessiveness) and Abhimana (attachment). These two impulses account for creation. If there were no sense of "I" and "Mine", the creative process would not go on. These two are the insignia of Tamo-guna, which is represented by the black colour.

Likewise there are in the world, people with Satwa-guna, Rajo-guna or Thamo-guna and are distinguished by one or other of the three colours.

## **FIVE KINDS OF SADHANA**

What is the way to bring about unity in this diversity of colours? The ancient sages, after deep enquiry, have indicated five different paths for achieving this objective. They are: Sathyavati, Angavati, Anyavati, Nidanavati and Swarupatmaka-Jnanam.

Sathyavati is a kind of sadhana. This sadhana reveals the presence of the Divine in a subtle form everywhere, in every thing, in the same manner in which, butter is present in milk. The sadhana provides the proof for the view that God is the universal Indweller abiding in all beings. No one should think that God dwells in a particular place or in a particular being. The purport of this sadhana is to make one realise that God is present in all beings and to act on that conviction.

Akaasa is the base and the form of Pranava ("Om") issues forth from Aakasa. Air (Vayu) has the power to sustain life. This power is represented by hydrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere. Oxygen has this Divine life-sustaining potency. The Divine is thus present in air in the form of the life giving breath (Prana). This is a matter of daily experience for everyone. When somebody faints, the people around him are cleared so that he may have more air and breathe more freely. This is a recognition of the presence of the life-energy in air.

In fire, the Divine is present as an alarum-signaller. Even when a fire is mild, people are careful. Consciously or otherwise, when we have to deal with fire, we develop a sense of cautiousness.

In water the Divine is present as Prajna (Integrated Awareness). The scriptures declare: "Prajnanam Brahma" ("Integrated Awareness is Brahman"). This Prajna arises out of water. When a person becomes unconscious, water is sprinkled on him to restore consciousness.

The fifth element is the earth (Prithvi). In the earth consciousness (Chaitanya) is present. The potencies present in the five elements—Prajna-shakti (Integrated Awareness), Jagrata-shakti (the awakening or warning potency), Chetana-shakti (Consciousness), Shabda-shakti (the potency of sound) and Jiva-shakti (life-sustaining potency) are all different forms of the Divine power. Those who are engaged in the Angavati sadhana regard the five elements as manifestations of the Supreme (Paramatma) and offer worship to them.

The third sadhana is Anyavati. In this sadhana the Divine is worshipped on the basis of certain insignia in a particular form like that of Vishnu or Siva. Siva, for instance, is envisaged as a deity with the trident, the damaru, three eyes, and is worshipped in this form. Similarly Rama is pictured as one bearing the Kodanda bow and Krishna as the Lord with the flute, wearing a peacock feather on his head. In this manner each deity is distinguished by certain special insignia for purposes of worship.

It comprises the nine types of worship practised by devotees: Shravanam, Kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, Padasevanam, Vandanam, Archanam, Dasyam, Sneham and Atmanivedanam.

The fifth sadhana is "Swarupatmaka Jnanam". This sadhana aims at achieving the realisation that every individual is an embodiment of the Divine and hence the Divine is present in everyone. The Gita declares: "All feet are His; all eyes, heads and mouths are His." That means, all human forms are Divine. True education should enable one to realise his inherent Divinity.

We speak often about prayer. Prayer does not mean petitioning to God. Prayer is an index of the experience of Atmic bliss. It is a means of sharing this bliss, spreading it all around, being immersed in that bliss. Prayer must come from the heart. Prayer that is not heartfelt is utterly useless. The Lord will accept a heart without words. But He will not accept words and prayers that do not come from the heart. This is why God is described as Lord of the Heart (Hridayesa). It is only when you have faith in this that you will be able to manifest your divinity.

Regard the body as a temple in which the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara—reside. There are no separate places where Brahma, Vishnu or Easwara dwell like Vaikuntha or Kailash. These are delusions born of ignorance. God is inside you, outside you, around you. You have to recognise this truth and live according to it Chittibabu (who had addressed the gathering earlier) referred to persons who are racked by doubts all the time. As long as you are filled with doubts, you cannot experience peace or happiness. We must perform all actions in the firm belief that "we are God and God is in us." We must experience this sense of Oneness (ekatvam).

### **From unity to divinity**

What is the use of all the Sadhanas you are doing? Only when the underlying unity of the Satwa, Rajo and Tamo gunas is recognised can you experience the bliss of Self-realisation. For realising the Self (the Atma) there is no need to go to any place. Do not imagine that the Divine comes from somewhere to give you darshan. What need is there for the One who is omnipresent to go from place to place? The Divine is beyond coming and going.

Realise the importance of unity. To achieve Unity you have to cultivate Purity. Where you have purity, you realise Divinity. Today you have no unity, purity or divinity. You have only "community" in the narrow sense of "mine" and "thine". You must develop fraternal feelings, without regard to barriers of race, religion, caste and class. When you develop this sense of spiritual kinship, the nation will progress and prosper.

In the name of Gurupoornima, you perform some pujas for some persons and waste your lives. There is only one Guru. He is God. That Guru is within you. You are seeking the Guru all over the world. Your qualities (gunas) are in you in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, and can protect you, elevate you or ruin you. When you act righteously and pursue the right path, they will protect you by their Divine potency (Vishnutwa).

merit as the case may be. The royal road to happiness and the removal of sorrow is right action. The essence of all religions, all teachings and spiritual paths is only one thing: Love. Develop that divine love.

### **"Don't give up God"**

Above all, whatever your difficulties, whatever the ordeals you have to undergo, in any situation, do not give up God. God is one. Whether you are affluent or destitute, whether you are a scholar or an ignoramus, whatever troubles you may be faced with, whatever spiritual practices you may adopt, whether you are regarded as a sinner or saint, "Do not give up God and realise God is one." (Swami recited a series of poems each ending with the refrain: "Do not give up God. God is one").

***From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on Gurupoornima Day, 9-7-88.***

## **“Thy Name is Love”**

The familiar greeting 'Sairam' is no casual substitute for a 'Hello'. This word has the power of exuding so much love and warmth, also conferring immense joy on the person so greeted. It is a constant reminder of the fact that we all belong to only one religion, the Religion of Love, and are all children of our Mother Sai.

If the little word can bring so much joy, imagine how much happiness we can give others by loving them all as we love Sai. If we have full faith in the fact that Sai resides in the heart of all, we'll never abuse others or hurt their feelings in any way. We'll refrain from losing our temper and speaking ill of others if the omnipresence of Sai is firmly implanted in our minds.

Baba is a living example of love. He often says, "There is nothing that cannot be conquered by love." Even a heart made of stone can be made to melt like butter with warmth and love. Our love for others should be such that we should feel the pain of those suffering and should always rejoice in the happiness of others.

It is quite easy to love our family and friends. But a superior kind of love is to love a person who dislikes us and to give love without expecting anything in return. Service naturally follows love, for, service is love expressed in action. Where there is love there is truth, for falsehood exists only where there is fear, which is a sign of absence of love. Where there is truth, there is right conduct. Where there is right conduct, there is peace and ahimsa or non-violence is the outcome of peace.

brightly dispelling all feelings of hatred. Let us make a small beginning from today in spreading the message of love by greeting whomever we meet with this magic word "Sairam" with all the warmth it carries.

—*Rama Sampath, Bombay*

### Waiting for the Lord

*The news has spread far and wide  
The Lord is to be by our side  
Two long years seem a lifetime  
Since he blessed Dharmakshetra last time.*

*Every face exudes radiance;  
Every smile a rare effulgence;  
Every heart leaps in ecstasy  
To welcome our dear Sathya Sai.*

*Dharmakshetra looks like a bride be-  
jewelled  
In her bosom has sprung a cascade;  
Work of love amidst hours of toil;*

*Arrival of the Lord they eagerly hail.*

*Every blade of grass waltzes merrily  
Every bird chirps ever so gaily  
Every breath spread,, exotic fragrance  
The coming of the Lord they announce.*

*Time seems to drag on for ever  
Every minute lasting an hour  
The long wait seems an eternity  
As we yearn for a glimpse of Sathya Sai.*

—*R. S., Bombay*

*(Lines written by a Bal Vikas guru on the eve of Bhagavan's visit to Bombay in March 1988. )*

### Mast and Mother

*The seabird that soareth up high  
Preening as monarch of the sky  
Wings and wings till a time comes  
When weary and weak it becomes,  
Disenchanted with its boundless place  
Tired of its vain pursuit in space,  
Harbours a keen desire to alight  
On the mast of a ship for rest and respite.*

*The child away from home, engaged in play*

*With sandy castles and dolls colourful and  
gay,  
Is so engrossed, but a time doth come  
When it remembers its mother at home.*

*The dolls and castles enchant no more  
Piteously it weeps for the mother  
To receive a soul-filling kiss,  
And enjoy unspeakable bliss.*

*Man too is busy with worldly pursuits,*

*boot*

*Deeply engrossed; but the time comes  
To realise the futility of earthly gains.  
He yearns for the Goal Eternal.*

*all*

**—D. Sahu, Shahabad**

"Knowledge can be acquired. But wisdom is higher than knowledge. And it is the Acharya-the Guru—who gives us the wisdom," declared Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice-President of India, addressing a meeting of students of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and a large gathering of devotees in the Prasanthi Mandir on July 20. Bhagavan blessed the occasion with His presence and at the request of the students, gave a discourse after Dr. Sharma's address.

Dr. Sharma, who had flown from Bangalore by helicopter on the 20th afternoon, began his address with a reference to his original intention to be present at Prasanthi Nilayam on Gurupoornima day. But he had to advance his visit. "I felt that going to the feet of the Guru need not be restricted to a particular day. It should be a continuous process. Whenever we can have darshan of the Guru, we get inspiration."

The word Guru, he said, has a deep meaning in Sanskrit. The Guru is the one who takes away whatever is evil in us. The Upanishadic injunction says: "Acharya Devo Bhava." The word Acharya has a great meaning. "Acharya" and "Acharan" (conduct) are related. Acharya (the teacher) is one who leads us to "Acharan" (good conduct). It is Acharan (good conduct) which leads us to peace with oneself.

To be able to do right things is not easy. The grace of Bhagavan, the grace of the Guru, is needed. That is why Krishna Himself said in the Gita: "Karmanyeva Adhikarasthe" ("You are entitled only to do your duty") and "Maamaikam Saranam Vraja" ("Take refuge in Me alone"). This means that you should have the feeling, "Whatever I am doing, it is in the service of God, in accordance with His wishes."

### **Karma and dedication**

Regarding Karma, some persons ask "If my Karma is decided by my earlier work or performance in my earlier birth, why am I held responsible for what I am now?" That question arises also in the minds of the young. There is a scientific basis for this. Whatever we have done in the past has its influence on what we are today. An English poet has said:

*Our actions flow from afar;  
And what we have been makes us what we are.*

Man himself has to act, he cannot get out of it. Whatever success he has got, whatever he has inherited, whatever his "genes", as they call them, are the results of his past, his earlier Karma. That determines the present. But how he uses the present is important. Here, we are enjoined: "Sarvadharmaan Parithyajya maamaikam Saranam vraja" This means that whatever you do should be in the service of the Lord. In the Gita the Lord reveals Himself as the Virat Purusha (His Cosmic form). This means that the Lord is the whole universe. Service to the Lord means service to all people. This cannot be easily done. For this, a guide is needed, a guide who



important.

### **Knowledge and wisdom**

Knowledge can be acquired. But wisdom is higher than mere knowledge. It is the Acharya—the Guru—who gives us the wisdom. A person may have read everything, but may not have right understanding.

Today the greatest problem facing humanity as a whole is this: Science and technology are giving us new knowledge which accords with our ancient knowledge—Advaita. Nuclear energy has proved that Energy and Matter are one—Brahma and Maya. But all that power that has come to humanity, without wisdom, can be harmful. All the leisure that we have got doesn't give us that satisfaction, that peace which comes only when there is the higher understanding.

Today's great problem is most of us are losing our moral and ethical moorings. These are vital. Today the fear that haunts the world is that it may be devastated and life may go. That is why it is said: "No peace today, no life tomorrow." The whole of humanity is worried. But peace can come only with the understanding of the objective of one's life, what one has to work for. And there, again, it is the Guru who gives the guidance.

### **Bhagavan's mission**

Today Bhagavan Baba has taken one thing in hand which is of the greatest value. It is the unification of mankind, on the basis of the inherent divinity in all beings. The message of unity is an ancient one. In the Rg Veda it is said: "Ekam Sat Vipraah bahudaa Vadanti" (The Eternal is one; the wise call it by many names.) Apart from unity, His message to all of us is to act with certain objectives in life, and have some moral and ethical values. If there is any salvation for humanity, any salvation for ourselves, it is only through understanding that message.

### **Call to students**

Addressing the students in particular, Dr. Sharma observed that they were extremely lucky in being in the presence of Bhagavan and receiving His grace. "His presence alone makes a world of difference," he said. "Of course, I find peace in His presence."

In this context Dr. Sharma recalled an incident which happened while he was a research scholar in the Harvard Law School in 1948. He used to carry on his work in a cubicle. A professor from another American University used to come and sit near him and leave after a while. One day the professor asked him: "Tell me, what do you do? Is it yoga or something else?" Dr. Sharma told him: "I can't teach you anything. I don't even know anything." The professor said: "No, you are not telling me the truth. All the time I used to come and sit here, I found peace." Dr. Sharma remarked that the American professor's experience might be due to one of two things. One might be the presence of certain vibrations. The other might be faith. The fact that he was an Indian might have induced some kind of faith in him, that gave him solace in Dr. Sharma's presence.

darshan of Bhagavan. You must make the best use of it. More than His words, His mere Presence will give your own Atma something which can be of great value. This is something precious you have got. Make good use of it. It will stand you in good stead in your whole life. Peace and other things will come when you identify yourself with humanity as a whole. The world looks to you to be an example. Having been students here, you have got to show that you, a student of this institution, is somebody who can be depended upon to act correctly, not to fall below certain standards."

*QUEST FOR TRUTH: I*

## **Common-sense and Truth**

*"First there must be common sense, then comes Divine Sense." —BABA (from My Baba and I by J. Hislop)*

In our worldly activities we often have to rely on common sense. This means reliance on the evidence of the senses insofar as this is commonly experienced by most people. What we see, hear and touch appears to give us certain knowledge of reality. But does common sense ever give a *true* picture of reality? History shows that what people have taken as common sense has quite often been inaccurate or even entirely false. The physical sciences prove that our senses only give us a very truncated and often inaccurate perception of the 'objective' nature of things. Learning to use one's common sense, however, is a necessary part of life because it ensures that we share the perceptions of others and learn to benefit from ordinary people's judgement.

### **Sense perceptions**

"Relying on the evidence of the senses" is not always without problems, even though these senses are 'common' to all of us. It has intrigued thinkers through the ages that any of our sense perceptions can be faulty. Our sensory organs themselves can be deranged, such as when the eyes develop double vision or things look yellow when suffering from jaundice. One may see a lake and feel rain when thirsting to death in a desert, and the lake may turn out to be a mirage seen by others, while the rain is only felt by one person. Even when healthy, our senses can be said to deceive us in many ways; a stick looks bent in water when it is perfectly straight, fast flashing lights blend into one single light and so on. The senses do not therefore necessarily always give us a picture of the nature of things, even when we are excellent at using them, which is not the case for most people.

The above deceptions of the senses are not commonly the problem. What is a common problem of sense observation, however, is that our impressions can only make sense to us if we *interpret* them. This interpretation process is mostly learned from childhood on, so we are hardly ever aware of its taking place until we set out to study it. A visit to a foreign country often shows strikingly how differently others seem to understand even the simplest matters such as

that we understood are then seen to be peculiar to our little corner of the world. From this we may learn how our own views are conditioned by our own culture and subjectivity.

### **Subjectivity**

Common sense falls down where there are appreciable differences between the accounts of different observers of the same event. An observer with one or another special type of training will report very differently from untrained people, and this can be due to the difference in their focus of interest and methods of observing etc. A right-wing and a left-wing politician will tend to view one and the same situation very differently. As one's personal values are often impossible to neutralise, all we have to fall back on is our common sense!

To have common sense is not necessarily to be unimaginative. A sound imagination that rests upon a sound basis of common sense is surely to be preferred as being much more useful than the speculative fantasies of sheer fiction. The so-called "creative imagination" is sometimes cultivated as if it were an end in itself. It may often only enhance the ego of the artist and serve no useful purpose when one studies the results it achieves in life. The same must surely on occasion apply to the creative scientist or thinker in whatever sphere. As Sathya Sai says:

*"The mind ..... has immense potentiality to create manifold images, and so is also called imagination. Imagination hides the truth. It fogs the intellect."*

*(Sai Avatar Vol. II, 499)*

Common sense, then, is a useful basis but can also be highly unreliable for solving problems. It makes the saying "Believe only half you hear" the more reasonable. It is good ballast to have against getting carried away by windy theories and wild ideas, but it can be a dangerous millstone around the neck if one never looks beyond it in a search for higher, spiritual truth.

### **Science and truth**

*"The process of education has to inspire men to discover truth, seeking it through study of the objective world." (Sathya Sai Baba discourse on 22-1-1986)*

Science relies on common sense too. On the basis of it, science sets out to eliminate the subjective elements and arrive at what really is common to all observations, whatever the phenomena studied. It is the world community of scientists' collective acceptance through time of those theories that—all circumstances taken into account—decide at any time what is "established scientific opinion." This is not "mere opinion" but rational judgement based on what, in the final analysis, is in agreement with the sensory observations of the majority of observers. It cannot be taken as just subjective, nor as wholly objective truth. It is "inter-subjective" or "commonly verified" truth.

### **Predictability**

The strictest criterion of truth in science is that of predictability. If a theory allows the prediction of future events (usually under controlled conditions such as in laboratory

is regarded as validated, which is to say that it is thought to come as close to truth as science can make it. Such predictions can only be made by the natural sciences, not by those dealing with the events of human or societal life.

The backbone of the attitude of scientific enquiry is the attitude of "reservation of judgement." Scientists have come to recognise that even their most well-tried theories tend to have to be modified or even rejected as researches proceed. Modern philosophy of science recognises the changing nature of scientific theory or "truths" as an unavoidable historical fact, but also as something that *in principle* must be so.

This again calls for an attitude of tolerance towards others' views, for future events may prove them to have held the more fruitful hypotheses. Science bases itself only on what has been observed in the past. It cannot be certain of future events, for these are unobservable and beyond measurement, even though they may now and again prove calculable in advance. The best it can do is predict on the basis of what happened in the past and then simply "wait and see" (such as meteorologists often do when predicting the weather!)

The results of science may turn out to hold true against future observations, but no guarantee of their certainty can ever be given. The best science can offer is approximations, predictions of the *likelihood* of an event coming true.

### **Relativism and tolerance**

The idea that differing versions of the truth can be equally valid is not much liked by scientists, lawyers or logically minded philosophers and theologians. It smacks of relativism and even solecism. Their basic view is that 'truth' must be the same for everyone. Rational philosophy holds sacrosanct the principle that an assertion must either be true or not true. There can be no 'in-betweens', no relative truths, nothing that is true for you but not for me. The water that feels chill to me and warm to you must have its fixed, objectively-measurable temperature. This sort of objective measure is what science wishes to apply to everything (even, paradoxically—and mistakenly—to subjective experiences!) Since at least the time of Socrates one has held very good reasons for this too, for otherwise we could say that almost *anything* could be true, dependent on taste or whim.

Such an attitude, which assumes there can be but one true account would seem to deny accepting any tolerance of differing views or incompatible versions of the cosmos. Such a rigid view breaks down when we understand that different but entirely incompatible systems of thought can account just as adequately as one another for the same phenomena, just as the many languages can describe the same things by different words and syntaxes.

### **Science and moral values**

As soon as we pass from questions of fact to questions of value, there are even clearer grounds for tolerance of others' views. Science never can itself answer any moral questions, for its hypothetical-deductive experimental method can never provide any measures of good or ill,

At best it can only provide evidence to help decide factual questions (i.e. whether something is the case [true]—or contrariwise [false]). Remaining as neutral as possible on all matters of values (i.e. of right or wrong), scientific theory therefore never seeks spiritual verities. So the truth or rightness of any ethical issue will a/ways remain outside the competence of science as we know it.

Though the physical sciences must themselves at some point base every theory on nothing other than sense observation, they end up insisting that reality is in no way as it appears to our senses! Unlike dogs or whales, we hear no very high or very low sound waves. How paradoxical! We hear no radio waves without some form of receiver (thank goodness). The physical sciences have now developed so far, observing by extremely advanced instruments or other means of observation that the ordinary person cannot use, that it often goes well beyond what common sense can discover. That the table before me is over 98% empty space, or that the DNA molecule is a double spiral, is well beyond the observation of my sensory powers. One must ask, is not science thus involved in some huge circularity, some fundamental fallacy?

### **A spiritual challenge**

What started as "natural philosophy" in Greece and became what we call the various sciences was originally stimulated by common sense. It represented a revolt against superstitions about how most good and ill fortune was caused by the direct action of a hierarchy of Gods. It began by trying to explain events by what we can observe with the aid of our five senses. Yet as this way of thought went on being extended and refined, one arrived nonetheless at the position that observable reality is not always as it appears after all. This is still also where the physical sciences of today meet their final limits in the attempt to establish the truth by experimentation of the physical realm. Their outgoing search for reality reveals the emptiness of physical appearances and eventually dissolves the very belief in reality as being nothing but the physical nature on which they base themselves. Science brings its followers to the limits of the materialistic fallacy, and philosophy proper or spiritual insight can begin.

What the truth of reality is clearly is not a scientific, but a philosophical and spiritual challenge. The solution can never be a matter of bigger research budgets, more sophisticated instruments or better-trained brains.

**(To be concluded)**

*—Robert Priddy, Norway*

*ONAM SANDESH:*

### **Live in Truth and Love**

The moon illumines the night. The sun illumines the whole world during the day. But, Dharma (Righteousness) illumines the three worlds. A virtuous son sanctifies his family. But not

divinity in man and lead a sanctified life is the essence of human existence.

The body, the mind and the ego (Ahamkara) together constitute the human entity. Action, Being and Knowing are the three basic aspects of human life. These three together manifest the human estate. It is the Atma principle that reveals both the differences and the unity of these three aspects. It reveals the uniqueness as well as the divinity of human existence. Man has to realise that the body and mind are expressions of the Divine Atma.

The mind has four levels of functioning: the mental, the Intelligence, the Chitta (Will) and Ahamkara (the Ego). Although it is the body that performs actions, it is the mind that cognises, and the Reality is the Atma. There is a power that encompasses all three. At the levels of thoughts and doubts, the mind is said to function. At the level of discrimination, the intellect (Buddhi) functions. The intellect indicates what is right and wrong. This is also an aspect of the mind. Constant thinking is the function of the Chitta (the Will). Then, there is the Atma. It is all-pervading. The Ego (the "I") arises from the Atma. All the four are different forms of the mind. The different terms indicate the different functions. Vedanta has declared that the mind is the cause of either bondage or liberation.

### **Prajnana**

There is a "Master" who presides over these four expressions of the mind. That is known as Prajna. Prajna is often equated with the intellect, the intelligence, knowledge or wisdom. But this is not correct. These latter qualities are transient and impermanent. But Prajna is not impermanent. Vedanta has declared that Prajna shines in the body, the mind and the Atma (the individual soul). "Prajnanam Brahma" declares the Upanishad (Prajnana is Brahman.) There is no difference between Prajnana and Brahman or Truth. It is described as Constant Integrated Awareness. This Prajna is present in all human beings. How can a man who has not understood his own true human nature understand divinity?

The first stage is for man to realise that he is no ordinary being. There are in man Sathya (Truth), Jnana (Wisdom) and anantam (the Infinite). "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma." The ancient sages declared thus the attributes of Brahman. The Truth referred to here is not about worldly facts. It refers to Transcendental Truth, which remains the same at all times and in all places. The presence of these three in man has to be recognised. Only then will his life get sanctified. Then the distinction between "mine" and "thine" ceases. It becomes possible to lead a life based on truth.

### **Land of three avatars**

Emperor Bali's life illustrates this truth. Kerala is a region which is hallowed by the advent of three avatars of Vishnu—Narasimha, Vamana and Parasurama. Siddhasramam is a sacred place in Kerala. Because of its location there, Kerala enjoyed supreme peace in olden days. During the reign of Bali, the grandson of Prahlada, the people enjoyed peace and plenty. They were free from disease and poverty. Keralites were known for their hospitality. They gave freely with joy whatever anyone sought from them.

The Lord assumed the Vamana form to test the greatness of Bali. When he went to Bali, Vamana was received with due ceremony and asked what he wanted. The young lad asked for three feet of land to be measured by his feet. Bali asked him why he wanted such a trivial thing. He could have asked for greater things. At that time, Bali's guru, Shukracharya, warned that the young dwarf was none other than Vishnu and that if he did not go back on his promise, he would lose everything. But Bali did not heed his guru's words. He was not prepared to go back on his promise, even if it meant the complete loss of his kingdom and life itself. Bali told his guru that there can be nothing greater than making a gift to the Lord of the Universe when He came as a supplicant stretching his hand for a gift.

Such was the greatness of Bali, because of whom Kerala enjoyed the bounties of nature. Kerala is a land of beauty, with its palm trees, plantain orchards and dense forests. There is a saying: "Beauty is Bliss. Bliss is the nectar of life."

### **Bali's example**

Kerala, a small state, has achieved permanent greatness as the place associated with three Avatars. Hence the heart of every person should be filled with the consciousness of God. Today because of political rivalries, moral values and spiritual pursuits have declined. It is all this more heartening to note that despite this decline, Onam is celebrated as a national festival by everyone in Kerala from the distant past to the present times.

Bali's example should inspire Keralites to adhere to truth and practise love of all human beings. Onam should be celebrated not by feasts and festivities but by practising the ideals exemplified by Emperor Bali.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 26-8-88*

### **Mr. S. B. Chavan's Testament of Faith**

"Whatever position I have held or have been holding, I am proud to say I have been consistently considering myself a very humble devotee at His (Bhagavan's) lotus feet. When I go to Delhi, it will be my fervent appeal to Swami that power should not go to my head. I should be as humble as before," observed Mr. S. B. Chavan, Union Finance Minister, addressing a gathering of students and devotees in the Prasanthi Mandir on July 23.

Mr. Chavan, who went over to New Delhi after serving as Chief Minister of Maharashtra for about two and a half years, said: "Whatever little power and prestige I enjoy, it is all with the blessings of Baba. I should like to serve the country to the best of my ability with a view to inculcating human values in the entire country."

institutions set up by Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam and elsewhere, Mr. Chavan said that if similar campuses came up in other parts of the country "the entire face of the country can change." India is not lacking in talent, but "we lack in sincerity and discipline," he said. "That is why we attach tremendous importance to what is being done here."

## **My Baba**

Sai Baba  
taught me how to give  
In a selfless loving way  
He taught me how to master self,  
To hope, to seek, to pray.

So many times I call to Him  
My weakness does He see  
And yet I feel His presence near  
To lift and comfort me.

So many times the peace within  
I break with selfish thought  
with careless words and loss of trust

And suffer dark remorse.

But peace and harmony does He bring  
to help banish desire and sin  
I hear His voice, I see His face,  
I bow my head and seek His grace.

Mother, Father, Master and friend!  
Guide and teach me, till in the end  
The wheel of Karma I can break  
through selfless service for Your sake.

—*Ann*

## **Pilgrimage**

If Swami calls you to His side  
Pray hard, —it's not an easy ride  
For if your ego dares to show,  
It's smartly dealt a crushing blow.

He pulls us down to build anew  
On a fresh foundation once askew,  
And takes us through both space and time,  
To help us reach the heights sublime.

With humility and helping hand,  
No thought of gain, or position grand.  
Your heart must subjugate your pride,

And the meanest creature not deride.

Lowly He rates our 'monkey mind'  
As something less than true mankind,  
For objective senses should not claim  
To be sole owners of our brain.

To summarise, our Lord, His song:  
It is for us to do no wrong;  
And live with love and charity  
To reach our true reality.

—*Francis Jasper*



## **"My home is my Temple"**

On leaving school I stopped going to church and for many years gave little thought to God. It was not until I was a mother myself that I began to seriously wonder what I was doing here on this earth. God was softly calling I knew, but what direction to take? None of the religions I knew of appealed to me or answered my questions. Instinctively knowing that God is aware of our prayers and thoughts wherever we are I began to worship at home, singing as I worked.

There were many times, however, when the world depressed me so much that I couldn't sing. I did not know then that by dwelling on all the misery and hatred I was making it harder for myself. It was in one of my darkest moments that I called out to God for help and Sai Baba came. Through reading the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba and other spiritual books I came to know something of the power of the mind and the vibrations made by our thoughts and feelings. In a way our minds can be compared to radio transmitters and receivers; if we are miserable then we 'tune in' to vibrations on that wavelength so making it even harder to break out of our unhappy mood. Sai Baba doesn't say 'BE HAPPY' for no reason. It is vitally important to be happy for we cannot hope to come nearer to God unless we tune in to the vibrations of love, light and joy.

Vibrations affect every thing around us; people, animals, plants, the atmosphere and even the articles we use and the places where we live, absorb our vibrations, good or bad. Most of us have at one time or another been in a home or building which we immediately dislike. For some reason we feel uncomfortable but on entering a temple or church we immediately experience a feeling of reverence. Over many years the fabric of a building absorbs the vibrations transmitted by the people who use it. Thus a place of worship becomes charged with holy vibrations which in turn help those who come to worship. Some years ago while on holiday in Jersey we visited an underground prison that had been used by the Nazis during the war. Though long disused the feeling of fear and dread in that place was almost tangible.

The ancient practice of Nagarsankirtan has been revived by Sai Baba and is performed daily at Prasanthi Nilayam. The definition of Nagarsankirtan given in Translations of Baba is as follows, "Moving choirs. When a group of good men and women move from one end of a street to another singing aloud the names of God, sharpening the intellects of the listeners and sanctifying the atmosphere by recitation of the glories of God" Sai Baba also recommends group bhajan singing (Bhajan: seeking our identity with the Lord through spiritual songs). However, there are many people who cannot or do not wish to attend these groups but since God is omnipresent there is nothing to stop us from turning our own homes into Abodes of Supreme

concentration like making the beds, ironing, peeling vegetables etc., I sing, thus my mind is centred on God and my home is being charged with good vibrations making my home into my Temple.

—*Sylvia Bishop*

**STUDENTS' CORNER:**

**"Om Sai Ram"**

Life is full of twists and turns,  
Sometimes it's cold, sometimes it burns,

But all you have to do is remember three words.  
Which will make you feel worryless, like the little birds.

This name, of course, is the name of the Lord,  
Whose love, compassion, is a direct cord.

This name, I will mention, is ever so great,  
But repeating it now is never too late,

It makes you feel wonderful—wonderful and calm,  
This word I'm telling you is: “OM SAI RAM.”

—*Vandana Talwar,*  
*S. S. S. Vidya Vihar, Delhi*

**AVATAR VANI:**

**The Divine and the Devotees**

*"This body is not mine. It is yours. Hence I am unaffected by what happens to the body. Your bodies are in me and when you experience pain or pleasure, I share that experience. Devotees should give no room for the apprehension that any harm can befall Swami. Nothing can harm Swami. In relation to the body things may happen in the natural course sometimes. These are like passing clouds. Understand properly the nature of Divinity."*

Bhagavan Baba made these observations in the course of a memorable discourse which He gave on August 26th in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the occasion of Onam celebrations.

X-Ray picture taken by the doctors revealed a fracture in the hip-bone. Although the doctors had advised four weeks of complete bed rest, Swami declared that He needed no rest and would carry on His work. Swami, however, had to refrain from giving the usual Darshans for the next few days.

Meanwhile, Keralites from their native State and from other parts of India started streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam for the Onam festival, which they celebrate with great fervour and enthusiasm in the presence of Bhagavan.

On the eve of Onam day there was a cultural programme by Bal Vikas students in the Poornachandra Auditorium.

### **Darshan from balcony**

On the morning of the 26th, the Onam programme began with Vedic chants and folk dances by students of the Srisailam Vidya Vihar. The students' band greeted Bhagavan when He gave darshan from the balcony of the Prasanthi Mandir to the inexpressible delight of the thousands of devotees who had gathered in the Mandir compound. Hundreds of overseas devotees were also present.

The afternoon programme commenced in the Poornachandra Auditorium at 4-30 P.M. The hall was full and quite a few had to stand outside.

Bhagavan, who came by car up to the Auditorium rear entrance, was greeted with thunderous cheers on arrival at the Auditorium stage. To the thousands of devotees who had missed Swami's darshan for a week, the presence of Bhagavan on the stage was a thrilling experience.

After Mr. Natarajan, the President of Kerala State Sai Samiti, had welcomed Bhagavan Baba and the gathering of devotees, Mr. Krishna Menon, former State President, spoke on the significance of Onam. Some items in the cultural programme were gone through, including Gita Parayana by a four-year old boy and rendering of two of Thyagaraja's Pancharatna kritis by two girls.

### **Divine Discourse**

Bhagavan, who was expected to deliver His Onam Sandesh seated, so as not to impose any strain on His fractured hip, elected to address the gathering standing.

### **Ignoring pain by self-control**

Beginning His discourse with a call for men to realise their inherent Divinity, Bhagavan devoted a good part of His discourse to an account of what happened to Him on Saturday and cleared all the doubts and apprehensions felt by devotees regarding His ailment. He explained how He could ignore the pain in the body by self-control and turning the mind away from body-consciousness. The entire gathering heard with rapt attention Swami's memorable

how they should overcome "the ills which flesh is heir to."

Bhagavan said that the laws governing Nature were made by God and everyone is subject to them, whether he is a millionaire or a pauper. The earth has its power of attraction. If a man slips, he is bound to fall and may get hurt. The body is subject to the laws of Nature. When anything happens in the course of Nature, the Divine can face it by self-control. The ordinary devotee cannot do so.

### **How it happened**

Bhagavan said that various rumours and conjectures were going round among devotees after Swami could not give darshan for four days from Saturday. Swami explained that it was His usual practice to bolt His room after giving Namaskars to devotees at night. In the morning after finishing His ablutions, He would open the door. On Saturday morning He slipped on a piece of soap in the bathroom and fell on His back. The injury He sustained was a natural consequence of the fall—as natural as heat generated by fire. Whoever sustains a fall, whether it is Swami or anybody else, will suffer from the consequent injury. Even the Divine has to submit Himself to His own laws governing Nature. In this process occasional mishaps may occur.

### **"I need no rest"**

Swami said that when He slipped and fell, the hip-bone had been affected. By His will power He got up and opened the room. Then Radhakrishna (the student who stays with Swami) and the doctors came. Swami said: "There was no need for the doctors to see me. I have to control whatever happens to me. This is my example to the world." But the doctors insisted on taking an X-Ray picture. As Swami declined to go to the hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam, X-Ray equipment was brought from Bangalore to take a radiograph. Yielding to the importunities of Dr. Chad and Dr. Krishnamurthy, Swami agreed to the X-Ray picture being taken. The radiograph showed a fracture in the hip-bone. It was extremely painful. The doctors said that Swami should have bed rest for four weeks for the fracture to heal. Swami told them: "I do not know the meaning of rest. I do not need any rest. I shall go on with my work."

### **Diverting the mind**

Swami observed: "This kind of equanimity cannot be felt by anyone except the Divine. There is nothing beyond the power of the Divine. Although there was excruciating pain on account of the injury, through self-control My mind did not think about it. If the mind had been dwelling on the pain, the pain would have been greater. The best medicine for this pain is diverting the mind. Every time the body turned, there was a kind of shock. I was wholly engaged in reading the numerous letters from devotees and was oblivious to the state of the body."

Swami went on to say that devotees might feel, "Why should not Swami cure Himself?" "I am not as selfish as all that," observed Swami. "When others are injured, do I relieve them immediately? Everything has a time factor. One has to put up with it for the duration of the trouble. The pain can be mitigated by prayer and by diverting the mind."

The body is subject to ailments from time to time. It comes and goes. Swami said: "If I rid myself of any ailment instantaneously, people may comment: 'What a selfish person is Sai Baba? He cures His illness immediately. But He does not remove the pain of others.' Whether it is your bodily ailment or somebody else's, attempts can be made to treat it, to teach the sufferer how to control his mind, and strengthen the powers of resistance. But it cannot be got rid of the same instant. The time required for healing has to be allowed. During the past four days My mind did not bother about the injury. I did not give up any of My normal activities. I did not come out only because of the entreaties of devotees."

"Sometimes," Swami said, "I take on the ailments of others. I do this for My own delight and not out of any external pressure. But in every case of illness, control of the mind is needed to bear with it. This is what every one of you should bear in mind. This is the message of My life. I am exercising various kinds of self-control to serve as an example for you."

### **"Devotees' joy is My joy"**

Swami reminded the gathering that His love and kindness for the devotees were there in abundance. Otherwise, He would not have stayed on, when the doctors were keen to take Him to Bangalore. He firmly told them: "When thousands of devotees from Kerala are coming here, it is impossible for Me to go away. I will not go." "The joy of the devotees," Swami said, "is My joy. I have no exclusive joy of My own. I have no such desire. Why should I be concerned about this body? You must take note of this important fact. *This body is not Mine. It is yours and therefore I have no concern with it. Your bodies are Mine.*

### **"I need no rest"**

Swami urged the devotees not to give room in any circumstance, at any time, for apprehensions about what may befall Swami. "Nothing can do Me any harm. Occasionally there may be troubles which are incidental to the nature of the body. But these are passing clouds. If you realise the true nature of Divinity, you will not feel that Swami is experiencing great pain and that He should take some medicine. Out of their love for Swami, devotees are appealing to Swami to take rest. But I don't need any rest. 'Karmanyeva Adhikaarasthe' (You are entitled only to do your duty). That is My message to you. Although I have been told by the doctors not to move, I get up at 5 in the morning, attend to My ablutions and take My bath as usual. All of you should forget your troubles and try to be as happy as possible. Rest assured that Swami has no troubles and no harm can come to Him. Ills of the body come and go."

### **"Nothing can harm Swami"**

Swami said: "As I fell, My head hit the mosaic floor with a thud. Dr. Krishnamurthy wanted to have My head X-Rayed. Swami told him: 'No one can know that My head has been injured. There is no need for X- Raying it.' My only sadness has been that I have not been able to give joy to the devotees. When you know that Swami has the capacity to control anything, why do you think that I am suffering? You think only about Swami's pain in relation to the body, but do not think about the Atma. You must have the firm conviction that nothing can harm Swami."

remembrance of the name of the Lord. "There is no use in doing japas and meditation for the sake of Swami. It appears artificial. What you have to bear in mind is that no trouble can affect Swami now or in the future and that everything is part of My play."

**“This itself is a miracle”**

"Such things happen to the Divine they come and go. I take no account of them. Here is another example of how the Divine works. The fact that I have been standing here for such a long time is itself a miracle. The legs have been strained to the limit. There has been considerable pain. But in the joy of addressing you I am unaware of the pain. Likewise, in all your sufferings and troubles, you must turn the mind away from them. It is to teach this lesson to you that I chose to speak to you today."

"At all times and in all situations recite the name of the Lord with devotion. Live in harmony and love with everyone. The Lord's name is sweeter than nectar. Let the Lord's sweet name dance on your tongue. Do not have any anxiety on My account The devotees from Kerala, though they have missed Swami's darshan on three days, should not suffer any pain on my account. They should think that whatever has happened is for their good."

Swami sang the bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi*". Swami left the Auditorium after Arati.

The rest of the evening's cultural programme was gone through. Twenty-four Bal Vikas students from various districts of Kerala presented a dance-drama relating to the Vamana Avatar and a Harikatha Kalakshepam in Tamil on Nandanar was performed by a ten-year old boy.

In connection with the Onam festival, a four-day medical camp was run by doctors from Kerala belonging to the medical wing of the Sai organisation. The Men's medical camp was inaugurated by Justice P. C. Balakrishna Menon of Kerala High Court and the Women's wing by Dr. K. R. Bhaskara Varma of Ernakulam. About 300 patients were treated at the camp.

The several thousands who were present in the Auditorium had a deep sense of awareness of Bhagavan's abundant Love for them and derived inspiration to face any kind of problems in life in a spirit of equanimity and firm faith in the Divine.

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

**The Great and the Good**

*'Its rare in this world  
To get the company of the good;*

*Granite stones are everywhere  
But you have to search for diamonds.*

Differences in beliefs and cultural practices among men are well known. Although climatic conditions may be the same in the various regions of the world, the ways of living and practices of people are diverse. This diversity is inherent in Nature. It is not a defect but an ornament. This diversity is not to be seen among birds and beasts. That is because they do not have the power to think. Man alone has this capacity.

Whatever one's education, position or intelligence, every man desires two things. He wants to achieve greatness and wishes to be a good man. No one wishes to be lowly and despised.

What is the difference between a great man and a good man? Greatness is based on worldly attributes. The great man is able to attract people. The good man strives to sustain himself by his own efforts. The difference between the two has to be clearly recognised. The great man enjoys many luxuries and amenities. He has thus many physical comforts. The good man experiences the bliss of the Divine. Greatness has a Rajasic quality. Goodness bears a Satwic quality. Good persons should try to develop Satwic qualities.

"Greatness" is often associated with persons who have likes and dislikes, attachments and hatreds and who have an inflated ego. Goodness expresses itself in pure joy and unselfish service to others. Goodness is fostered by righteousness. Dharma (right conduct) is like a mirror. It reveals to you what is your duty towards your parents, your friends and others. How you discharge your duties will determine how you yourself fare in later life.

#### **Four kinds of temples**

There are four kinds of temples: One, the Temple of Education (Vidya-alayam); second, Temple of Food (Bhojana-alayam); third, the Temple of Medicine (Vaidya-alaya) and the Temple of God (Deva-alaya). All the four are equally places of worship for man. But because of the infirmities in human nature, they are not all treated alike. People go to a hotel (Bhojana-alaya), eat whatever food they like and come out happy. They go to a hospital (Vaidya-alaya), relate their illness to the doctor, and receive the prescribed medicines from him. The purpose of going to the hospital is accomplished. If you ask for eatables in a hospital, will you get them? In a hospital you can only ask for medical treatment. When you go to an educational institution (Vidya-alaya) you must seek only knowledge in the subjects you are interested in.

When people go to a temple of God (Deva-alaya) they do not always conduct themselves properly. In a temple you should be concerned only with worship and not think of anything else. Instead of concentrating the mind on the Divine, the mind is allowed to wander hither and thither and think about useless mundane affairs. With the result that people tend to forget that if they secure the grace of God all other things will be accomplished easily. Having come to Prasanthi Nilayam, some persons are developing various differences and doubts and forming undesirable

should be profitably used.

### **The good and the bad**

Education, wealth and strength are necessary for everyone. But the value of each of them depends on the way you use it. When a good man gets the benefit of education, it ripens into wisdom and makes his life an ideal one. But when a bad man gets educated, he gets immersed in disputations and education itself gets polluted. When a good man gets wealth, it is used for charity and for righteous causes. He redeems his life by sacrifice. But wealth in the hands of a bad person promotes arrogance and pride and ultimately causes his downfall. Strength in a good man enables him to help the weak and serve society. Strength in a wicked person encourages him to cause harm to people and harass the weak. Thus, education, wealth and physical prowess derive their value from the way they are used.

It is only when the individual is transformed and becomes good that society can be changed for the better. Men must engage themselves in a constant process of self-correction, instead of seeking to find the faults in others. If instead of searching for a hundred faults in others, one corrects anyone of his own faults, he would be sanctifying his life.

### **Jealousy and egoism**

Before you undertake any activity, you must examine whether it is right or wrong, whether it is good or bad. When such an enquiry is being made, sometimes an evil force enters. It is jealousy. It clouds your vision. This jealousy has an evil companion called egoism (Ahamkara). This ego is constantly seeking to dominate the body and the mind. These two evil elements are always seeking to establish themselves, especially in the minds of the young. Every effort must be made to give no room for them.

### **Bhakti, rakti, shakti, mukti**

Bhakti (devotion) is as essential for experiencing Atmic Bliss (Ananda) as blood is essential for the body. This Bhakti is the source of man's true power (shakti). This power endows man with various abilities. Through this power, man can develop ultimately detachment (virakti). When detachment grows, man achieves liberation (mukti). Mukti (liberation) is not a special state or object. It is the gradual elimination of all desires. Desires arising from Kama (lust), Krodha (anger) and Lobha (greed) have to be reduced as much as possible. Students should make special effort to get rid of these three evil qualities. They must widen their vision and develop the spirit of oneness with all living beings. This may not be easy to realise, but through steady practice and spiritual discipline, it can be achieved.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 7-8-1988*



*Around Thy palace, O Lord,  
I see thousands of eyes  
Some filled with merry notes,  
Some with tears of grief,  
Seeking Thy splendrous sight,  
To heal their wounded hearts,  
And lighten their burdened eyes.*

*Fast blowing breeze awaits,  
To sweep with it, the holy  
Fragrance radiated by Thee,  
For making the universe pure.*

*When Thou out of Thy palace,  
Come and walk on the soft sand  
I look at Thy holy footprints,  
Left by Thine Lotus Feet;*

*My tempted hands want  
The touch of the holy sand.  
But my heart withholds,  
And says: Touch this sacred sand  
When thou becomest worthy,  
Of His words, Love and Grace*

*I withdraw my hand and pray  
To Him silently to make  
My heart and mind pure.  
Another gush of wind,  
Clears off the holy marks  
From the sand,  
Till He comes again...*

**—Ashwani Rana, II B.A.**

*Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquility of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquility.*

**—Baba**

## **The Message of His Life**

An incisive commentary on Bhagavan Baba's oft-quoted statement, "My Life is My Message", was offered by Prof. V. K. Gokak, former Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in his address in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Gurupoornima day (July 29).

Unprecedented crowds of devotees from all parts of the world had started arriving in Prasanthi Nilayam days before Gurupoornima. The gathering in the evening overflowed the auditorium and filled all the area around it.

Annamalai University, addressed the gathering before Bhagavan Baba delivered His Gurupoornima Sandesh (published in the August issue).

Prof. Gokak began his address with the question what Bhagavan's words "My Life is My Message" mean. He said:

What do we understand by this statement? What does it stand for and how could it be a beacon-light for all of us in our own pursuits in life?

The world is full of people who are inclined to say, 'my message is my life'. They won't say, 'My life is my message'. They believe that their words are full of wisdom and do not have co-equal deeds to match them. Leaving aside this vast group, if you come to the meaning of the sentence, "My Life is My Message", we shall be first struck by the fact that the average human being can only say, 'I will try to understand this, I will try to do this', because there will be many failures, probably in the beginning more failures than successes. That is why the Upanishads say, "Sathyam Vada", because the Upanishads well knew that very few will utter the truth. They said, "Dharmam Chara", because they knew that very few will follow the dictates of Dharma. This is the imperfection of the ordinary human being.

#### **The four-fold fountain**

What we have in this great sentence, "My Life is My Message", is the fact that the position has been reversed with Bhagavan. He did not call on any one to practise Dharma or to speak the truth. You know one of the most outstanding statements that He made: "Sathya is my prachaar" (Truth, to put it literally, "is my propaganda"). But what it means is: "Truth is my communication. What I speak is the truth." It is not as though truth is an ideal that stands before us. Truth is like a fountain (welling up within oneself, and only the one who has reached the source of these springs, who, in fact, is the very source of all these springs, would say: "I speak the truth. What I speak is the truth."

"Dharmam Chara". That is what the Upanishads tell all of us: "Practise religion." But Bhagavan stated: "Dharma is my aachaar." This is a sentence going in the opposite direction. "What I do is Dharma." Here is one, whose mighty soul embraces the Universe, knows spontaneously that there is an utterance of truth, there is an observance of Dharma in Him. It is not as though you take down Dharma from the Shastras and practise them, but this very Dharma springs from within yourself. It is spontaneous. It is a fountain springing up, and that is why you observe Dharma.

"Santhi is my swabhav," declared Bhagavan. We prescribe Santhi as an ideal for people, to learn how to be at peace with themselves. But with Bhagavan, whatever the occasion, peace comes out resplendent in full plenitude.

Bhagavan declared: "Prema is my swarup." ("Love is my form"). It means: "If you want to see my image, then think of love and I am there."

You can spend years in studying Bhagavan's life from day to day and try to find whether there is any departure from Peace, from Dharma, from Truth, from Love. You will find that every day there are countless instances wherein His love, peace, dharma, and truth reveal themselves, one instance after another. In fact in the biography that Prof. Kasturi wrote of Him, "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram," all the parts are full of anecdotes, full of statements, full of remembrances of what happened, and all are traceable back to this fountain, this four-fold fountain that springs within Bhagavan, teaching us about His Truth, His Dharma, His observance of duty, His peace and, His love.

### **The master's feet**

As a matter of fact, when as a boy He came out of his ancestral home, saying, "I am Sai Baba, my devotees are waiting for me," He sang the famous lines: "Manasa Bhajare Gurucharanam, Dustara Bhavasagara tharanam." These two lines are a couplet of mantras. I do not have the time to go into the full imagery of these two lines, but it is something universal, something marvellous, which applies to everybody. In the ocean of Samsara we are all swimmers standing each in his own station, trying to take a plunge into the sea, and there before us is a wide expanse of water. How are we going to save ourselves? How are we going to cross the uncrossable ocean of Samsara? "Bhajare Gurucharanam" if the blessed feet of the Master are before you, then you can plunge into the ocean or whatever you like. If you have blessed feet like them before your eyes and you bow down to them and you worship them in your heart *of* hearts, and in your own mind you treasure them, then there is no ocean, there is no barrier *of* any kind in this universe which will stand in your way. That is what those lines meant, and the whole of Bhagavan's life upto today has been an expansion of the message given in these two lines. Thus His own life became His message.

### **Seven avenues of wisdom**

'Great men have gone' all over the country, found a place congenial to there where they could set up their institutions, have their activities for transforming the life of humanity. Bhagavan's life is unique in this respect. He came out a few yards from His native village and there was Prasanthi Nilayam waiting for Him. He set up the meditation hall first. It had four or five rooms then. Today this regional centre called Puttaparthi, which is the headquarters of a taluka called Sathya Sai taluk, stands not merely as a regional centre but, with the name Prasanthi Nilayam, is a centre of international life and international harmony where people from all parts of the world have come and settled down. It is an international township.

Swami has drawn the whole of the world towards Himself and put up here for devotees from all over the world seven avenues of wisdom. To do that for an international brotherhood is an unthought of, undreamt of feat even today. One avenue is the Ashram itself, which is a dwelling place for more than a thousand devotees coming from different parts of the world, living in harmony with each other under the observance of rules that Bhagavan has set up for their guidance. Second is the Ashram canteen, which caters to people from the whole world, has its branches in Sai Sadan and other centres, where the catering differs from one national group to another. This Poornachandra hall is a centre for religious and social culture, where Christmas and

meet. The fourth one is the Bhajan Mandir where devotees coming from various parts of the world the ABC of meditation, learn what good bhajans can do for them singing the names of God and the glories of God. Bhajans are a pathway to God-realisation. This is what Bhagavan taught in the Bhajan Mandir. Then come the two other mouthpieces that He had for the whole of this Sai Brotherhood—"Sanathana Sarathi", a journal which conveys Bhagavan's message to all parts of the world in various languages, and also the bookstall, which is an international bookstall because books from that stall find their way to all parts of the world under difficult conditions. And last of all, the educational complex, which He built up for educating humanity, where you find little children of different nationalities studying together, right from toddlers to research students.

These seven avenues Bhagavan put up where He stood, a few steps from His own village. It is a great achievement, unprecedented in the history of mankind. I would also say that in this little regional centre, which He has given to the world, to put in Blake's words, you may

*"See a world in a grain of sand  
And heaven in a wild flower.  
Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour."*

Only a person who can hold eternity in an hour and who can hold infinity in the palm of his hand can put up a centre of this kind with its lofty avenues of wisdom.

### **Universal values**

We have, in addition to these seven avenues, a national centre where universal values are cultivated. India has been the cradle of these universal values ever since its birth as a nation. India has been recognised in all parts of the world as the cradle of all ancient cultures. The emphasis that it lays on spirituality is something unique. In fact, all great teachers of India, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and today Bhagavan Himself, have said that India is the Guru of nations of the world. All countries have to learn their lessons in spirituality here, because in India this emphasis on spirituality has been given an overriding place. At the same time, a unique balance between the spiritual and the material has been maintained, as may be seen in our earliest scriptures, the Vedas. This balance of Matter and Spirit, of reason and intuition and an all-round view of spirituality, which includes materialism itself within its definition, had been taught right from the Rg Veda. What is more, it is not only spirituality that is emphasised, but all the paths that lead to God-realisation, to maturity of one's own spiritual life. They are analysed, set forth as so many highroads to Reality, the path of Karma, the path of Bhakti, the path of Jnana, and so on. They have been defined and set forth for people in clear terms so that in other parts of the world people can learn these lessons, to take these teachings home and practise them.

Add to this the fact that there has been a living succession of personalities that have achieved this goal, who have lived this kind of life. I am not speaking of mutts and swami's who have their own system of succession. I am speaking of the living succession from prophet to prophet. This line of prophets in India has never been broken. In Europe it came to an end in the 17th or 18th century. But here it has had an unbroken sway. This is the reason why you have in India living personalities who teach the ways of the Spirit. Swami is the centre of centres Himself today in India summing up within Himself this international, regional and national spirit of universal life. He has given this to us and this is what we have to remember on this Gurupoornima day.

His life has been a message in more senses than one. He has lived His life in His own little village and turned this village into almost the spiritual capital of the world. The world has shrunk to the village of Puttaparthi because in this village you will see people from all parts of the world.

### **A song for Sai**

In conclusion, I shall read out to you a little poem that I wrote on this occasion.

*His is the light on the mountain-path,  
His is the banner in the wind,  
Where his footprints are  
We find the laid-out paths, the sheltered sea.*

*His is the flute-voice that soars high,  
Above the dangers of the sea,  
Above the terrors of the sky,  
Above the earth, the under-world,  
And warns demons, satyrs, men:  
"Innocence and Purity  
Walk here. For others there is no room.  
Trespassers will meet their doom."*

*His are the words that conquer, fill  
All hearts with unfathomed hopes.  
Nations that like lions roar  
Dread the compulsions of his will.*

*His is the hand that rings the bells  
For the New Age that is being born;  
For Truth, Beauty, Love, Delight  
And for the golden streaks of morn.*

*Saw down to the incarnate God  
Sai, who has no death, no birth.*

## **The Power of Words**

Once a teacher, having about 10 students, was teaching them some good things. To such an ashram came one who had some position and power. This teacher did not go to the door to welcome and receive him. The man who came there, because he had some position and authority, felt somewhat hurt and he went right into the class and asked the teacher: "Why is it you didn't care for me? You have not come and received me. What are you doing?" The teacher said, "I am busy teaching the children some good things." The person who came in asked: "Just because you are teaching them some good things, are the hearts of these children going to be changed and become more sacred?" The teacher took some courage and said, "Yes, of course, there is every possibility of their mind changing by my teaching." The intruder said, "No, I cannot believe it," and the teacher replied: "When you cannot believe it, it simply means that you have no faith in it. Because of that, I cannot give up teaching these boys some good things."

Then this person, who felt somewhat important, started arguing and said there is no possibility of changing a mind merely by words. The teacher, who was clever and who had known these things, asked one of the youngest boys to stand up. In the hearing of this visitor, the teacher told the young boy, "Look here! My dear boy! You just get hold of the neck of this visitor and throw him out of the door." Immediately on hearing these words, the visitor became completely excited and he came to beat the teacher. Then the teacher asked, "Sir, what is the reason for your becoming so angry? We did not beat you, we did not throw you out, the only thing that has excited you to this stage of anger are the words which I conveyed to this young boy. You said that you do not believe in changing the mind by mere words. What is the reason why the mere words which I uttered to this young boy have changed your mind so much that you are so excited? With mere words you can cause any excitement. With mere words you can cause any amount of affection. With mere words you can earn the grace of anyone else."

So, if in this world you want to promote friendship, you can do so by using sweet words, by talking in a very sweet manner and by speaking about sacred things.

—Baba ("*Chinna Katha*")

## **The Road to Prasanthi**

"Show me the road to Prasanthi"

A pilgrim asked me once.

His tongue was dry, for he had

He had argued long and loud;  
For they showed the road that led to ivory  
towers  
And castles in the air,  
And higgie-haggling counters that dealt with  
plots  
In Heaven and in Paradise  
Or battle fields where brain clashed with  
barren brain.

They had misled him into many an alley  
blind,  
Thick with tangling arguments  
They sent him along dark corridors of hatred  
and of fear.

Taking their words as true, he had waded  
through vales of tears  
Deafened by conflicting cackles of clamour  
and of claims;  
At every crossroad he passed, he said, the  
canvassers of traffic  
Did fill his ears with cynical spite,

His head was free of ego cargo;  
His ears tingled, he said, with consecrated  
song.  
He longed to know the road to Prasanthi  
He knew it was his journey's end.

There was a glint in his eye  
And a thirst in his throat  
And a groan, hiding inside his chest  
A pang, a pain, a pull,  
A chronic homesickness  
These made him kindred to me

Show me the road to Prasanthi  
I am much in need of rest—

I was happy, for he knew what he could get  
Where Swami's Presence is.  
There, fear is afraid to show itself

"Show me the road to Prasanthi"  
They gave me, he said, a map of the route  
But, how can a map show me the Truth?

O The agony on his lips,  
The question in his eyes!

"Why seek a road," I asked him.  
"Your feet are for securing foothold  
Not for trudging mile after mile  
Behind every shadow show.  
Roads take you along many a bend and  
bump  
And, make you follow diversions galore  
Through bleak and barren land  
With trails of dust suffocating thick.  
The road is littered with tolls and jolts,  
Segmented into "mine and thine"  
"Show me the road to Prasanthi  
The sun is setting, quick, quick," he said.

I told him, "Dear Friend, you are already  
there!  
Wherever you are, 'tis Prasanthi  
Listen... His laughter you can hear  
Open your eyes, His Glory is clear  
In starry sky, flowery field, the crimson  
cloud  
The b a b y prattle, the murmuring stream.  
Stay. Don't stray; Be still. Don't will.

When you rise and start to walk, stay,  
Swami says—That is the word,

You are the Sathya of the Sai,  
The I whom Time cannot declare as, was or  
is;  
There is no they or we, no terminus,  
No then or now; you're simply IS.

Know this, you have reached Prasanthi  
Without moving a single step."

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

## **Wealth or Grace?**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Man's life is determined by his qualities. The transformation of the world is related to the transformation of the individual. The world will change only when the individual changes. When individuals are good, society also becomes good.

We tend to attach importance only to the external forms of social institutions. We lay stress on the conditions prevailing in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres. Changes in these spheres alone are not enough. Mental and spiritual transformation is more essential.

What man should seek is not longevity in life but the divinisation of life. He must develop his good qualities. The span of life is determined by Time. It is virtue that has to be nourished. The character and conduct of a person are based upon his qualities. Forgetting this truth, people go after changes in the external conditions of life. When the Yaksha asked Dharmaja (in the Mahabharata) "Who is the guide and protector for the world," the latter replied, "Only the good man is the protector of the world." If there were no good people in the world, it would be a hapless world.

Hence, today, even more than the teachers, it is the students who have to be exemplary and high-minded. Teachers and students today do not live upto this ideal. Students are self-seeking and self-centred. Likewise the teachers also are self-regarding and self-seeking. Students go to teachers only to get their selfish desires fulfilled. When their wishes are satisfied, they feel content. Otherwise they are disappointed. They are even prepared to take up cudgels against the teachers. The result is that harmonious relations between teachers and students do not develop. What is most deplorable today is the indifference of students to their mental development, because they are concerned only about their narrow personal interests. They seek only material gains.

Renunciation of desires (Vairagya) is not a virtue that can be got by a message from others or as a result of prodding by someone. However many books you may read, or discourses you may listen to or advice you may receive, the spirit of renunciation has to emanate from the heart within you. It cannot come from outside. Buddha's father, Suddhodana, tried every conceivable



renouncing the kingdom and family and leading the life of a renunciant.

### **Chaitanya's prayer**

Our life is not based entirely on food (annam). It is based on the Spirit (Atma). One who regards food as the basis of life is an Ajnani (ignorant of the truth). The one who realises that the Spirit alone is everything in life is a Vijnani (the man of Higher Knowledge). Rantideva declared: "Oh Lord! The man who regards food alone as the summum bonum of life is a sinner (papi). The man who seeks a spiritual life is a gopi (a pure devotee of God)." Krishna Chaitanya once went to the temple of Jagannath at Puri. He was a handsome youth at the time. He addressed the Lord, Jagannath, in these terms: "Oh Lord! You are not merely Jagannath (the Lord of the world). You are the Lord of all the worlds, of the Cosmos, the Lord of Life, the Lord of the Spirit, the Lord of all embodied beings. You can accomplish anything. I do not seek from you the powers of yoga or physical strength. I seek only the power of your Love. Your love will give me all the strength I need. It will be my real strength."

### **The power of love**

The power of love alone confers true strength. All other powers are of no avail. Hence the only strength we should seek from God is the strength of love. With that strength, all other powers can be acquired. It is not wealth ("Sid") that we should desire. We should yearn for Hari. It is not the man of riches who is a "Maharaja." In Northern India, Sadhus and holy men are addressed as "Maharaja". They consider only those who have renounced everything as "Maharaja" (real rulers). It is not rolling in wealth that constitutes enjoyment. To be immersed in God's love and thoughts of God is the greatest enjoyment as well as true yoga.

Chaitanya declared that "The Lord is the Indweller in my heart" because according to the Lord's own declaration, "My Atma abides in all beings as the indwelling Atma." It should not be imagined that the Lord is only this human body. He is present everywhere in the Cosmos. He is timeless, without beginning or end. You must try to develop the awareness of this omnipresent Divine in your heart.

Today we seek to accumulate all kinds of wealth by various activities. When these activities themselves are transient and evanescent, how can the wealth acquired by them be lasting? All of them are impermanent and unreal, as declared in the Gita. There is only one permanent and immutable reality, that is God. People are forgetting this truth. You may appear externally to be a great devotee and claim that you are doing many things to please God. But the truth cannot be hidden from God. You must consult your conscience and find out whether your devotion is genuine.

### **Devotion and grace**

Annamacharya (the composer) sang many songs in which he hailed God as his sole refuge and support. Later he had the realisation that he had been trying to deceive God by his words. Then a great change came over him. We should realise that we cannot please God by our books or our songs or by our learning and scholarship. Nor is it possible to please God by intellectual

attainment depends on the nature of his thoughts. Oh Lord! Whatever the feeling with which anyone envisages you, you appear to him within that form." Divine Grace is in proportion to the measure of your devotion. You can take from the vast ocean only the amount of water your vessel can contain.

According to the purity of our actions, we will get the fruits thereof. Our precious human birth can be redeemed only by developing human qualities and leading a righteous life. You (the students) must make good use of the golden opportunity you have got now. Besides worldly education, cultivate meditation on God and develop the inner vision.

Become Rajayogis. Rajayoga implies doing your duty without concern for the results and dedicating yourself to the service of society and welfare of humanity. This is the penance which Emperor Janaka did.

The foremost duty of students is to concentrate on their studies, behave in an exemplary manner in all their relations with the outside world, and seek to experience the Divine internally as a spiritual discipline.

The first sutra in the Brahma Sutras declares: "Athhaatho Brahma Jignasa" ("Then thereafter seek to know the Brahman"). In the four words of this sutra are contained the meaning of life. To begin with the nature of creation has to be understood. We have to view creation in relation to its extraordinary magnificence (vilakshana). Next, our conduct has to be harmonious (salakshana) and orderly. We have to realise that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine ("Vishnuswarupa"). Our conduct should be such that no one can point a finger of criticism at us. It should be blameless and pure. If the heart is also pure, one will not get immersed in the body-consciousness. The body is doubtless an essential instrument for right living and its health and fitness should be safeguarded. But our main concern should be to experience the Divine in everything in creation. If the latter is ignored, physical existence alone will have no meaning.

### **Karma, dharma and brahman**

In this context, how is one to seek the knowledge of the Brahman? This quest can begin after one has acquired knowledge of Dharma (that is, after the stage of Dharma Jijnasa has been completed). When is Dharma Jijnasa accomplished? When Karma Jijnasa, the knowledge of Karma, has been mastered. There are thus three stages. Karma Jijnasa (Knowledge of Karma), Dharma Jijnasa (Knowledge of Dharma) and Brahma Jijnasa (Knowledge of Brahman). This means, the progress is from Karma to Dharma and from Dharma to Brahman. Hence, one must have full faith in Karma (prescribed duties) and Dharma (the principles of Right Conduct). To observe Dharma, one has to ensure purity in thought, word and deed. Dharma is the basic goal of life. Sri Rama has been described as the very embodiment of Dharma. (Ramo Vigrahavan Dharmah).

Students should bear in mind the rules of right conduct that should govern their life. They are passing through the most precious and sacred period in their lives. This should be well used. Dedicate all your thoughts and aspirations to God and surrender yourselves to the will of the Divine. Surrender may appear to be difficult, but it is not so. It is, in fact, like keeping your money in a bank. You will be able to draw money from the bank whenever you need it. Similarly when you have entrusted all your concerns to Bhagavan, you can draw from Him whatever you need. What is it that stands in the way of this surrender? It is your ego and your possessiveness. You do not have sufficient trust in the Lord. People desperately cling to their possessions saying: "My money, my house" and so on. They forget that when you surrender to the Divine, you acquire His grace. Some time or other your wealth will go. But once you have earned the grace of God, you can feel secure and satisfied. Bhagavan does not need your wealth. He is always a "Chittachora" (one who steals the heart), not a "vithachora" (a stealer of wealth). It is you who have to change from "Vithachoras" (stealers of wealth) to "Chithachoras" (stealers of hearts).

***—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 17-7-1988***

## The Eternal Verity

*"Man is burdened with the delusion that the true is false, that the temporary is eternal. Long identification has trained him so. He has to be re-educated into the right vision. The truest thing that fact that persists unchanged, is the 'I' itself. All else is unreal, but appearing as real."*

(Sai Avatar p. 51)

When considering the fallibility of our senses as instruments of observing the true nature of things, it is clear that some things are mere "appearance" and are misleading as to the "reality" we think of as being "behind" them. All things that are subject, sooner or later, to change are "appearances"—i.e., all the physical objects making up the (sensory) world. No object is "real" in the very strict sense of the word.

Much of what Bhagavan Baba teaches about the nature of man and the universe leads us to agree that we must be aware that things are not always as they appear. He has said:

*"Truth is one and for all time truth. Whatever changes, know that as untruth. Once you were small and grew bigger. That is also untruth. Where is the body of the ten-year old? All has merged into the present body. First untruth, then, when we have the experience, we know the truth. Dark and light are not different; they are one only."* ("Conversations..." J. Hislop p. 3)

### Inner truth

Evidently this refers to truth in a higher sense than the way we ordinarily speak of it. It is at once logical to our minds that the truth must always be the same if it is to be truth and yet deeply mysterious. Everything that exists in the world which we perceive through the senses changes, sooner or later. Nothing worldly is permanent. This is to say, then, that the truth is not of this world. It cannot be found solely in studying the world of phenomena external to ourselves, for this is but a world of appearances. In one sense it is real enough for us, but then again we realise it is ephemeral too and the real must lie somewhere beyond...

It is clear at least that truth in the above sense is inner truth. Bhagavan Baba says:

*"Consciousness... is the omnipresent Supreme Spirit, the One Reality pervading everywhere. From it comes Conscience, which is the voice of truth inside."*

(Sanathana Sarathi, June 1985 p. 161)

The voice of conscience can at times make itself felt with inner certainty, so that we know without doubt what is a right or a wrong course of action.

As Prof. N. Kasturi put it in one of his last articles, "What is Truth?"

*"The path to Truth is paved with discarded certainties. The level of moral purity, mental clarity, intellectual verity and emotional stability, decide the Truth we can rely upon. When*

*the horizon widens, the waves subside and the storms are stilled, more facets of Truth come within our reach."*

(Sanathana Sarathi, January '87)

### **Inexpressible truth**

In a letter Plato once wrote the following:

*"...about the subjects which I seriously study... there does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith. For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself."*

(Letter VII Loeb Classical Library p. 341 Harvard 1929).

### **Learning and doing**

This amounts to saying that the truth cannot be trapped in words, which view Plato attributes to Socrates. In the dialogue Phaedrus, Socrates talks about Thoth, who brought the invention of letters as an elixir of memory and wisdom to offer them to the king of Egypt (Thamus). But Thamus replies as follows:

*"... this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing produced by external characters which are no part of themselves will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir, not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear so."*

(Ibid)

Our western bias that makes us think that "knowing the truth" has to do only with the mental, theoretical activity of the mind is worse than one-sided. Our lopsided, word-centered education tends to make many of us more concerned with thinking than with being, with talking than with doing. Likewise with the media-dominated lifestyle, where the mind is often being flooded by images that come from the experience of others, not from our own first hand being.

Bhagavan Baba explains that the problem is not book-learning, but too much of it combined with too little practice of what is learned. Verbal indigestion! Thank goodness that we have the writings of Sathya Sai Baba to remind us of, and lead us towards, the ineffable, unseen truth. Here, Socrates was explaining to Phaedrus about...

*defend itself and knows to whom it should speak, and before whom to be silent."*

*Phaedrus: "You mean the living and breathing word of him who knows, of which the written word may justly be called an image."*

*Socrates: "Exactly. If he has composed his writings with knowledge of the truth, and is able to support them by discussion of that which is written, and has the power to show by his own speech that the written words are of little value, such a man ought not to derive his title from such writings, but from the serious pursuit which underlies them."*

(Ibid)

### **Book knowledge and experience**

This last refers to the title "philosopher", which means a "lover of wisdom." In Socrates' case, such wisdom depended on living a life of virtue and acting on the prompting of his "inner guide" (daimon). So a philosopher is far from simply being a scholar and vice versa. According to the Socratic vision he is one who lives out truth in speech and action as this is dictated by his inner self or voice.

The mind lives on direct experience and yet it can come to feed more and more on secondary or vicarious thoughts. The ideal of Western culture, inculcated in us from school to the highest education, is information, generalities, theory and civilised opinion. Since all but a fraction of this is obtained at second hand, personal experience and the practice of knowledge in life can usually only come after the end of education, if then. That book knowledge cannot be a substitute for the richness and fullness of personal experience is obvious even to common sense. Further, beyond the sphere of our worldly lives, too, there is a fullness of being that thought can neither capture nor fully comprehend.

Here and now, however, in this troubled world where we must make our way together, what we need to know is yet within reach of us, even if we cannot know the higher truth. Some brief words said to Hislop and reported in "Conversations..." (p. 176) clear up a great deal of confusion for practical purposes:

*"To search for truth is needless. Truth is in every place at all times. One must live truth, not search for it."*

### **The way of truth**

As Sathya Sai Baba has made so abundantly clear to us by His perfect and unfailing example and by thousands of illustrative instances, truth gradually comes to us through spiritual effort towards realisation of the divine qualities in everything, including oneself, through personal practice of the good. He shows us in such mysterious ways how the way of truth is highly practical, quiet and mentally untroubled. To see Him walk among people is to see Being and Knowing freely unified in a perfect balance. By comparison we are relatively unbalanced, what we are is out of gear with what we think we are. Swami tells us that we are God and, I must

God.

## Transcendental truth

*"Sathya or truth is not just relating events exactly as seen, heard or experienced. It is the eternal truth which is beyond time and space, which does not ever change."*

— Sathya Sai Baba  
(Sanathana Sarathi Feb. '85 p. 30)

Baba has shown us various ways to reach forth towards self-knowledge, which he asserts is the final goal of human existence. Each one of us, He tells us, is essentially the *Atma* or selfless spiritual Self that knows and lives in truth and love. All such qualities are one, we learn. But how can we really understand this? When I try to know myself, whether with the mind or in meditation, I am nonetheless aware that many matters remain almost entirely obscure to my consciousness, with its many limitations, of which the *Atma* is free, as Swami explains it.

We may hear many lectures about our true divine nature and how to realise it; that we are essentially nothing but truth, consciousness and bliss but, until we experience it as such, it must remain like a closed book to us. As long as I don't fully experience myself as that divine, all-embracing love and eternal joyous wisdom that witnesses all things, it amounts to little more than mere ideas or certain memories, perhaps. Nonetheless, we may consider how important .o, us is even the 'theoretical' knowledge that we are, essentially, one with the purity and truth of the *Atma*. It can and does remove many fears and otherwise bottomless doubts as to the ultimate meaningfulness and fulfillment of existence altogether. Frustrating, as it is to have only some indirect knowledge of the divine Self, think how much worse it is to have no notion of its existence whatever!

Authentically, knowledge of the Truth evidently cannot be expressed adequately in words or grasped by mere mental activity. Short of being beyond all worldly concerns, it seems evident we cannot know The Truth as such.

*"Absolute truth is beyond the reach of Time and Space, it is Aparichchinna, that is, indivisible. It does not begin, it is always and ever existent; it is the basis, the fundamental, the self-revealing. Knowing it, experiencing it, is Jnanam. It is A-nirdesyam, that is, it cannot be marked out as such and explained by some characteristics. It is Adrusya, that is, invisible to the eye."*

Sathya Sai Baba (Sai Avatar Vol. It No. 962)

—Dr. Priddy, Norway

*"God does not come down as Avatar to relieve individuals of their troubles and sorrows. Difficulties and troubles come in the natural course as a consequence of past actions. The Divine comes as Avatar only to teach mankind the truth about love (Prema). It is love and sacrifice which make man divine," declared Bhagavan Baba in the course of His memorable discourse on Gokulashtami day, Sept 3, to a large gathering of students and devotees in the Prasanthi Mandir.*

Bhagavan's arrival in the Mandir was a thrilling moment for all, as His message on Krishna Jayanti was eagerly awaited.

Bhagavan's discourse was preceded by a short address by V. K. Narasimhan on the supreme role of Bhagavan Baba as world teacher at the present time when nations and peoples are driven by conflicts and differences. The world sorely needed Bhagavan's message of human unity based on a recognition of the Divine in all beings and the cultivation of unselfish love as the key to harmony and unity among all nations and peoples.

### ***Bhagavan's Discourse***

In His discourse, Bhagavan said:

Marvellous are the beauties presented by Nature. They are sacred as well as wondrous. What Nature promotes or destroys, what it bestows or takes away are equally amazing. It is not easy to understand these marvels.

Man is born in this world but does not realise the purpose of his birth. Forgetting this purpose, he regards himself as the master of Nature and in his insane conceit forgets his own divinity. He is unable to recognise that it is Nature that provides or takes away, that blesses or punishes, that Nature's sway is extensive. Nature presides over every aspect of life. In his deep involvement with mundane concerns man tends to forget his divinity and what he owes to Nature. All things in creation are equal in the eyes of God. God is immanent in all of them. Hence God and Nature should not be regarded as distinct entities. They are inseparably interrelated like the object and its image. Man, however, looking at Nature externally, considers it as purely physical and intended to provide the amenities he seeks.

Nature is the best teacher for man. Every object, every individual, is offering lessons of various kinds to man every moment. This truth was recognised by Bharatiyas from the earliest times. It is the primary characteristic of the sacred Bharatiya culture. From a stone to a diamond, from an ant to an elephant, from a simpleton to a sage, everything and every being was regarded in Bharat as a manifestation of the Divine. Every object was considered worthy of worship. That was why they sanctified a stone image and worshipped it. Bharat is the land in which the tender Tulsi plant and the giant banyan tree were worshipped with equal devotion. Cows, horses, elephants and other animals were treated as sacred objects of worship. Even ants were



Crows and eagles, dogs and monkeys were deemed worthy of worship. Not realising the deeper truth underlying this attitude to various objects in creation, ignoramuses choose to regard this worship as a silly superstition. This is wholly wrong. Bharat considered that the expression of Divine love should not be confined to human beings but should be extended to all beings. This is the great ideal which Bharat has held out to the world. This kind of all-embracing social consciousness cannot be found in any other country in the world. The profound secret of this knowledge and understanding has not been grasped by any country. Bharat is the land which has upheld this sacred spiritual truth and adhered to this vision of the Divine.

### **Unity in diversity**

The Gita has declared: "Bear no ill-will towards any living being" ("Adveshta Sarva-bhoothaanaam"). Hatred towards anyone is hatred for God. The scriptures have also declared: "Sarvajiva namaskaaram Kesavam Pratigachhati". (The salutation that you offer to anyone reaches the Divine"). Few outsiders can understand or appreciate this sacred aspect of Indian culture. Even many Indians do not realise the purity and divinity which characterise Bharatiya culture. Bharat has always proclaimed that, despite variations in names and forms, there is a unity which underlies the diversity in creation

Because Nature is a reflection of the Divine, its laws cannot be transgressed by anyone. Man, who has taken birth to realise his own true nature, instead of seeking to understand the truth about the cosmos, is lost in the pursuit of material possessions. He does not realise that the human body, made up of the five basic elements, is bound to perish. This temporary, perishable body should be regarded only as a means for realising the eternal Reality. The body should be considered as an iron safe in which the precious jewels of good qualities and good actions are kept. It is these qualities that should be cherished. If today, the state of the world appears deplorable, it is because men's actions and conduct are not good. Men should return to the ways of righteousness and lead a good and godly life.

### **Why avatars come**

God is not a separate entity. Man is the image of God. "Daivam manusha rupena", declare the scriptures. It means that God appears in human form. God has no separate form. It is to show to humanity how human life can be divinised that Avatars come from time to time.

I have often declared that God does not come down as avatar to relieve individuals of their troubles and sorrows and to confer joy and happiness on them. Difficulties, troubles and worries come in the natural course as a consequence of past actions. The Gita says: "Karmaanubandhini manushya loke" (Human beings are bound by Karma in the world). As human birth is the result of Karma, there can be no escape from the consequences of Karma. As is your action, so is the reaction to it. When you stand before a mirror and offer salutation before the mirror, the salutation is reflected by the image. If you address harsh words to the mirror, the harshness is reflected by the image in the same manner. It will be evident from this example that the fruits of our actions are determined by the nature of those actions.

Bharatiyas have held fast to three beliefs: The law of Karma, the concept of Avatars, and the doctrine of rebirth. The law of Karma means that there is no escape from the consequences of your actions. The Karma doctrine lays down that one has to experience the results of his actions.

The concept of Avatar implies faith in God and in the divinity inherent in man. Man does not merely mean the human form. Man is distinguished from other animals and creatures by his capacity to judge what is permanent and what is transient, and his ability to recognise the past, the present and the future. Man alone has the capacity to comprehend this threefold nature of time. Man can ruminate over the past and speculate about the future. He can experience the present. However, man should not worry about what is past. The present is a product of the past. What has happened is beyond recall. It is futile to worry about the future because it is uncertain. Concern yourself only with the present. By "present" we may be thinking only of this moment. But this is not the present as Divinity sees it. For the Divine, the "present" is what is "omnipresent". This means that both the past and the future are present in what is, because it is the result of the past and the seed of the future. Because man has no firm faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, he worries himself about the past, the present and the future. For the Divine these three categories of time do not exist.

### **"No thought of my future"**

The question has arisen in the minds of some devotees: As Swami is aware of what will happen in the future, should He not have anticipated and averted the slip in the bathroom? I know all about the future. But I think only of the future of others and not of my future. You must note carefully this fact. "Karthavyam yogam uchyathe" ("Doing your duty is Yoga"). I think only of what I have to do at any particular moment. Some things might happen. They come and go. Happenings in the world are like passing clouds. These incidents give rise to certain experiences. Students should take note of these experiences.

### **Purpose of avatar**

When the Divine comes down as Avatar—whether it be as Rama or Krishna, Matsya (Fish), Varaha (Boar) or Vamana—it is only for one purpose. You recognise only the momentary results of the advent. But you should note that the Divine comes as Avatar only to teach mankind the truth about love. "Oh man, it is because you lack love and are filled with selfishness that the world is plunged in so much conflict and chaos. It is only when you develop love and the spirit of sacrifice that you will realise the divinity that is in the human." The man who has no spirit of sacrifice (Tyaga) will be a prey to all ills. A man without love is a living corpse. It is love and sacrifice which make man Divine.

### **The way of love**

Love alone is the fruit of love. Love is its own witness. There is no trace of self-interest in it. Because love exists for its own sake, it has no fear. It is to teach humanity the way of love that Avatars come in the world. The world displays the diversity that has emanated from the One (ekatvam). The Divine demonstrates the unity that subsumes the diversity. Recognition of this "Unity in Diversity" can be learnt only from the Divine.

The Krishna Avatar has been described in various ways: As the sport of the Divine in human form, as an ideal for the world, as a sacred ruler, as the manifestation of the Atma. The Divine comes as Avatar to proclaim the pure, unsullied and disinterested love of devotees towards God. People may consider that the Avatar's activities include punishment of the wicked, protection of the good, weeding out of unrighteousness and restoration of righteousness. This is how they may look at the Avatar's doings. But that is not the way the Lord sees things. There is nothing bad in God's view. Hence there should be no hatred or ill-will towards any being. It is only when you love all that you can be said to love God. When you hate anyone you are hating God.

### **God and the devotee**

The devotee's feelings determine his concept of God. When a devotee prays, "Oh Lord! Don't you see my sufferings? Don't you hear my lamentations? Can't you see the troubles I am going through?" the Lord appears to him only as a pair of eyes. The full form of the Lord will not appear to him.

The state of mind of spiritual aspirants today is like this: when they are in meditation they appear like Yogis. After the meditation is over, they return to their daily activities and are immersed in mundane pleasures. This is not the way of life preached by Krishna. He declared: "Sathatham Yoginah", "Be Yogis at all times." What we witness today is: "Yogis in the morning, epicureans (Bhogis) during the day and sick (Rogis) at night." How can such persons ever remain Yogis at all times? You have to think of the Divine at all times, in all situations and in whatever you see, do, say or experience. To pray to God when you are comfortable and to blame God when you are in trouble reflects your selfish and narrow outlook. You cannot know what may happen at any time in any situation. What is bound to happen cannot be prevented. Hence you must regard anything that happens as a gift from God. It is only when you develop such faith and love for God that true spirituality can grow. You should not allow worldly attachments to multiply without limit. Attachment only to the Divine, which: transcends all other attachments, is permanent. Wherever you go, whatever you see, develop the sacred feeling that only what pleases God delights you. The body is only an instrument. It is the Divine that animates it and makes it move about and experience things. Those, who cannot recognise this truth, go about proclaiming that they are devotees, that they are close to God and have renounced all attachments.

### **The gopikas' devotion**

Sri Krishna once enacted a small drama to demonstrate how the devotion of the illiterate cow-herdresses of Brindavan was deeper and fuller than that of Rukmini or Sathyabhama or the sage Narada. He pretended that he was suffering from a severe headache and that only the application of the dust from the feet of a devotee would cure Him. Neither Rukmini, Sathyabhama, nor Narada was willing to offer the dust from their feet as they felt that they would be condemned to live in hell if they allowed the dust of their feet to pollute the Divine head of Krishna. When Narada approached the Gopikas, they had no hesitation in collecting the dust of their feet, because their only concern was to relieve their beloved Krishna of His pain instantly without caring about what happened to them as a consequence. Even though they were warned

concerned about the worst that might happen to them if only their Krishna would be relieved of pain. Krishna's pain was gone the moment the Gopikas offered the dust of their feet. Narada realised that such totally unselfish devotion exhibited by the Gopikas was the highest form of devotion (Param Bhakti). The Divine exists in everything, in every being, in every foot as well as in the dust on the foot. He is also in the one whom you may consider as a thief.

### **The ways of the Divine**

The troubles besetting the world today cannot be removed except through the promotion of unity. This unity can be promoted only through love. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished through love. Love is God. God is Love. Live in Love.

Here is an illustration of how love works. For the past fifteen days I could not move about without feeling a "shock". Today when I came out and saw the happy faces of the devotees I was filled with joy and forgot the state of my body altogether. This is how the Divine works: to experience your love and fill you with love in return. There can be no joy where there is no love. The Gopikas were filled with such love that they saw Krishna in everything and thought only of Krishna in all that they did.

### **"Fill your hearts with love"**

When you fill your hearts with love, you will have no ill-will towards anyone. Cultivate the faith that the Divine is in everyone. Surrender to the Divine in a spirit of dedication. The symbolic meaning of the relations between Krishna and the Gopikas is this: The heart is the Brindavan (in each person). One's thoughts are like the Gopikas. The Atma is Krishna. Bliss is the sport of Krishna. Everyone must convert his heart into a Brindavan and consider the indwelling Atma as Krishna. Every action should be regarded as a 'leela' of Krishna. Gokulashtami is celebrated by offering to Krishna "Paramaannam" (rice cooked with jaggery). The real meaning of "Paramaannam" is "Annam" (food) relating to "Param" (the Supreme). "Paramaannam" is sweet. The idea is that the Supreme is sweet. Your love must be sweet. What you offer to God must be your sweet love. Your love must be all-embracing. This is the foremost message of the Avatar.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse on Gokulashtami day, September 3, 1988,  
in the Prasanthi Mandir*

**GANESHA CHATURTHI SANDESH:**

### **“Devotion is the Panacea”**

*"There is nothing greater in the world than devotion (Bhakti). Devotion is Param Prema—supreme love for God. Devotion alone is the means to God-realisation. Devotion is the panacea for all ills. Divine love encompasses all sacred acts," declared Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His Divine discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on the occasion of Vinayaka Chaturthi. Bhagavan*

*devote such festivals to meditation on God.*

In the course of His ninety-minute discourse, Bhagavan said:

God is one without a second. He is infinite. It is impossible to measure Him or compare Him with anything. He is omnipresent. Comparison is possible only when there is a second object. The Vedas declare: "Ekam eva Advittheeyam" ("One alone without a second.")

The Divine willed: "Ekoham Bahusyaam" ("I am one; I shall become many.") By His will the Divine manifested Himself in the many. All religions have accepted this truth. The Bible declares: "God created man in His own image." From the one the manifold cosmos has emerged. Only man has been endowed with the capacity to control Nature. With the growth of knowledge, the animal nature in man has diminished and he has been able to develop culture.

God comes in human form. As the saying goes: "Daivam manusha runena" ("The Divine appears in human form"). Hence man should not be regarded as a mere product of nature, a creature of the senses and the physical elements. In terms of the corporeal body, all human beings may appear alike. But their thoughts may be different.

It is the uniqueness of Bharatiya culture that it has maintained an unbroken and unchanging continuity through the ages. Bharatiya culture bears testimony to the eternal verity that is unaffected by the tides of time or history and remains unchanged during creation or dissolution. This truth is the under-current of Sanathana Dharma (the Ancient Code of Righteousness).

### **Pre-eminence of bhakti**

Devotion (Bhakti) occupies pride of place in Bharatiya culture. Devotion cannot be confined to observances like worship, pilgrimages or going to temples. These are merely actions indicative of devotion. There is a power which provides the basic impulse for these actions. That is the love of God. Bhakti means total love (Paripurna Prema). This love is motiveless. Love based on a motive cannot be real love. As the river seeks to join the ocean by a natural impulse, as a creeper winds itself naturally round a tree to climb upwards, the devotee's love is a spontaneous expression of the yearning to realise God, free from worldly desires of any kind. The Bhagavatam has expounded the nature of this sacred love from days of yore.

### **The ego and the atma**

To experience the presence of the Divine the devotee's love flows as a pure selfless stream. It proclaims that it needs no one except God. It is oblivious to all other things. It regards the Divine as the One that pervades everything. God is in every object in the cosmos. All names and forms are derived from God. But by regarding them as distinct entities, man becomes a prey to many difficulties. Man's ego is the cause of this divisive attitude. The man who is wrapped up in his ego cannot recognise God. When the ego goes, God appears. When the ego merges in the Atma, there is liberation (Mukti). The ego (Aham) arises from the Atma. From the ego, thought emerges and thought is the source of speech (Vaak). All these have emerged from the Atma. It is

man's bondage.

### **The one and the many**

The entire cosmos has emanated from the Atma, is sustained by the Atma and ultimately merges in the Atma. This truth is expressed in a sutra in the Brahma Sutras: "Thath Ja-la-an" ("From That it is born, merges in It and is sustained by It"). Man also comes from the Brahman, grows in the Brahman and merges in the Brahman. Man (Nara) is like the water bubble that arises in the water, grows in it and merges in it. Narayana is like the water. The aim of spiritual sadhana is to make man recognise the unity that subsumes creation and enable him to realise the bliss of oneness with the Divine through the means of Karma. Upasana and Jnana (rituals, meditation and Knowledge).

Although the cosmos may appear as multifarious there is one thing that is its basis. A seed that is planted grows into a tree with numerous branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. Wherefrom did all this variety come? All these existed potentially in a subtle form in the seed. That is the significance of Sri Krishna's declaration in the Gita: "Beejam Maam Sarvabhoothaanaam" ("I am the seed in all beings"), Just as from a seed a tree can come, with innumerable branches, flowers, and fruits, with a seed in each fruit, from the single seed of the Divine the infinite variety of Nature (Prakriti) has emerged. The relations between beings in the cosmos can be compared to the relations between the branches in a tree. Our feelings may be compared to flowers and life itself may be compared to the fruit. In each being, there is a seed of the Divine.

### **Param bhakti**

The cowherdresses of Brindavan exemplified in their devotion the devotee's quest for oneness with the Divine. They saw Krishna in every manifestation in Nature and welcomed association with it, whether it was a tree, or a mountain or the ocean. They wished to be always near Krishna, to sport with Him, listen to the music of His flute and end their lives in Him. This is the mark of Supreme Devotion (Param Bhakti). Everyone should strive through sadhana to develop such devotion. One should not adore God when he is happy and blame God when he is in trouble.

Apart from the Gopis in the Bhagavatam, it is the eldest of the Pandavas, Dharmaja, who is the exemplar of Supreme Devotion (Param Bhakti). Whatever ordeals he was subjected to or humiliations he had to experience, Dharmaja never allowed his faith in Krishna to weaken. He adhered steadfastly to the belief: "Oh Krishna! Whether I am in a city or a forest, whether I am high or low, whether in happiness or sorrow, you are my sole refuge." It was because of this unflinching and single-minded faith in Krishna that Dharmaja could achieve glory and stand out as an ideal to the world.

### **Why avatars come**

There are various reasons for the advent of the Divine in human form. For the human being, his past karma is the cause of birth. The circumstances of each one's birth depend on his past actions. Man is bound by the consequences of his actions ("Karmanu bandhini manushya loke").

incarnations karma is not the cause. The evil deeds of the wicked and the good deeds and yearnings of the righteous are responsible for the advent of Avatars. The Narasimha avatar (the Divine incarnating as half-man and half-lion) was due to the great devotion of Prahlada and the bad qualities of Hiranyakasipu (Prahlada's father).

The descent of the Divine is in response to the yearnings and actions of people and not because of any karma of the Divine. This may be understood from a simple illustration. Crops grown on the ground look up to the skies for rain. They cannot reach up to the clouds. The clouds come down in the form of rain to provide water to the crops. To cite another example: There is a child on the floor. It wants its mother. It cannot jump up to the mother. The mother has to bend down, take the child and fondle it. In the same manner, to offer relief to devotees, to protect them and foster them, the Divine comes in human form. This is described as "Avatarana", the descent of God as an incarnation. God comes down from His high level to give joy to the devotees. Man does not try to understand the inner significance of such incarnations.

### **Devotion is the panacea**

There is nothing greater in the world than devotion (Bhakti). Once the sage Narada demonstrated to his disciples how devotion is greater than anything in the world, including the Divine. While the Divine was greater than the cosmos, which the Lord as Vamana could measure in two steps, the Lord Himself is held in his heart by the devotion of the devotee. *"Devotion bestows the highest benefits. Devotion alone is the means to Realisation. Devotion alone confers supreme peace."* Devotion is the panacea for all ills. There is no Veda or Shastra superior to devotion. Divine love encompasses all sacred acts. To achieve oneness with the Divine, one will have to be prepared to sacrifice everything.

### **Incident in a train**

Swami related the story of an IAS Officer and a villager travelling in a train, when the latter threw a few coins as an offering to the river Godavari while the train was going over the bridge. The officer commented on the superstitious behaviour of Bharatiyas who threw coins in rivers while men were starving. As the officer started smoking at that time, the villager asked him whether the few coins he offered out of faith once or twice a year involved a greater loss to the country than the money which he was wasting all through the year on smoking, which was not only bad for his health, but also harmful to others because of pollution of the air. The villager told him that he derived happiness from the small offerings he made to the sacred Godavari. He berated the officer for casting aspersions on Bharatiyas' beliefs and actions. Only those ignorant of the greatness of Bharatiya culture could indulge in such criticisms.

### **Sacredness of festivals**

All the sacred festivals celebrated by Bharatiyas are full of significance spiritually and socially. Every festival is regarded as a holy event surcharged with divinity. On such a holy day, each house is cleaned up, everybody takes a sacred bath to purify the body, special pujas are performed, coconut is offered to the deity and prayers are offered during the day.

The significance of today's festival (Vinayaka Chaturthi) is explained by different persons in different ways. Is it possible to transplant an elephant's head on a human body? The esoteric significance of the Ganesha image is Ganapati has been given the head of an elephant because he is known for his extraordinary intelligence. The elephant is symbolic of extreme intelligence. In common parlance reference is made to the elephant's intelligence ("Gaja thelivi"). The elephant is a highly intelligent animal. Ganapati is described as "Buddhi Vinayaka" and "Siddhi Vinayaka" (Vinayaka the wise and Vinayaka the Accomplished). "Vinayaka" itself means an unexcelled leader. (Vi=Exceptional; Nayaka=leader). For whom is he the leader? He is the chief of the Ganas (hosts of spirits) and hence is known as Ganapati. He is the chief of Rudra Genas, Bhadra Ganas and other Ganas.

### **Vinayaka and Vyasa**

Vinayaka is the embodiment of intelligence. When Vyasa wanted to write the Mahabharata he prayed to Vinayaka for help. Vinayaka agreed to act as scribe on one condition: While dictating his verses, Vyasa should not pause at any stage. As Vyasa was reciting the verses. Ganesha was inscribing them on the palm-leaf at great speed. There was a race as it were between the two as to how fast Vyasa could dictate the stanzas and how quick Ganapati could inscribe them.

When the Mahabharata was completed, it ran into 100 crores of verses. It was a colossal compendium of all knowledge and ranked as the fifth Veda. It contained countless subtle truths. Human beings, the Devas and the Asuras, all three groups desired to have a share in the sacred work and prayed to Vyasa. When the 100 crores of verses were divided equally among the three claimants, one stanza of thirty two syllables remained. After distributing 10 syllables to each of the three, two syllables remained. How were they to be distributed? Ganapati said these two syllables should be given to the world in the names of Hari. Hara. Rama, Krishna, Sai—all the two-letter names of the Lord.

### **Remover of obstacles**

What is the significance of Ganesha worship? Man is confronted with many obstacles (Vighnas) in the journey of life. Prayers are offered to Ganapati—who is better known as Vighneshwara—for removing such obstacles and minimising impediments. Ganapati is an important deity for people of all sects. He is the deity to whom worship is offered first in any ritual. Why is this pre-eminence accorded to Ganapati?

Once upon a time Parvati and Parameshwara wanted to decide between Vinayaka and Subrahmanya (their two sons) who was superior. They called the two lads and set them a task. They were told that they should go round the cosmos. Whoever came first would be entrusted with a high office. Subrahmanya immediately got on to the back of his peacock and started flying on its wings But Ganapati stayed put. Parvati and Parameshwara thought Ganapati was out of the race. But on seeing Subrahmanya approaching at a distance, Ganapati got up, circumambulated his parents and sat down. Ganapati claimed that he had won the race, When Parameshwara questioned him Ganapati replied: "The whole cosmos is a projection of the Lord.



round the universe." Ganapati also asked them: "Show me any place where you are not present. You are omnipresent. You are in everything."

Because of the acute intelligence he displayed Vinayaka was made head of the Ganas by Parameshwara.

There is thus an inner significance for every name and form, Normally, the elephant's head on a human body should present an ugly image. But any one can see that Ganesha's elephant head has an attraction all its own. There is no trace of ugliness in it. It is symbolic of extraordinary intelligence and intellectual ability.

### **To unity through love**

We celebrate festivals like the Ganesha Chaturthi as holidays. But they are not holidays but holy days. It is not easy for any one to recognise the truth about the Divine. His leelas are beyond the grasp of the mind and speech. Hence, one should make the best use of whatever one is able to get from the Divine. One should avoid getting into unnecessary and purposeless controversies, which may cause more confusion.

Love is the most important element in everything. Through love alone you can unify the world. It is the absence of love that is the cause of hatred. It is this hatred that is undermining human nature. Despite the fact that it is difficult to nourish hatred, while it is quite easy to foster love, men are engaged in doing what is difficult.

Uttering truth is easy. But indulging in falsehood is a tortuous process. One has to take a lot of trouble to cover up one lie with more lies. That is why it has been said: "Sathyam brooyaath; Priyam brooyaath; Na brooyaath Sathyam Apriyam" ("Speak the truth; speak what is pleasing. Do not utter truth that is unpleasant"). God is the embodiment of truth. Truth is the foundation of the Universe. This truth transcends the mind and speech and is beyond the categories of Time and Space. Vedanta has described it as Ritam. It is also called Transcendental Truth. Truth is that which remains unchanged over time. You must live upto this Truth. You must realise that the Divine is present in everything. Only when you can recognise the omnipresence of the Divine will you be able to experience the Divine.

Develop faith in God. All names are His—Rama, Krishna, Christ or any other name. Every man is an embodiment of the Divine. True human relationships can grow only when this truth is recognised. The first stage is when you recognise "I am in the Light." Next you realise, "The Light is in me," and finally you realise, "I am the Light." "I" represents love and light represents Jnana (Supreme Wisdom). When love and light become one, there is Realisation. The path of devotion (Bhakti) is easier than the path of knowledge (Jnana-marga). The Gita has extolled the Bhakti-marga, the path of devotion. Love should come from within, not enforced from outside. You should develop disinterested and spontaneous love. The attitude of petitioning to God for favours should be given up. Love of God should not be based on *quid pro quo*; seeking favours

the day to meditation on God.

From today give up selfishness (Swartha), turn your mind towards the Supreme (Parartha), lead a life of Truth (Yadartha) and sanctify your lives. Place your faith in God and do your duty to the best of your ability. Saturate yourselves with love and share it with all. If you earn the love of God even to the slightest extent, you will experience infinite joy."

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan: "*Prema mudita manase kaho: Rama, Rama, Ram*").

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir on 15-9-1988*

## **Back to the Source**

A disciple who had travelled a long distance to reach a great master asked for a lesson. "Go back the way you came!" declared the master! Another teacher, apparently angered by an insistent disciple clamouring for a lesson, shouted, "get lost." A Tamil saint who pestered his master for a teaching met with an irritated response, "Keep quiet." Masters of Zen Buddhism are known to confront their disciples with apparently ridiculous questions like, "What did you look like before you were born to your parents?" Jesus said, "Unless you be converted and become like little children you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. XVIII-3).

The obvious meaning of all these anecdotes is to make the disciple go backwards in his enquiry and arrive at the Truth. What were we before we were born? If we existed before birth, how can a pre-existing thing be said to be born? So, what is born and what is to die is the physical frame. Whatever was there before we were born as this body, that is the Reality. We are asked by the scriptures to go back to that source, the consciousness "I AM." That is realisation. In the words of Bhagavan Baba, (quoted by Lucas Ralli in 'Sai messages for you and me'); you should have the certain knowledge, understanding and experience of "I AM." I and God are One. Liberation follows from the moment that you reach the permanent state of "I AM."

## **Nothingness**

We all clamour for happiness and peace. Swami says that happiness is our real nature. That state is the Truth, the Sat, the unchangeable. We know that we exist (chit) and we love that state of existence (Ananda). Thus our real position is Sat-chit-ananda, the Asti, Bhaati, Priyam as Swami calls it. The name and Roopa are only our unreal aspects which came from outside. When they are rejected we automatically abide in our real state. That state is best described in Swami's words. (Quoted by Hislop in 'My Baba and I'): "Above you nothing, below you nothing, to the right of you or to the left of you nothing and dissolve yourself in that nothingness; that would be the best way you can explain the realisation of the Self and yet that nothingness would not be the

power of existence of that appears to be everything.”

If that is our true state, what is it that stands between us and that state? Obviously, it is the ego, the "I am so-and-so" concept. This ego is like a drug addiction hard to get rid of. The more we go along with it the more it dominates us like a tyrant. This addiction actually started at birth, and what was that drug? It is the identification with the body. This individuality is the greatest obstacle on the way to realisation, for, personal entity and enlightenment are incompatible. The destruction of individuality and experience of Reality take place as simultaneous events. This is what was implied by Jesus when He said, "He that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. XVI-25). A familiar advice given by Ramana Maharshi was "die yourself and lose yourself." (Talks with Ramana Maharshi—Ramanashram). Swami's advice is "be willing to be nothing"; "nothing is everything and everything is nothing." The barrier was created by us only and it is up to us to break it too. Baba asserts: "You are the creator of the fog and only you can clear it away" (Lucas Ralli). No doubt a difficult job, but Sai gives the assurance: "I will help you, but you must make the effort. Being a devotee is just a beginning like putting on a tracksuit before the race. But after that, effort is required, much effort, and you must stay in the track if you are going to finish the race." (Lucas Ralli)

### **Ahamkara and mamakara**

What is the effort expected of us? Swami has given the guide-lines time and again. The basic step is giving up the body-consciousness, which is the starting point of the ego. That is why the ego has been called *Chit-jada granthi*, a knot between the Self and the body. Bhagavan repeatedly reminds us, "the human body is not you, it simply houses the spark of divinity within." (Lucas Ralli) This, 'I-am-the-body' idea is so deep-rooted that we are unable to get over it even though we appear to be convinced every time we hear Swami speak about it. Not only do we identify ourselves with our body, but we tend to identify Sai also only with the physical body He has assumed!

Individuality automatically leads on to the 'mine' feeling. So the next step advocated in all scriptures is the readiness to let go everything, that is, giving up, detachment, and renunciation of the feeling of possessiveness. The next offshoot of the ego is 'doership'. So the third step prescribed is performing actions without identifying oneself with it. Lord Krishna advises in the Gita (111-19) "Tasmaad asaktah satatam kaaryam karma samaachara asaktohi aacharan karma paramaapnoti poorushah" "Always perform your duties without attachment, for man attains the Supreme by doing work without attachment." The same directive is found in Yoga Vasishta. "O Rama, be outwardly active but inwardly inactive, a doer outwardly but a nondoer inwardly." Swami also advises: "What makes you think 'doing' is so important? Be equal-minded. Then you will not be bothered about 'doing' or 'not doing', success or failure; the balance will remain, unaffected by either". (Quoted by Samuel Sandweiss in "Spirit and the mind").

### **Total surrender**

Eschewing the feeling of doership automatically leads to acceptance of whatever comes as the gift of the Divine. Soon we realise that we do nothing; everything just happens and we are

Avatar is limited to handing over our problems to Him to be solved by Him! Rarely do we step aside and allow Him to run our life.

The fifth component of this ego annihilation process is to destroy the mind, the thought process; 'die-mind' as Swami calls it, because the mind is a major obstacle to higher consciousness. The mind, the greatest chatterbox inside us, causes so much 'noise pollution' it is impossible for us to listen to the voice of consciousness. Death of the mind automatically leads on to the birth of wisdom.

### **Live in the present**

The sixth important advice given by all masters is to live in the present. All scriptures declare that our true nature is to be beyond time and space and we are in contact with these only at the point of now and here. Swami's directive in this regard is, "live now, live every moment of every day, live in the present and surrender to the Will of God" (Lucas Ralli). Because, to quote Ramana Maharshi, ("Day by day with Bhagavan"). "We do know the present and we exist now. But yesterday and tomorrow are only with reference to today. Yesterday was called 'today' in its time and. tomorrow will be called 'to-day' by us tomorrow. Today is ever present." The present assumes reality because of the reality of our own existence at the moment. Past is only memory and future is only imagination. The past should serve no purpose other than learning lessons from it. Forgetting the past and not worrying about the future automatically eliminates two-thirds of the ego's sustenance, for it is held up on the three props, "I was so-and-so," "I am so-and-so" and "I want to be so-and-so"!

What does this all add up to? When one achieves success in all these endeavours, one finds oneself at the end in the position of an infant. A newborn infant is just like an object among objects. It is a state where you do not know anything and also you do not know that you do not know. It is said that to know nothing is true knowledge. Swami speaking about His Sankalpa says, "Do not want to understand, do not ask to understand, relinquish understanding, relinquish the imperative that demands understanding." (Samuel Sandweiss) Yoga Vasishta advises, "Be neither that which is understood nor the one who understands." In other words give up all conceptualisation and remain what you are, that is, be like a child.

### **"Be like a child"**

The process of conceptualisation started in early childhood with the feeling 'I AM' and steadily progressed to the position 'I am so-and-so' and then followed all the trials and tribulations. The entire gamut of concepts has to be thrown away to go back to that state of 'I AM'. That is the state of pristine purity before it was contaminated by the 'I am this-or that'. Physiologists tell us that a major part of the human brain is engaged in mundane activities of life which include the two basic functions of survival of the self and survival of the species. If this large chunk of brain could be released, its potentialities for use for higher purpose could be very great. All sadhana is aimed at this delearning process. That is why a scholar in scriptures is advised to throw away all his learning and live like a child. Once you become like a child all body-based distinctions disappear. You become just conscious and happy. The intruding ego no

long as they last and they fail to leave any impressions on you.

So, this is the gist of all effort required. During all these years of journey ever since we started moving forward from infancy, in the first gear, we have been driving this vehicle of Jivahood in top gear, perhaps now and then slowing down in second or third gear. But now we are required to put on the reverse gear and go back the way we came and reach the state where we did not know anything and did not know that we did not know!

—*Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam, Brindavan*

## **The Dawn**

*Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive And, to be young, was very Heaven* wrote Wordsworth, when he saw in the eastern sky over France the scarlet fringe of the morning clouds and heard the echoes of cheering mobs shouting "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." He was tremendously enthused at the Revolution that rumbled, shaking the very foundations of human institutions. But the scarlet soon turned into a rain of blood and the cheers were smothered by the boom of cannon and the ominous clipclap of armies on the march. It became patent that Liberty was but a flash in the pan, Equality a will-o'-the-wisp and Fraternity an Utopian dream. Mankind was not ready yet. Man did not have the equipment to earn them and treasure them. The needs of the corporate state buried Liberty; racialism and egoism buried Equality; national pride buried Fraternity. The Dawn disappointed everyone; the day did not follow. The Heaven was polluted by hatred. The shining ideals which tantalised mankind for a few moments were soiled by greed, scorched by hate and polluted by envy.

If the springs of action are not pure, the consequences are bound to be disastrous. The world has now come to the brink as a result of dire pollution in the mind of man, a pollution far more insidious and poisonous than the pollution of the air he breathes, the vegetation on which he lives and the seas and rivers which foster him. He has lost courage and desperately runs helter-skelter in panic, frightened at the shadow that is pursuing him. He finds a rival or enemy in every man and arms himself against his own kith and kin. He has no peace; so he swallows drugs to pacify the storm in sleep or stupor.

Luckily for mankind, the Dawn is here; the Day is bright. The Lord has assumed human form in order that man can be cleansed, comforted and led into the path of Love which alone can establish Liberty, Equality and Fraternity on earth. Fill the day with Love, Baba commands. When that is done exploitation, violence and falsehood disappear like mist before the Sun. He exhorts us through His discourses, His writings and, above all, His own daily life, to cultivate selfless Love and to share it, so that it can grow from more to more. When you love a person with the supreme spiritual love you cannot tolerate his misery or stunt his talents by neglect. You

potential; this process is Liberty. This is what each human being craves for.

Political, social or economic Equality is a mirage. Baba asks, "How can desire be equalised? Can imagination be moulded into a pattern and emotions made uniform?" Men are not born equal; they come, trailing clouds of glory, ignominy or tragedy. They are born with halters or garlands round their necks, carrying prisons or palaces with them, provided for them as reward or retribution for acts done in previous lives. But, beyond the clutches of both reward and retribution is the Atma which is the real reality of Man. When we are aware of the Atma in us, we can project the idea on to others and get to know the same Atma as their Reality too. Thus, Equality is experienced as an indisputable fact. No longer can man revel in superiority and inferiority based on flimsy canons of race, colour, caste or creed, political status or economic power. Every drop in every sea is saltish in taste. The Atma is equally divine, equally eternal in every being. Baba is teaching the world how to build this unique egalitarian human community on the foundation of Love.

Then, we have had for long the target of Fraternity. This was sought in ages past in the cultivation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The pages of history are full of grim descriptions of the diabolical wars among the children of God. Children of the same parents are differently equipped and grow up along different ways. Rivalry, competition and conflict have to be recognised now as the natural ingredients of the atmosphere of the home. Identity of language, religion and race does not ensure harmony and sympathy. Fraternity too, as Baba avers, has to grow in the mind. Your brother is no different from you. There is no 'other'. All living beings are cells of the same Divine Body. When the toe is hurt, the eye sheds tears. It is repentant that it did not guide the toe aright. That is real Fraternity. We cannot afford to thrive in an atmosphere polluted by wars. The 'I' must be merged in the 'We'. This can be done only after achieving awareness of the One Atma that encompasses all humanity.

This is the core of the Sai Message. Rejoice that it is booming beyond all horizons, and drawing all peoples into the circle of the True, the Righteous, the Peaceful and the Loving.

*Bliss is it in this Dawn to be alive  
And to be young...O it is very...Heaven.*

*—Prof. N. Kasturi (From The Golden Age)*

## **The Cry from the Heart**

Once upon a time, Namadeva (noted for his mastery of the *bhakti-marga* through constant recital of the Name) and Jnanadeva (noted for his mastery of the path of Wisdom) were together crossing a thick jungle. They were both afflicted with severe thirst, but could not find water anywhere in spite of a tiresome search. At last they came upon a ruined well with a little water

his power and transformed himself into a bird. The bird flew down and drank its fill, only to, change itself into Jnanadeva again! Namadeva relied upon the power of the Name. He sat on the edge of the well and called, 'Narayana', in great anguish. God responded to his prayer. The water rose up to where he sat and he could gather it in his palms and quench his thirst. He had no need to embody himself anew and disembody himself again for the satisfaction of a physical thirst.

When God is invoked by prayer that emanates from the heart, let it be but once, He responds immediately. But now the call emanates only from the lips, it has not the ring of sincerity and faith. From the lips, it must roll back on the tongue; from the tongue, it must go deep into the throat; from the throat, it must reach down to the heart. Continuous *sadhana* alone can grant success in this endeavour. You must become like an infant with no inhibitions or stratagems. The mother may be attending to her daily chores on the first floor of the house, leaving the infant in the cradle on the ground floor. But when the child sends up a loud wail either through fear or hunger, she rushes down to lift the child, fondle it, feed it and comfort it on her lap. She will not stay away because the wail is not musical or melodious. She is moved simply by the agony the wail expresses.

So too, the Mother of the Universe will not weigh the quantity of yoga that you have practised, or calculate the number of *japams* you have rolled on the rosary, or the time taken by you for *sadhanas* of various kinds. She can be moved, Her Grace can be won, by genuine anguish emanating from the heart. Man is finding it increasingly difficult to call upon the Supreme Source of Power and Grace with this genuineness. His life has become pathetically artificial.

—Baba

#### *STUDENTS' CORNER:*

### **“That Memorable Janmashtami”**

It was 5 a. m. on September 1, 1977.

"Swami, Swami, please come back soon." It was the Brindavan boys pleading with Sai Krishna. With Krishna Janmashtami just round the corner (four days ahead), this Krishna was giving them the slip.

"Certainly, certainly (thappaka, thappaka)," the Lord assured them. One small boy pleaded, "Swami, please come for Krishna Janmashtami." The Lord smiled intriguingly. "Bangaru, how can I come? It is an Ashtami. I don't travel on an Ashtami day!" The tears which blurred the vision of the boys rolled away. Swami's Benz glided through the avenue carpeted by Gulmohur flowers.

wended its way to the Sai Ram shed. (It was difficult, as always, to pinpoint who was leading whom—the boys, the cows or vice versa!!) As the procession ended with Arati, all of us returned to our rooms with heavy hearts.

Suddenly I felt a tap on my back. Looking up from my desk to which I was confiding my tears, I was facing the assistant warden. "Ravi Kumar, speak about Krishna Leela in the dining hall today." As there was hardly an hour left, I demurred. But as he insisted, I had no option but to agree.

The hostel Bhajan hall (also dining hall) was beautifully decorated. As was the tradition, all the lights except the coloured bulbs decorating the jhoola were switched off. On the tastefully decorated jhoola was an extremely lovely picture of Swami.

The warden cautioned me against exceeding ten minutes. As I narrated the leelas of Krishna, I lost count of time and when I finally felt that the allotted ten minutes were coming to an end, I had spoken for 45 minutes! I ended with some words which surprised me. Looking back, I for one have no doubt that it was Swami's Leela.

I ended thus: "Even during those days, whenever Krishna felt that the Gopis were becoming egoistic, He would disappear from their midst. They would, then repent and pray from the bottom of their hearts. Lord Krishna, after teasing them, would suddenly appear in their midst and immerse them in Bliss. Oh! How wonderful it would be if Swami suddenly appeared and sat on this jhoola!"

The thought that Swami was not with us had made everyone sad and the wonderful Bhajans that followed had in a way purified our hearts.

It was dinner time. The function having taken longer than expected, dinner time had been pushed to 9 p.m. As we were moodily munching our food, Sri Ramabrahmam's stentorian voice sharply stirred us to wakefulness. "Boys! We have just received a phone call from Bangalore. Swami has just returned to Bangalore from Ooty. Swami has asked me to tell all of you to keep awake. He will give Darshan."

So, we all quickly finished our dinner and rushed to Swami's Bungalow (It was not a Mandir for God, but a bungalow where our dearest Lord resided). Swami came at 10.05 p.m. and smiled at us. As He accepted Arati and went up, He said, "Tomorrow we will celebrate Krishnaasthami!"

***6th September, 1977, 9 a.m.:***

We stood eagerly awaiting Swami's darshan. Swami came down and smiled at us. "Come on, boys," He said, and as He led the way, we followed. He entered the hostel and walked straight to the dining hall and sat on the jhoola. He, then, assured us that though physically away, he had



detail including escapades of a cow with a particular boy in tow. Swami had come, it appeared, with the sole purpose of conferring boons. He agreed to every prayer and it was not like God talking to His devotees, but Krishna talking to His cowherd friends, as He allowed everyone to speak and listened and answered. After a blissful namaskar, we went to college with hearts full of joy.

When we arrived for lunch that day, we were in for more wonderful news. Swami spent the whole morning in the dining hall supervising the arrangements, decorations, etc.—and even drew up the menu! Even as Swami was directing where each photo was to be placed, He called a boy and said, "Madurai Chettiar has brought something for me; go and get it." The boy ran to the gate and even as the Gurkha was assuring him, that 'Chettiar sir' had not come, the 'honk' of a car horn made them turn back and there they were—Mr. Chettiar and his family. The boy told Mr. Chettiar that Swami had asked him to collect what he had brought for Him. He pleaded ignorance and then it dawned on him that he had brought a sandalwood statue of Krishna for Swami. Quickly opening the suitcase in the dickey, he gave the idol.

Swami took the idol and placed it in the centre of the altar.

In the evening, as Swami came to the hostel, He was received and led to the dining hall by the Veda-parayana boys. Swami then asked the warden to say a few words.

When Swami got up to speak we sensed that there was something wonderful in the atmosphere. His face was radiant. His eyes were showering grace. He gave a wonderful discourse. During that memorable discourse He created the 'Kaustubham' which Krishna's grandmother had given Him at the naming ceremony. Swami Himself went round showing all of us the green emerald encircled by four rings of glittering diamonds. He, then, put it on the neck of the Krishna idol!

In the midst of His discourse, Swami suddenly turned towards a boy and asked for a towel. Nobody knew for what purpose. A small towel was brought and sent back. When a bigger towel arrived, Swami said, "Though the pictures show Krishna wearing a crown, Krishna actually wore peacock feathers stuck on a single towel like this, ...Krishna never aspired for or wore a crown."

After that we had a wonderful dinner. I have only to add that Swami Himself served all of us sweets to show what a day that Krishna Janmashtami was!

—*T. Ravi Kumar, Research Scholar, Prasanthi Nilayam*

**S A I**

*Fragrance in the flowers.  
The green of the grass.  
The love in the heart  
of an innocent child.*

*The silence of solitude.  
The sermons of the saint.  
The grace of gratitude.  
The freedom from taint.*

*The melody in music.  
The rhyme in verse.  
The vision synoptic.  
The tenderness in nurse.*

*The twinkle of the star.  
The whistle of the wind.  
The distance of the far.  
The speed of the mind.*

*The mystery of death.  
The hope of the suffering.  
The life In the breath.  
The warmth of spring.*

*The bliss of ecstasy.  
The pathos in pity.  
The flight of fantasy.  
The spark in the witty.*

*Logic in the argument.  
Creativity in the writer.  
Colour in the pigment.  
Valour in the fighter.*

*The humility in the low.  
The warmth in friendship.  
The resolve in the vow.  
The prayer in worship.*

*The radiance in splendour.  
The magnetic in attraction.*

—*Satish K. Dua, Faridabad*

*The Divine is recognised by gifted people in the vast, the magnificent, the beautiful, the mighty, the majestic, and the awesome. But, for the generality of mankind, the consciousness that each one is a miracle sustained by God, that each breath is a witness of God's Providence, that each event is proof of this Presence, comes but rarely in life. When this body, that is apparently human, behaves as if it is filled with supra-human potentialities, then amazement draws attention to all towards the Divine that is its inherent nature. Off and on, it becomes necessary to give this lesson to mankind, so that faith in God and power to recognise Divinity are added to the human faculties. Then only can the mind of man be turned from the world to the Master of the Worlds.*

—**Baba**

### **Pilgrims to Prasanthi**

Herein the Abode, morning holds its  
message  
For all who come by many a passage,  
The Message of the Lord, the Great  
Illuminator,  
A call to live, to live for all  
To work in love, to love in work  
Above the body or mind, for the sake of the  
Soul.

#### ***The Temple***

On earth's holy pedestal  
Heaven finds a shrine  
Where time looks to eternity  
Mortals to immortality  
The Spirit doth shine.

There stands the Temple,  
Beneath the airy canopy  
A condensed marvel of celestial beauty  
In its serene form  
With smiles of peace

Hallowing the sphere with bounteous mercy.

The Temple beckons  
To those on earth  
To come from life's nights  
To a lighted path,  
To realise the Reality  
Of life and existence,  
Of cause and consequence,

In a home between the earth and Heaven,  
A brief hyphen,  
To link in mind  
This with That.

#### ***Pilgrims***

From the ends of the endless globe they do  
come,  
Distances dissolve in journey, time in  
twinkles,  
Faces unseen, yet ever known,  
They come and come, in endless stream.

Races and colours mingle together,  
No high, no low, no prince, no pauper,  
Men and women, young and old,  
From the family of the One, the children of  
God.

Their eyes exchange in wonder,  
They know, they know each other,  
Frontiers vanish from mind, continents fade,  
Ineffable love effaces shadows and shades.

On the vast spreading space all around  
Below the hills, the trees, on grass, on sand,  
They stay, they rest, they sprawl, they lie  
On the mellow breast of earth, under  
star-spangled sky.

Come the heat of summer, winter's cold,  
Come the showers of monsoons, the  
autumn's storms,  
They, too, pass by  
Over the unconcerned, the passers-by.

They go, others come  
The unknown ever-known every day,  
Time runs by,  
Over the pilgrims of unbroken tie,  
They pour forth, from places apart,  
From the lands between pole and pole,  
From north or south, from east or west,  
From hundred corners of the earth.

They forget,  
The fringe of the Alps,  
The slopes of the Himalayas,  
The terrains of Mexico,  
The steppes of Mongolia,  
The banks of the Mississippi, the Rhine or  
the Seine,  
The places far and distant, where they live  
in.

As pilgrims on the earth,

To see thereat,  
All in One,  
One in all.

### *Echoes from the Ether*

From dark distances of Time,  
the Past rings its sanctus bell,  
sings holy songs,

The echoes of which  
reverberate in tranquillity  
when minds settle to pray.

From the ether descend  
the hymns of the Rishis of yore  
chanted on the banks of Sindhu  
'Arise, O Souls, arise!'

The songs of Akhnaton  
on the banks of the Nile  
'O Sole God, how manifold are  
thy works!'

The Sermons of Buddha  
in serene Sarnath on Eternal Wheel  
of Law,

The Sayings of the Prophet of Taoism  
in the hidden wilds of China  
on the Nature of the Way,

The Creed of Zoroaster in the land of Iran  
on Knowledge and the Lie,

The Message of Jesus  
in the hamlets of Nazareth  
'the Kingdom of God is come nigh  
to you',

The Call of Prophet Mohammed  
Surrender to God' in the deserts  
of Arabia.

From the ether come the echoes  
To the Pagan, the Heathen, the  
Faithful,

At a place, where the Past culminates  
in a point of the Present,

Where the gods and goddesses  
of forlorn Olympus,  
and, of all Pantheons of the world,  
descend, to breathe the spirit eternal,

Where Faith is a Faith above the Creed,  
In a Spell, joining Love to Light,  
There, the echoes of the ages bygone,  
Find expression in Prayers pristine.

### *Waiting for the Lord*

Facing the Temple  
they wait  
For that moment  
of moments,  
Like bubbles  
on dark sea  
To glisten in  
the light of moon.

Silence deepens  
to depth  
Hearts throb  
to peace within,  
Eyes turn wet  
in hope Divine.

Seated are they  
charmed, enchanted  
Sans fears or tears,  
all designs,  
Gone are  
the worldly dreams,  
Gone,  
agonies.

For the appointed hour  
they wait,  
A sea of humanity  
in expectations,  
Dear and high,  
as moments come nigh.

### *A Glimpse*

Open the doors  
For Him to emerge,  
All eyes turn  
Thoughts merge in one.

In slow, soft steps  
He walks forward  
An Aura of Grace,  
He lifts His Hand  
Opens His Palm  
Looks around  
To Bless them all.

He halts, He looks  
He walks again  
He bestows His Love  
He moves on,  
From corner to corner  
He covers the span,  
Ends His walk  
Back He goes,  
To the Shrine again.

He comes like a Flash of Light,  
A Cosmic Lamp, burning bright,  
Leaves no foot-prints on sands of  
His Path,  
Only Leaves His Image printed in a  
myriad hearts.

In still repose, souls do rise  
From delusion to realization  
From darkness to Light  
From finite to see the Infinite.

—*Dr. Manmath Nath Das. Bhubaneswar.*

(The above poems have been reproduced from the author's collection of poems entitled, "The Abode of Bliss").

*How can Sai be pleased with you  
If your thoughts are not good  
If your words are not pleasing  
If your actions are not right?  
Good thoughts, sweet speech  
And right conduct—these alone  
Constitute true education.*

To lead a purposeful and worthy life, you have to recognise the true meaning of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect and know how to use them intelligently and effectively. All the troubles of mankind are due to the fact that 99 percent of the people lead lives without understanding this truth.

The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are only instruments for the individual and have no consciousness of their own (Chaitanya). The body is inert. Beginning as a mere mass of flesh, it grows into a handsome boy, an attractive youth and becomes a decrepit old man in later years. Because of these changes in the body, man imagines that the body has consciousness and is not an inert mass. But it is not the body that is the cause of this growth and change. To cite an example: If you sweep your house every day and throw the dust in a dustbin, in due course there will be a big dung-heap. Can consciousness be attributed to the dung-heap because of its growth over a period? Likewise, the body grows on account of the food consumed by it. See what happens to the body when food is denied for some days. It ceases to grow; in fact, it begins to deteriorate.

The body is only a temporary rest-house for the Spirit. Vedanta declares: "The body is a shrine for the eternal Spirit inhabiting it." It is necessary in this context to know what enables the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect to develop or to deteriorate. The whole cosmos is made up of the five basic elements (Pancha Bhootas: Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth). Their qualities are represented by sound, touch, form, taste and smell. All these have emerged from Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss), the Primal Source.

### **The five elements**

Aakasa (Space) provides the initial impulse. It is comparable to an infinite container. The other four elements—air, fire, water and earth—are contained in it. These elements vary in their order of subtlety. Water is subtler than earth and is more expansive and lighter than earth. Fire is subtler than water and air is subtler than fire and more pervasive. Aakasa (space or ether) is subtler than air and is all-pervasive. Each of these elements is covered by a sheath (kosa). The mind, the intellect, the will and the ego are enveloped by these sheaths.

Aakasa (space or ether) is activated by what is called "Atigati", very high-speed motion (or vibrations). These vibrations, by their movement, give rise to air. The movement of air results in

To generate heat air is necessary. When the heat cools off, water is produced. Fluids solidify into earth. Hence, the starting point for the five elements is Aakasa (space). These elements have come into existence for sustaining the universe and demonstrating the omnipresence and omniscience of the Divine.

### **The mind and the body**

In the human being, the Antahkarana (the inner instrument) is made up of the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego. The ego is linked to the life principle (Prana). It is encased in the Vijnanamaya Kosa (the sheath of integrated awareness). The mind is linked to the Will (Chitta) and is encased in the Manomaya Kosa (the mental sheath). Thus between the individual soul and the vital principle (Prana), the mind functions. The life principle functions between the mind and the body. The intellect (Buddhi) functions above the level of the mind. The vital principle functions below the mind. Both the intellect and the vital principle (Prana) are surcharged with heat (Agni). It is their combined presence in the body that accounts for the heat in the body.

The mind should not be treated as something trivial. Man comprehends the world through the mind and hence its workings should be completely watched. Because the mind is located between the intellect (Buddhi) and the Prana (the vital principle)—both of which are filled with the fire principle—it tends to melt. The presiding deity for the mind is the Moon. The Moon represents coolness and fluidity. Fluids like water have a tendency to flow down and find their level. Fire, on the contrary, has the tendency to go up. The mind, because of its watery nature, has the tendency to move downwards to get interested in petty things. Efforts have to be made to make the mind look upwards.

### **The primal source**

It should, however, be remembered that the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego are made up of the five elements, which are all emanations from the Supreme—the Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). This is their Primal Source from which they have emanated like innumerable sparks from a fire. From this source they emerge as billions of atoms and assume countless forms. Man should realise that he has also come from the same Divine Source.

Endowed with the human form and gifted with sense organs, the mind and the will, man nevertheless is failing to remember the source from which he came. What is the cause for the body? The root cause is ignorance. Ignorance robs man of the power of discrimination. Lacking this capacity, man tends to inflate his ego (Ahamkaram). Egoism breeds hatred, which is the cause of attachment. All actions (Karmas) are born of attachment and desires. Hence, the primary cause of birth in a human body is one's Karma.

### **The cosmic delusion**

What is the ignorance that afflicts man? It is the false vision which makes one mistake the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal. An episode in the Mahabharata illustrates how this happens. Recognising the supreme virtuousness of Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, Maya, the architect of the Asuras, offered to build a unique mansion for him in his capital at the time of



remarkable feature. In it, where there was no water, a pond would appear to exist. Where there was a pool, there would be no appearance of water. Where there was no door, a door would seem to exist and a door would be present in an apparently blank wall. It was unique in producing delusions of this kind. Duryodhana, Dussasana and other Kauravas came to see this mansion. Imagining that there was water in one place, they lifted their clothes only to find that there was no water at all. At another place, they drenched themselves because they stridently walked into a pool not seeing the water in it.

What is the inner meaning of this story of the Maya Sabha? The cosmos itself is one vast Maya Sabha (a mansion of delusion). Attachment and hatred are represented by Duryodhana and Dussasana. Dussasana means one who is a violator of the rule of law. Duryodhana is one who misuses his strength and abilities. In every man, there are these traits of Duryodhana and Dussasana. In life everyone has to adhere to certain regulations. In the Sathya Sai Institute, for instance, there are regulations relating to the conduct of students in the hostel and elsewhere. It is only when these regulations are observed strictly that they can call themselves "seekers of knowledge" (Vidyarthi). When students misuse their talents and skills, they become weak and go astray.

### **Misuse of senses**

How does this misuse take place? The eyes are misused by looking at undesirable objects. The tongue is misused by indulging in evil talk. The ears, the heart and the hands are all misused in different ways. Misuse occurs whenever a divinely endowed capacity or talent is used for wrongful purposes. It is misdirection of energy. If students indulge in such misuse, they turn into Duryodhanas and Dussasanans and come to grief like them. Hence, no one should misuse any of the powers with which he is endowed. It amounts to an affront to the Divine which is the source of all powers.

Everyone thinks that it is his sense organs—his eyes, ears, etc.—that enable him to experience and comprehend the world. How true is this? In the dream state none of the senses is functioning. And yet, one has the experience of seeing, talking, hearing, walking and doing other actions. What is the eye that sees in the dream? What is the tongue that talks? In the dream state, the mind does all the functions of the sense organs, which are dormant at the time. When you feel in a dream that you are walking through a forest, it is not your legs that are walking. It is the mind which does the walking. It is the mind that assumes all the functions of the senses. The entire world is a projection of the mind. When the mind is properly directed, all the senses will be under control. When you water the roots of a tree, all the branches and leaves will get the benefit.

### **Mental aberrations**

The mind is subject to fancies and aberrations. In poor light you mistake a rope for a snake and are filled with fear. When light is brought, you find there is no snake. The appearance and disappearance of fear are entirely the result of mental aberrations. The rope alone was there all the time. The idea of a snake was superimposed on it by the fancies of the mind.

The Brahman cannot be experienced unless one gets rid of the delusions of the mind. How is one to get rid of the delusions? By developing faith in the omnipresence of the Divine. This faith can grow when one realises that every object in the world needs a basis for its existence and support. The Divine is the basis and support for the entire cosmos.

The Vedas are the authority for accepting the Divine as the source of everything in creation. If one can accept the authority of the ordinary almanac for recognising a particular date in the calendar, why should one refuse to accept the authority of the Vedas with regard to the nature of the Atma and the Brahman? There is authority in the Vedas for everything that we experience in daily life. The Vedas have recognised the uniqueness of human birth and proclaimed the existence of God. It is illogical for man to accept on the authority of the scriptures his uniqueness as a human being and at the same time deny the existence of God.

### **Nature and divinity**

How misconceptions and doubts can arise may be seen from a scientific example. When you hold a mirror before you, your image is reflected by the mirror. But the image is not in the mirror. The reflection is seen because of the mercury-coated surface at the back of the mirror. Seeing the image, you imagine that it is in the mirror. You imagine also that it is a true reflection of yourself. This is also not true. In the image, your right eye appears as the left eye and the left eye as the right eye. Hence, the image is not a true reflection of yourself. Likewise, Nature is a vast mirror. You regard as real the varied objects you see in Nature. But they are all different forms of the Divine. "The One willed to become the Many." This truth is recognised by all religions. But man forgets this truth and leads a life divorced from faith in the Divine.

Students! You may yourself enquire into the basis for this creation. To start with, you try to find out what causes dreams. Some may say, "thoughts" are the cause. Some others may attribute dreams to the kind of food that is consumed. Neither of these is correct. The fact is, it is sleep that is the cause of dreams. Where there is no sleep, there are no dreams. So, to the question, "What is the cause of creation?" the answer is: Ignorance (Ajnana). For example: During the summer, the land gets heated up and is completely barren. As soon as there is rainfall, things begin to sprout and the land looks green. Wherefrom did the sprout come? Before sprouting the seeds remained in the earth and when the rains came, they began to sprout. If there had been no seeds earlier, the sprouting would not have occurred.

### **Actions and results**

Likewise, karma (past deeds) is the seed for human birth. Your present life is a reaction, resound and reflection of your past actions. Therefore; you are advised to "Be good, see good, and do good." When you perform any action; you do not think about the long-term consequences. You are preoccupied with the concerns of the moment. But when the final results come you are frightened. Whether the results are pleasant or unpleasant they are inescapable. If sugar is dissolved in water, even if you think it is poison, it will only do you good. But if poison is put in the water and you drink it, thinking that it is sugarcane juice, it will be fatal. If you

on your actions and not on your fancies.

It is his conduct that is most important for every person. Conduct is determined by the state of the mind. Instead of giving way to the promptings of the senses, every action should be done as a sacred offering to the Divine. You should be indifferent to censure or praise. Such equanimity can come only from faith in God. Lacking this faith and filled with the conceit that he is the doer of everything, man gets immersed in sorrow and trouble. The one who boasts about his achievements should recognise equally that he is the author of his misfortunes. He cannot claim to be the doer and at the same time deny responsibility for the consequences of his actions.

### **"Do your duty"**

Hence, in all your actions, whether good or bad, do your duty, leaving the results to God.; The flowers that you may offer in your Puja will not please Sai. It is what you offer from the lotus of your heart that will please Sai. Consider everything in Nature as gifts of God. And when you offer anything, have the sacred feeling that you are offering to God what He has given to you. When you feel and act in this way, your life will be filled with peace and joy.

Have the firm conviction that the Cosmos and God are not different. Look upon creation as the manifestation of the Divine and make proper use of, your opportunities to experience the Divine.

In your studies, try to combine spiritual discipline with academic pursuits. Only then will you find fulfillment in education. Every one of you should become an ideal person. You must develop the habit of examining yourself and correcting yourself. Self-correction and self-punishment are as important as Self-realisation.

Your senses, like the eyes, the ears, the tongue, are God-given gifts. They should be used only for sacred purposes and should not be misused. There is only one royal road to realising God. It is the path of Divine love. You have come from the Divine and your destiny is merger in the Divine. Entertain only sacred thoughts and engage yourselves only in sacred deeds. Thereby you will be sanctifying your lives.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse at the  
Sri Sathya Sai Institute Students' Hostel, Vidyagiri, on 2-10-1988*

AVATAR VANI:

### **Towards Human Unity**

*"Having come here (to Prasanthi Nilayam), there is only one thing which is most vital for all of you to recognise and understand. Forgetting all differences of race, religion, caste and creed,*

*one God. When you recognise this oneness and fill your hearts with Love, you will be able to redeem your lives by chanting the Name of the Lord,” observed Bhagavan Baba, in a thrilling discourse delivered to an overflow gathering of devotees in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Oct. 20, at the conclusion of the Veda Purusha Jnana Yajna Saptaham.*

The Yajna, which was inaugurated by Bhagavan on October 14, concluded with Poornahuti on the 20th. Bhagavan delivered edifying discourses on all the seven days, explaining the esoteric significance of the Navaratri festival, the need for adoring one's Mother as the embodiment of Divinity, the supreme value of chanting the Name of the Lord, and the need for cultivating Divine Love as the sole means of unifying mankind and sanctifying the life of the individual.

### ***Bhagavan's Discourse***

Bhagavan began His discourse on the 20th with a poem. Bhagavan said:

*Who gave man his digestive organs?  
Who is the author of birth and death  
To know Him is the height of Wisdom.  
Forget not this truth, oh Man!*

The poet Bhartrhari said: "Salutations to the Lord of Time who sets everything in motion." Time is all-powerful. One should not waste even a single moment of this precious time. Everyone has to follow the dictates of Time, because Time is not subject to anyone. God is the embodiment of Time. Through good deeds one should acquire the grace of God and redeem one's life.

Bharatiya culture, which is world renowned, whose message has reached all corners of the world, which has withstood the vicissitudes of time and circumstance, which has remained unchanged through aeons since the beginning of creation, bears testimony to the eternal verities. Yagas and Yajnas reflect the image of this culture.

### **Every act is yajna**

What is Yajna? It is not merely bringing together ten Ritviks, getting them to perform home, to recite the four Vedas and make offerings to various deities in the sacrificial fire. Every act done by man as an offering to God—offering all the fruits thereof—is yajna. Whatever action one does, whether big or small, should be regarded as being done to please the Divine. It may be a sacred or secular act, it may be for benefits in this world or hereafter, it may be binding or liberating, it may be material or spiritual—whatever the nature of the action, it must be dedicated to God. Every individual is a preceptor. Every man is a Ritwik. Everyone is an embodiment of the Brahman (the Supreme Spirit). Everything in the Cosmos is permeated by the Divine and is contained in the Divine. It is this truth that was proclaimed by the Vedas when they said: "Antar

outside of everything in the universe.

### **"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam"**

Why, then, is man unable to recognise the omnipresent Divine? The Upanishads enjoined man to offer the fruits of all his actions to the Divine as the means of realising the Divine. In what form can the Divine be experienced? The answer is: "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahma." "The Brahman is Truth, Awareness and Infinite." Truth is not mere factual accuracy regarding any event or object. This is truth in the worldly sense. But Truth in the spiritual sense transcends the categories of Time and Space and remains unchanged always. This transcendental Truth has to be inscribed in the heart. It is in the light of this truth that man should pursue the journey of life in the world.

What is "Jnanam"? Jnana refers to the higher consciousness (Chaitanya) and not to knowledge of various kinds. It is consciousness that inspires man, permeates trees and animates even the smallest insects. Thyagaraja sang about this cosmic consciousness as being present in the ant and the Brahman, in Siva and Vishnu, in the form of supreme Love. To experience this all-pervading Consciousness is to experience the Divine.

This Consciousness is "Anantam"—Infinite. It is omnipresent. In whatever form He is worshipped, whatever conception one may have of the Divine, whatever feelings one may have towards the Divine, the Divine responds in that form and image to confer joy on the devotee. When a devotee prays: "Oh Lord, be by my side and walk with me, behind me and around me," the Lord keeps his company. The devotee can experience only the footfalls of the Lord. If the devotee cries: "Oh Lord! Can't you see my pitiable plight? Have you no eyes for my troubles?" only the eyes of the Lord appear to him. When a devotee prays: "Can't you hear my lamentations, Oh Lord," the Divine appears to him only as a pair of ears. Your experience of God is determined by your feelings and method of approach to Him. The Lord has His feet, head and eyes and ears everywhere and He appears to every person in the form envisaged by Him.

### **Embodiments of bliss**

The fourth is Ananda (Bliss). Every person seeks bliss. The aspirant has been described as the embodiment of Bliss. This Bliss has been described in manifold terms: Eternal Bliss, Supreme Bliss, the Bliss of Yoga (oneness with the Divine), Brahmic Bliss (Brahmananda), Atmic Bliss (Atma-ananda), but all these forms of Bliss are merged in one bliss alone—the Bliss of the Heart (Hridaya-ananda). In whatever small act a man may do he desires to derive joy from it. This joy is within him.

In the statement "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma," Brahma is the embodiment of Bliss. "Brahma" means pervasiveness, being present everywhere. When there is no place where He is not, where is the need to search for Him? When the doors of the heart are opened the Blissful Form of the Divine can be seen. This was precisely the experience of the Gopikas.

*The whole universe is the Lord's Abode*

*Play on the life-strings of your body  
Shed tears of devotion and offer your Spirit  
See Heaven in that experience  
That is the road and the door!*

When you offer life, all your energies and potencies to the Divine, you experience ineffable bliss. Are we today seeking such bliss? Are we aware of it? No. The seat of all bliss is the heart. Vibrations emanate from the heart. These vibrations proclaim the Lord's name. There is no need to engage in any sadhana (spiritual discipline) if the power of the Lord's name is understood.

### **Rama—three in one**

Tulsidas declared that there are only three powers that matter in the world "Krusaanu Bhaanu-Himakarathe"—Agni, Surya (the Sun), and Chandra (the Moon). These three are the eternal Witnesses. They are essential for everyone, whether he is a theist or an atheist, a yogi or an epicurean, a renunciant or a hedonist. Without fire, the body will get cold and perish. Without the radiations from the sun, no energy or vitality can exist in man. Solar rays are essential for the survival of plants or human beings. Equally the moon is essential for existence.

Human birth is a consequence of past sins and ignorance. It is necessary to destroy sins, eliminate ignorance, and achieve peace and serenity in life. Agni (the God of Fire) will burn our sins to ashes. The Sun-God destroys our ignorance. The Moon cools the agitations of the heart. These three are embodied in the name Rama=Ra+aa+ma. *Ra* represents Agni (the Fire-God). *Aa* represents the Sun-God (Surya). *Ma* represents the Moon (Chandra). The name Rama contains within it the three deities, Agni, Surya and Chandra. Moreover, the name Rama embodies also the Vedic pronouncement "Tat-twam-Asi" ("That Thou art"). "Ra" is "That" and "Ma" is "Twam". The essence of the Vedas and Shastras is contained in the Divine name. The supreme significance of the Rama name is borne out also by the science of Numerology (Sankhya Shastra). According to this science, the letters Ra+Aa+Ma make up seven according to their numerical equivalents. Seven is a sacred number, as is evident from the sacredness of the Seven Sages (Saptarishis), the seven colours of the rainbow, the seven swaras (notes of Indian music) and the seven days of the week.

### **The saptah yajna**

Today we have completed the Saptah Veda Purusha Jnana Yajna. What does Saptah Yajna mean? It is offering the Seven Sounds within us to the Divine. The completion of the yajna is described as "Samapti". "Samapti" means "Brahma-prapti", attainment of Brahmic-consciousness. The seven-day yajna is performed for this purpose.

These seven days have sped like minutes! What is the reason? It is because the seven days were spent on thoughts of the Timeless Divine and in activities dedicated to the Lord who is beyond Time, that we also transcended the limitations of Time. If we devote all our time to remembering God, time will cease to be a burden. "Kaala-Kaalaprapannaanaam Kaala

we enshrine the Lord of Time (Kaala) in our hearts, we become the masters of Time.

### **"Sankirtan"**

How is this to be done? The easiest means is chanting the name of the Lord. Community singing by an assemblage of devotees is to be preferred. This is known as "Sankirtan" (singing the glories of the Lord together). There are four types of "Sankirtan": Guna Sankirtan, Leela Sankirtan, Bhava Sankirtan and Nama Sankirtan. Guna Sankirtan means singing the attributes of God and dwelling on His numerous auspicious qualities. In describing Sri Krishna's qualities, a devotee sang:

*Can we comprehend you, Oh Krishna!  
You are subtler than the atom;  
Grosser than the grossest.  
Immanent in the eighty four lakhs  
Of species, you are their sustainer.  
With your infinite form  
How can we ever know you?*

While describing the Lord in these ways, occasional doubts may arise. If He is in the minutest atom and the vastness of space, why can't we see Him? The cosmonauts who circled the earth might have doubts about the presence of God. But there is a difference between the instruments employed by them to explore space and the mantras through which God is experienced. God is the embodiment of mantra and is not a mechanical contrivance (Yantra).

In Leela-nama Sankirtan, the devotional songs glorify the Leelas (the extraordinary sports and other miraculous deeds of the Lord) and the different ways, in which the Lord delights and tests the devotees. The Lord's ways cannot be easily understood. He makes one devotee, weep and He wipes the tears of another. He turns an ascetic into a pleasure-seeker and a libertine into a saint. He excites craziness in one and removes lunacy in another. These baffling sports of the Divine are the theme of the songs in Leela Sankirtan.

### **Madhura bhava**

In Bhava Sankirtan, the devotee's innermost feelings find expression in song. These feelings are of different kinds, Bhishma exemplifies the feeling (Bhava) of peace, and contentment (Santhi). Arjuna exemplifies the feeling of friendship (Sakhya-bhava). Hanuman is an example of Dasya Bhava (the feeling of service). Yashoda displayed the feeling of maternal love (Vatsalya bhava). The gopis exemplified the Anuraga Bhava (the feeling of endearment). Radha revealed "Madhura-bhava", the enjoyment of the sweetness of the Lord. Among the different "Bhavas", "Madhura-bhava" ranks supreme, as it is the state of ecstatic enjoyment of the Lord's name and form in all its sweetness.

Except in the chanting of the Name (Nama Sankirtan), the other forms of Sankirtan are liable to give rise to doubts and difficulties. Hence, in this Kali Age, the easiest and safest form of Sankirtan is Nama Sankirtan—community chanting of the Names of the Lord. This will not give rise to any doubts or excite emotional disturbances. As one goes on chanting the name he experiences an inner joy, which is indifferent to praise or blame. The constant repetition of the name of the Lord should lead to the imprinting of the Name on the heart. This can only happen when the heart is softened by love of the Lord.

The difference between "Kirtan" and "Sankirtan" is that the former relates to chanting by the individual in privacy, while the latter relates to community singing. In "Sankirtan", all the participants experience joy in common, hence it is superior to "kirtan", where the joy is confined to a single individual. Many a devotee, who will never venture to sing aloud, will join in community singing spontaneously without reserve.

### **A "miracle" at Dharwar**

In this context, I may recall what happened at Dharwar many years ago during My visit to the Karnataka University. That University was completely dominated by Veera Saivas. They would close their ears to any name except that of Siva. I began My discourse in Kannada in the Convocation Hall of the University. This was my first speech in Kannada. My Kannada was sweeter than the Kannada spoken in Dharwar. In their linguistic attachment, they were immensely happy when I spoke in Kannada. It is My practice to end every discourse with a community bhajan. I looked at the gathering and reviewed the state of their mind. I knew that the name of Vishnu was anathema to them and if "Narayana" was uttered they would close their ears and if Krishna's name was mentioned they would turn their heads away. In such a situation, I began singing the bhajan: "Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!" Instantly everyone in the audience responded with "Govinda Krishna Jai!" There was amongst them a Veera Saiva guru. Even he joined in the bhajan, uttering, "Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!" At the end of the Meeting, the Vice-Chancellor Mr. Adke came running towards Me and said: "We used to have our own ideas of what Sai Baba's miracles mean. Sai Baba has made people who had never in their life-time recited the name of Krishna, chant the name today. This is a great miracle!"

What is the inner meaning of this episode? It means that anyone, whatever his background, forgets himself in a Sankirtan and participates in it. Only the Divine name can make one oblivious to everything and immerse himself in the joy of chanting the Name. Learn to go through the problems of life with the Name on your lips.

### **Transcend differences**

Embodiments of the Divine! Having come here, there is only one thing which is most vital for all of you to recognise and understand. Forgetting all differences of race, religion, caste and creed, disregarding considerations of class and community, you must feel that all of you are children of one God.

*Our race is only one: the human race.*



*Our caste is only one: the caste of Love.  
Our language is only one: the language of the heart.*

When you recognise this oneness, eschew all differences and fill your hearts with love, you will be able to redeem your lives by constantly chanting the name of the Lord. That Name will help you to accomplish anything. It will fill your life with peace and happiness. It will enable you to rid yourself of likes and dislikes. The supreme quality for man is love. Develop love so that you may get rid of attachments and aversions. Thereby you will be sanctifying your lives!

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan: ‘Bhava bhaya haranaaVanditha charana’

**PRASANTHI DASARA:**

### **The Triple Message**

"Revere the mother as Divine," "Chant the name of the Lord with heartfelt devotion"; "Cultivate selfless Love and experience the supreme Bliss" these were the keynotes of Bhagavan's scintillating discourses during the seven days of the Veda Purusha Jnana Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam from Oct. 14 to 20.

The stage of the Poornachandra Hall, where the yajna was inaugurated by Bhagavan on the morning of Oct. 14th, had been austere decorated for the occasion. The yajna kunda was set up in the middle of the dais. A new gleaming statue of Shirdi Sai Baba, in the familiar sitting pose, was installed on the stage.

The Dasara celebrations began with Kalasa Sthapana in the Prasanthi Mandir on October 11. Devotees had started streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam from the beginning of the month.

There was Narayana Seva on October 13th on the spacious grounds of the Hill View Stadium. Nearly fifteen thousand men, women and children from all the surrounding villages had gathered on the grounds. As in previous years, Seva Dal volunteers and students of the Institute arranged for their sitting in orderly rows for the feeding.

Bhagavan arrived exactly at 9 a.m. and went to the rooms where the food was kept. Swami blessed the prasadam and Himself Inaugurated the Narayana Seva by serving food to some of the women and men. Scores of students from the Sathya Sai Institute and the Higher Secondary School served food to the thousands with remarkable speed and enthusiasm. Swami was on His feet for over half an hour attending to every detail of the Narayana Seva, inspiring the students and the Seva Dal by His presence.

men and women, with Bhagavan Himself presenting saris to a few women and dhotis to some men. Some overseas devotees participated in serving food and distributing clothes.

### **Veda purusha jnana yajna**

On the 14th, Bhagavan came in procession, headed by a large group of students chanting Vedic hymns, and the Ritwiks who were officiating in the yajna. Leading the procession was Bhagavan's Sai Geeta, followed by a band troupe.

Bhagavan inaugurated the Athirudhra Home. Besides the Ritwiks officiating at the Homa, there were others chanting the Vedas, an old couple doing Linga Archana and Devi Puja, a purohit who performed Surya Namaskar, and two pandits who were doing Parayana of Devi Bhagavatam and Valmiki Ramayana.

Bhagavan gave darshan to thousands of devotees in the Auditorium every morning. In the afternoons, on six days, there were discourses by Bhagavan, preceded by speeches by some old devotees and by research scholars and postgraduate students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute.

### **Students' testimony**

The speeches of the students not only testified to the extent to which they had imbibed the teachings of Bhagavan, but also revealed numerous instances in which Swami had given protection to the students or other devotees in critical situations. A common theme for all of them was the infinite love of Bhagavan, which they had experienced in innumerable ways. All of them pledged themselves to live up to the ideals of Bhagavan and dedicate themselves to His global mission for the transformation of mankind.

The Yajna concluded on October 20, with Poornahuti and adoration of Bhagavan as Veda Purusha by the Ritwiks. Bhagavan came to the auditorium from Prasanthi Mandir in a procession led by a large number of students reciting Vedic hymns.

Bhagavan delivered His concluding discourse, emphasising the inner significance of festivals like Navaratri and exhorting all devotees to rise above barriers of caste and creed, language and nationality and develop love towards each other as children of one God.

Swami later went round the auditorium sprinkling the mantra-charged Yajna-thirtham on all devotees and conferring His benediction on them.

The crowning event of the celebrations was the jhoola festival in the evening, when Swami, wearing an immaculate white robe, showered bliss on thousands in the Poornachandra Auditorium from the glittering silver jhoola. The Institute's students' orchestra provided a concert for the evening's function, which concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

*While Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were roving among the hills and dales of Dandakaranya, one day Rama moved towards the bank of a clear blue lake. While stepping down the bank, Rama put his foot on a little frog which suffered great pain but remained mute. Rama felt pity at the poor creature's plight and asked the frog why it did not cry out in protest. The frog replied, "Whenever I get into trouble or have fear from foes, I cry out, 'Rama! Rama!' But, when Rama himself is causing me pain, whom am I to appeal to?"*

—Baba ("Chinna Katha")

AVATAR VANI:

### “The Mother Divine!”

*"Recognising one's mother as the very embodiment of all Divine forces, one must show reverence to her with love. This is the true message that the Navaratri Festival gives us;" observed Bhagavan Baba, inaugurating on October 14th in the Poornachandra Auditorium the series of discourses He gave during the seven days of the Veda Purusha Jnana Yajna.*

Everyone should consider it his foremost duty today to revere the mother as divine and serve her, regardless of country or circumstance. If a man cannot respect and serve the mother, who has borne him for nine months, brought him forth into the world and reared him over the years, whom else is he likely to respect? Maternal love is akin to that of the Creator who projects and protects this infinite cosmos in countless ways. One individual may elect to worship the Divine in the form of his favourite goddess. Another may worship God in a different form and derive bliss from such worship. Each one should note that the forms in which the Divine is worshipped by others are as important for them as his own chosen deity is to him. If, on the contrary, he criticizes or casts a slur on the deities worshipped by others, he is committing a grievous sin, however well he may be performing his own worship.

Likewise, a man should show equal regard and reverence for the mothers of others as he shows for his own mother.

There are several notable examples in daily life of the divine quality which motherhood represents. The cow converts its own blood into nourishing milk for man to sustain his body. The cow is the first example of the Divine as Mother. The Earth comes next. Like the Divine, the Earth bears man in its bosom and takes care of him in many ways. Hence the Earth also is an embodiment of the Mother. In the human body the Divine flows through all limbs as "Rasa" (the divine essence) and sustains them. This divine principle is called "Rasaswaroopini". Another name for the same is "Angirasa". These divine principles that permeate and sustain the physical body should also be worshipped as mother goddesses. Then there are the great sages, the

elevates man or degrades him and, as a result of their labours and penances, gave to mankind the great scriptures, indicating the spiritual and mundane paths and how humanity can redeem its existence. These sages have also to be revered as Divine Mothers. Then, there is the guru who imparts every kind of knowledge to enable man to acquire the skills necessary for leading the good life. The guru also should be revered as a Divine Mother. The cow, the earth, the presiding deities for the body, the sages and the guru are all worthy of worship as the embodiments of Divine Motherhood. Although these five appear in different forms and names, they have one thing in common with the mother. They play a protective and sustaining maternal role for mankind and hence should be revered and worshipped as Divine Mothers.

Conversely, the mother of every child displays in relation to the child the attributes of these five entities. The mother nourishes the child, provides the necessities for its growth, teaches the child what it should know and what it should avoid and leads it on the path of righteousness.

### **Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati**

The life of a man, who cannot respect and love such a venerable mother, is utterly useless. Recognising one's mother as the very embodiment of all divine forces, one must show reverence to her and treat her with love. This is the true message that the Navaratri festival gives us. The supreme Shakti manifests herself in the form of Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. Durga grants to us energy—physical, mental, and spiritual. Lakshmi bestows on us wealth of many kinds—not just money, but intellectual wealth, the wealth of character, and others. Even health is a kind of wealth. She grants untold riches to us. And Saraswati bestows on us intelligence, the capacity for intellectual enquiry and the power of discrimination. The Navaratri festival is celebrated in order to proclaim to the world the power of these goddesses. One's own mother is a combination of all these Divine beings. She provides us energy, wealth, and intelligence. She constantly desires our advancement in life. So she represents all the three goddesses that we worshipped during the Navaratri festival.

### **Kunti's love**

If the Pandavas were able to become so dear to Krishna and make their lives worthy by serving Him, it was not on account of their own merit or austerities. It was Kunti Devi's love for them that brought to them such a great fortune. Even when they had to live in the forest or in the House of Wax, she always stayed with them and prayed for their welfare. The Pandavas also reciprocated her love, and that accounts for their final victory.

Lakshmana, likewise, was able to dwell in the forest with his brother Rama, serving him ceaselessly, only because of his mother Sumitra's blessings. She told her son that Ayodhya without Rama was like a forest, and that the forest in which Rama lived would be a veritable Ayodhya to him. It was on account of the hearty blessings of his mother that Lakshmana was able to while away fourteen years in the forest even without food or sleep.

All our epics and sacred books emphasise the power of the mother's love, her blessings, and grace. Consider the story of Gandhari and the Kauravas. When Krishna visited Gandhari to

"Though you are God, how could you be so partial? Why did you support the Pandavas in full measure, and allow the destruction of all my sons?" she asked him. Krishna replied to her that she herself was to blame for the death of her children. He reminded her that though she gave birth to a hundred sons, she didn't cast her loving glance on even one of them at any time. As she chose to remain blind-folded, she never looked at any of her sons with an affectionate eye. Kunti, on the other hand, brought up her sons with great care, attention, and affection. "How could such sinners who couldn't even enjoy their own mother's loving glance thrive and flourish?" he asked her.

There is no need to propitiate Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati for material prosperity, energy and worldly knowledge. If we love and adore the mother, we shall be showing our love and devotion to all the goddesses.

One's mother is greater than heaven itself. Sri Rama himself declared that one's mother and Motherland are greater than even heaven. The Navaratri festival teaches this profound truth. One must remember that reverence to one's own mother is one's paramount duty. If one's mother is unhappy, all the expenditure one incurs and all the worship one offers in the name of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati in the Navaratri festival will yield no fruit.

### **Mother comes first**

Even in the ancient teachings about the persons who are to be revered as Gods-mother, father, teacher and guest-the first place is given to the mother, when it says, "Matru Devo Bhava." Even in our casual talk we say, mother, father, teacher and God. God is relegated to the last position, but the mother is given the first place. This reveals the attitude of Bharatiya culture towards women in general and the mother in particular.

It is the mother that holds the child with her hand and teaches it how to walk. It is the mother that feeds the child and teaches it how to eat. It is again the mother that teaches the child to utter meaningful sounds and to speak. Thus the mother is one's foremost teacher. Vemana observed that a son who does not care for his parents is no better than the worms that are born and die in an ant-hill.

We should deem our parents as Ishwara and Parvati and serve them wholeheartedly. If we cannot please them, how can we hope to please God? Consider the story of Lava and Kusa. Sita gave birth to them in the hermitage of Sage Valmiki. They were taught various branches of knowledge by him. Sita also was teaching them many lessons and imparting to them many skills. What happened when Sri Rama himself came to fight with them? Lava and Kusa remembered their mother with great reverence and aimed an arrow at him. Rama fell into a swoon when the arrow struck him. Such is the power of one's mother's blessing.

## The Call of Sai

What is involved in the desire people have had from the start of Sai's mission, to leave their routines behind for a while, get out of usual time and domestic space, and immerse themselves in Baba's presence? The desire is based on divine discontent, the longing of the pilgrim for a New Jerusalem, a transcendental Benaras or Mecca. The call of the oasis to the caravan traveller offers refreshment after long desert days of burn and mirage, and the satisfying waters of the spirit flow fully in the sanctuary of continuous serenity, Prasanthi Nilayam.

The soul knows the truth of home in its depths here, the nourishment feeding the roots of one's existence gives one strength to push on toward fulfillment. The "part" is washed in the chaos of bafflement, mystery, surrender, surprise, and made whole again. The lovesick soul is inspired and becomes well, at peace in the ineffable presence of the beloved. Intuitively, silently, men, women and children feel this, and gravitate to Puttaparthi, securing there their heart's desire, converging on this centre to find their lives meaning.

### Symbol of perfection

He is the *most perfect* being I know. "What finally is right?" asked Walt Whitman, the American poet. And he answered: "That which tastes sweet to the most perfect person." The most perfect person, or to put it more mysteriously, the most perfect *being*—for there is that about Sai which goes beyond personhood—lives in such a fine way that all his relationships are harmonious, beneficial, ennobling, His way of being works for the good in the lives around him. He offers resolutions, not clashes and conflicts, or pains and woes. He brings the best out of life. Being a person, Sai helps people learn to live; being Being, Sai gives access to the Depth of divine reality, the Valley of eternal peace. But it is through Sai's love that people know the perfection of this Being.

From such humble origins—obscure village folk—Sai has risen to accomplish so much! His sweet persuasive voice of wisdom rings bells of recognition in so many hearts! Dozens, hundreds, thousands, millions have come to recognize and honour the inspiring fresh little Lord in the orange robe and frizzy hair. He says welcome to all that ails us, and sends us on our way feeling no pain. This Mystery Man has built, on invisible heart-to-heart foundations, a pastel oasis kingdom in the desert, and re-paved a royal road to the holy in men's lives. Sai has enthused millions to venerate wisdom, devote themselves to service, and become established in peace and love.

### Blessed naiveté

While some came, smart men, with minds set to disprove, I felt Sai's love melt me and I was transformed. I was so naive as to believe that by feeling my heart taking refuge at Sai's feet, wherever I was on earth, I was guided, guarded, saved by that, that grace! I sat with eyes closed, rapt. Blessed naiveté, newborn simple, and innocent!

Making a living, getting on in the world takes its toll—this age is not supportive of such a link as long-distance communion by heart connection. And again and again I patiently return to my childish faith. Mentally I place my heart and head at Sai's lotus feet. And bliss wells up silently inside. However often I "die" in personal disappointments, in others' eyes, in the transforming cycles of breaths, days and nights, lunar and solar circlings and lifetimes, I am born back to faith in Sai, and I play in patience at the lotus feet, a child, naive, a newborn fool for God. Over and over! "The lotus that blooms in the fire never dies," and the heart knows its home and follows its bliss to Sri Sai.

—William Jackson, *Indiana University*

## **Tears**

*Rolling from the eye,  
A place that seems so high  
As a rain-drop from the sky  
Difficult to know why?*

*For the tender you come out in grief and sorrow,  
For some, when they think about the morrow,  
For others when they are scared or in fear,  
Also for those who cannot bear the loss of their dear.*

*You may rush out even in happiness,  
Or sometimes with mere dust.  
All this is worldly and useless,  
For the Almighty God, it is meaningless.*

*You show your true value to the Father,  
When you come out for those who suffer,  
Remember every drop for others laid,  
Brings God hundredfold to your aid.*

—Ashok Bhat, *Brindavan*

## **Symbols of the Spirit**

*High on the cliff, with joy I see,  
Where the air is so fresh and free,  
Amazing changes taking place,*

*By Bhagavan Baba's Will and Grace.  
  
Now Hill View Stadium is more alive,*

*How majestically they stand,  
On the rocky terraced land.*

*These concrete figures great  
A holy atmosphere create,  
Changing the hill's face,  
They evoke words of praise.*

*Tomorrow will bring many more,  
What Splendour is yet to come,  
Lies hidden in the Lord's bosom.*

*Every religion is a road  
That leads to the Lord's Abode;  
Everybody is like a son;  
Loving Father is Only One.*

**—Chandrabhan Singh**

## **Playing Your Role**

Each of us has a unique and special role to play in this great drama of life. Discovering this role and adhering to it is not only the key to bringing ourselves closer to God, but is also the kind of Nishkama karma that Swami speaks of. How does one become aware of his special role and realise what his life's mission is?

Seeking the purpose is one of the most innate and essential longings of every human being. With this feeling, life becomes meaningful and well directed. One experiences sparks of inner joy and gets a sense of fulfillment. Coming to terms with what our true work is, moves us towards the divine. Finding your life's purpose need not be a difficult task, and there are a few vital secrets that could even make the process enjoyable. (Yes, even spiritually it can be fun!)

**TURN EVERYTHING INTO AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE:** This is the most essential step not only in doing our work, but also in any endeavour we may undertake in our life. The most important aspect of this process is that it allows us to apply it wherever we are, whatever our current occupation or task may be. Every avatar and teacher has demonstrated the usefulness of this important step. Bhagavan Baba, from His childhood, had always expressed God's love in all His activities.

Moreover, turning everything into an expression of God's love right where you are, expands you and moves you into alignment with your real life's purpose. Jesus, who was the son of a carpenter, expressed God's love while being a carpenter. This moved him from carpentry to healing and eventually to becoming a Messiah.

Expressing love is everybody's true purpose. The most essential secret of a life of fulfillment is to express love no matter what your job is. Swami has stressed this again and again. "Start the day with love. Fill the day with love. End the day with love. That is the way to God." This is not a copybook maxim. It is a great mantra for daily living. We can look at Swami and the wonderful



love He has brought has expanded from the tiny village of Puttaparthi to every corner of the world.

### **Use of talents**

**RECOGNISE YOUR UNIQUE TALENT, SKILL OR GIFT:** Everyone has some special talent, skill or gift. It is important that we recognise them, so that they become an integral part of our lives. Unfortunately, the world does not accord equal recognition to different talents and even attempts to differentiate between them in terms of monetary rewards. A cardiac surgeon will receive much money and recognition, while a loving and devoted wife and mother receives little recognition, if any, from the world. Yet the wife and mother is every bit as talented and important as the heart surgeon.

In some, there is a unique artistic talent that lies dormant and has to be drawn out. In others, it is a special healing quality or ability. Some others have the ability to bring humour and joy into the same old working routine, keeping the spirits of everyone around them lifted. Still others have the ability to acknowledge the special unique abilities of others, while most of the people simply take them for granted.

Be willing to remove yourself from the judgement of the world, and let God show you what your unique gift is and how to develop it to serve others well and express God's love in the world. Swami is constantly helping us to realize our divine potential. He says: "Earn by your efficiency and enthusiasm the right to play higher and higher roles. That is the meaning and purpose of life."

### **Share your gifts**

**BE WILLING CONSISTENTLY TO SHARE YOUR GIFTS WITH THE WORLD:** Once you are aware of your gifts and talents, start sharing them with others in all aspects of your life. Don't let meaningless barriers stop you from this, such as not getting any money for your talents or receiving outward recognition. These are not important. Once you start giving your gifts to the world—whatever they are—and doing so in a way which expresses your love of God, the inner joy received from this experience will be sufficient compensation. Nor is that all. The more you share your gifts and talents, the more opportunities for service will present themselves to you. Look at the real results: the joy you bring to others. Let these results prove themselves to you. Whatever your special talent or gift, give it with love. Immerse yourself in love, in all your endeavours. Love is your guide, your reward. Most importantly, love will give you the sense of purpose you've sought all your life.

—*Michael J. Oliver*

*Add two spoons of water to two seers of milk; the water too is appreciated as milk! So too, let your tiny drops of love for things material merge with the stream of love for God and be elevated. At present your sadhana can be described only as adding two seers of water to*

*any one, you cannot indulge in unhealthy rivalries, you will not find fault with any one. Life becomes soft, sweet and smooth.*

—Baba

### **Awakening: The Grace of Sai**

*Life isn't really what it seems,  
It's only a series of dreams.*

*Through Him we come to know the goal,  
It's not the body, it's the soul.*

*We may believe it's all so real,  
Because we think: we see, we feel.*

*With the aid of His instruction,  
We can attain "self " destruction.*

*But beyond the wishes and fears,  
Notwithstanding the smiles and tears,*

*We enter into the Great Light,  
Where there is no wrong and no right.*

*If life is merely but a dream,  
Can it have a reason, a theme?*

*Free from the dream and illusion,  
Away from pain and confusion.*

*Perhaps, there may be a purpose,  
something more under the surface?*

*No more let down and no sorrow,  
No yesterday, no tomorrow.*

*How to explore it, how to reach?  
What books to read, and who will teach?*

*Aware the journey has ended,  
We did not fall. We ascended.*

*As we look for meaning to life,  
What can uplift us from this strife?*

*It was under His direction,  
that we achieved resurrection.*

*If there is more, then it's our fate,  
to overcome pleasure and hate.*

*We have secured Peace from on High,  
The Absolute, the grace of Sai.*

*To find meaning, to reach life's end,  
We seek help, we need the True Friend.*

—Michael Dave, U.S.A.

### **Divinity**

*He that hung the stars;  
And lit the moon,  
Silent and bright,*

*He who made the sun shine;  
And the flowers bloom;  
Has given us life;  
To live in this beautiful world.*

*He who gave us a little loving heart;  
And a little place to live in,  
To learn to bear the streams of Love  
That He showers on us each day.*

*Be grateful and know that He is God.*

**—R. Ram Mohan, XII BPC**

## **Knowing and Doing**

The hall-mark of a properly educated person is that he represents in himself a combination of what may be described as 'intellectual vision' with what we should identify as 'knowledge of technique'. One of these, without the other, will make a person deficient in real value. Intellectual vision, by itself, will remain ethereal and not alter things at the ground-level. Mere mastery of technique will result in human beings becoming automatons. True education should result in the pupils knowing well what they know, and doing well what they do.

The human element is of paramount importance. Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of all time, has said:

*"The chief motivating force behind all our effort ought to be an overriding concern for man and his destiny. We should not forget this in the midst of our diagrams and equations."*

The educational institutions created under the divine will and guidance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are fully in tune with the exhortation of this eminent scientist, who was a great Humanist as well.

The transformation of a deprived and down-trodden society into a progressive one, which may be called a 'fulfillment society' calls for change—change on a grand scale, an all-pervasive social change, a metamorphosis of habits and customs and a wrenching re-orientation of values concerning time, status, money and work and are-weaving of the fabric of our daily existence. To bring about such a change, we need education—not just higher education or education in the specialties, craft-education, vocational education and the like—but a form and style of education that will touch the hearts and transform the minds of every member of society. It will have to be

help them to grow and enhance the happiness of fellow-human beings; generate in its pupils an attitude of mind tuned to an increase in productivity of work; and be suffused with a moral force which forms the foundation for purity of conduct. The Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the allied institutions symbolize this approach to education more than any other institution created in our country in current times.

We are the inheritors of several priceless legacies from our spiritual and cultural past: adherence to truth and rectitude of conduct; an unacquisitive temperament (and Swami often speaks of the imperative need to impose a ceiling on our desires); placing the organisation and society above one's personal interest; eschewing hatred and violence; and the cultivation of compassion for all living things. The challenge of today is to combine the best elements in our heritage with the bounties of science and technology that are valuable in the human context. Not all of what science yields is good. Despite some glittering successes, science, in its cold and objective march forward, has left behind humanism on the way and brought into being many bizarre and nightmarish products—the horrendous weapons of war which threaten to destroy the human race at one stroke. Man is the only species in Nature which indulges in the killing of its own kind; and this is for an inglorious end. The challenge is to be able to fuse the best in our cultural tradition with the best that science can and does create for the promotion of human welfare. We in this country have the wisdom; and Bhagavan Baba's divine grace is at work to unlock this potential and usher in a model to benefit the whole of the human race.

Competence is our elementary duty; but, to achieve progress, we need more than competence—an attitude of ceaseless striving to establish higher standards of performance in the work that we do. It is necessary to create a climate of high expectation because, quite often, it is high expectation that inspires high performance. It is equally essential to build up confidence in one's ability to achieve great deeds. Bhagavan Baba has made these desirable attributes—striving for exemplary performance, fulfilling ambitious expectations and cultivating in individuals the confidence that goals previously regarded as impossible to achieve can be reached by a dedicated, determined effort—the corner-stones of the educational mansions that he is creating.

Bhagavan often points out that happiness, in the true sense, will not, come through the acquisition of material gains—not through the gaining of power to dominate over the weaker elements in our society—but only through the pursuit of goals perceived to be worthwhile and enduring. And it is the supreme task of education to put into the minds of our pupils a vision of these goals and into their hearts a yearning to achieve them. The Sai institutions of learning are attuned to this task.

### **The Sai spirit**

We have a tendency to tolerate shoddiness in philosophy on the ground that philosophy is an exalted subject, and look down upon excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a lowly form of activity. Because of this attitude, we end up with poor philosophy and poor plumbing. We should resolve that we need good performance in all of our socially accepted activities. We should be prepared to promote an aristocracy of excellence in every calling based upon the

air knows that this attitude to work and quality of performance is spontaneously practised in all sectors of its activities. I will describe it as the all-pervasive Sai-Spirit, which is at the same time divine and human.

Bhagavan Baba's clarion-call is for the inculcation of human values in our educational system. If these values take root in the system, the emerging products from our institutions will have the following attributes:

they will want peace with justice in a world that acknowledges the rule of law and in which no nation or individual need live in fear;

they will want freedom, not being born to have some one else's foot over the neck or hand over the mouth; and freedom on the home-front and a world in which freedom is looked upon as a good and easily available commodity;

they will want the dignity and work of every individual to be recognised and safeguarded;

they will want every person to be given an opportunity to achieve the best in him or her, dissenting from conditions such as disease, ignorance and poverty that tend to stunt the growth of individuals;

they will subscribe strongly to the tenets of equality before the law and equality of opportunity for all.

These attributes are not exhaustive but illustrate the bounties that can flow out of a value-based system of education. They have deep roots in the tradition and culture of the people concerned. There is an intimate connection between an individual's attitude towards these aims and deeper feelings which are 'universal' and 'eternal'. Bhagavan Baba's teachings place equal stress on both-the individual's hopes and aspirations and deep universal feelings.

The monuments of the spirit will not remain unattended but will call for nourishment in each generation by the allegiance of believing men and women. Every individual, whether a teacher or the taught, has to see himself or herself as a builder and maintainer of the value-system that we cherish. To convert this dictum into reality is the over-riding responsibility of the educational structures that we create and the action-plans that, we implement. We have before us the luminous example of the Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

We are privileged to look at the lotus-feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba—to derive the strength, the wisdom and the vision that we need. His kindness and compassion have no boundaries.

**The supreme teacher**

uncertainties. The world is able to go on and find solutions to its problems because of the advent of great and noble characters. We are in the living presence of a great and noble soul - a teacher par excellence whose effulgence is brighter than a thousand suns. He expects each one of us to do our best to make the world cleaner and safer to live in and to contribute what we can toward the lifting of the burden of poverty, malnutrition and poor health from the backs of people everywhere. And He will kindle a little of the divine spark in our hearts. At this moment, let us rejoice in the glory that we see in SAI RAM.

—*Prof. S. Sampath*

*From the address delivered in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Gurupoornima day, 9-7-1988*

## **Devotees: What Next**

There are said to be fifty million devotees of Sai Baba in the world. I wonder how many of these are truly dedicated adherents. I doubt if there are more than a few thousand, in the sense that they have made a fundamental and consistent effort to radically change their whole natures, their attitude to work and service, their life-styles, and above all, their capacity to love. There are too many fringe members, too many beginners who remain at the beginners' stage. Swami would say they are '*paddling in the shallows instead of diving deep into the ocean.*' Ideally, the impact of Sai should make one feel that one's life has been divided into two parts: Before Baba and After Baba. We have to slowly grasp the mind-boggling concept that Sai Baba is no mere guru, or even a minor Avatar like the Buddha, Mohammed, or Jesus. He is the Poorna Brahman, the God Force made manifest in its entirety. His movement has been described by Dr. Gokak as 'the revolution of all revolutions' because its goal is quite literally to 'unmake and remake the nature of man'.

How do we set about becoming better devotees? I think the first priority is to fully grasp that all mankind, indeed all life, are tiny cells in the body of God, so that whatever we hurt is really hurt to ourselves. It is a salutary thought, and it should surely give us a clearer concept of the Brotherhood of Man. Some cells, it is true, have become cancerous, like murderers, rapists, drug barons, but they are still our brothers; they need healing, not killing.

### **Self-awareness**

Increased self-awareness and self-honesty is a *sine qua non*. Swami says: '*No man can know God who does not know himself.*' Most of us rationalise and deceive ourselves, even unconsciously when we want something which is basically wrong.

Swami says that *two-thirds of meditation should be self-enquiry*. One's aim should be to become a child of God rather than a child of conditioning. Some people are afraid to look too deeply into themselves for fear of opening up some kind of Pandora's Box. But self-awareness

cupboard! It is only retained sin that binds and blinds.

### **Love in action**

Next, I feel one should have a clear understanding of the meaning and goal of life. Man is half animal, half potentially divine. Swami tells us that the sole purpose of our incarnation is to crucify the ego (the lower self) on the altar of compassion. The goal of our lives should be '*to grow in love, to expand that love, and to merge with God who is Love, and this is best done through service.*' He himself serves mankind 24 hours a day. He does not sleep. He is the very embodiment of love.

But of course it is love in action, or selfless loving service to mankind. Service, or love inaction, must become the hub of one's life. If practised regularly service becomes an attitude of mind which spills over into all relationships, with family, friends, with everybody, even with those one dislikes, for we dislike a person with our personality, but we can still love that person with our soul.

There are so many little ways of loving and serving, and little ways lead to bigger ways. For example, answer the telephone amiably, rather than with a snappy recitation of one's number; it sets the tone of the conversation to follow in the same way that the opening paragraph of a novel sets the tone of the book. Cook lovingly; the food will absorb your vibrations and be more digestible. It is a well-known fact that one of the chief complaints in prisons is constipation, not because of lack of exercise or bad food, but because the food is cooked without care.

Place a ceiling on desires. Desire is the cause of most of the world's suffering. One can work at it through spiritual discipline. This is certainly good for some people, but it can also lead to frustration, and frustration is disease. I think the better way is through sublimation to grow out of one's desires, and this is best done through service. I can only write from experience. As a young-man, from an affluent family, I took holidays in the South of France, I enjoyed so-called high-living. But after the past thirty years of service I live in a small cottage, run a secondhand Mini, eat very little, spend very little on clothes. I have foregone holidays and all social life. I work for Swami seven days a week. It is no sacrifice; indeed my nightmare would be to be compelled to lead my former life. I have found the inner joy of service so much more fulfilling than indulging the senses in physical and material living.

Expand a sense of duty and learn to accept duties with a good grace. Swami says: '*The secret of happiness lies not in doing what you like, but in liking what you have to do.*' It is true, for the simple reason that in doing what you have to do you are following God's will instead of your own, and in time you grow to prefer that.

*'Wasting things is wasting God,* says Swami. Learn to be thrifty and to make do and mend. No one *has* to follow the increasingly material modern trends. Ask yourself the following questions: how much food do I waste, when millions in the world are starving? How much energy do I waste in long, gossipy telephone conversations, or in reading trivia in the

of what is necessary for our reasonably frugal needs should be 'held in trust for humanity'?

Try to resist the temptation to know too much. Swami says: '*You seek too much information and not enough transformation!*' There must be a balance between Knowing and Being. Knowledge that is not put to use in service is like food which is not digested.

Of course detachment from the characteristics of the lower self should be a major plank in one's efforts at self-improvement—that is, detachment from ego, personal pride, envy, jealousy, anger, hate. Learn to welcome criticism instead of being offended by it. If there are occasions when you feel jealousy or envy, beat down these negative emotions and try to transmute them into positive ones. To take one small example, if you are sitting in Swami's darshan line, and He calls the person sitting next to you for interview and ignores you, transmute any incipient pangs of envy into a feeling of happiness for the one so blessed. I think it is a matter of instant recognition and arrestment until the habit grows and such emotions no longer arise.

When praying to Baba do not always ask for something, for faith, a sign, a healing, a dream, or guidance. He once said, after an exhausting tour, '*It is your love that sustains me.*' He needs our help in his gargantuan task, so sometimes ask him what you can give *him*, for the best way you can serve *him*.

Finally, a few ideals for those who aspire to become advanced devotees, which one would not advocate for beginners. First, one must learn to dispense with the need of the Sai physical form by activating the omnipresent link. I remember talking to some students at the College at Brindavan. They said they felt closer to Swami when He was away than when He was present. I suspect there is an element of spiritual immaturity, perhaps even of indulgence, in those who make the journey to Swami every year, sometimes twice a year, at very considerable expense. Swami discourages it. He says: '*Make your home a Prasanthi Nilayam.*'

Finally, we have to accept that suffering is necessary for our growth. Swami has said: '*Do you think I would confront you with pain if it were not for your good?*' and on another occasion '*Happiness is just an interlude between two periods of suffering.*' Conversely, suffering is just an interlude between two periods of happiness.

When I came to Baba, it was the most impacting and consummating experience of my life. In fact, on reflection, it seems that every significant event in a long and chequered incarnation has been a preparation for a final mission—to play a major role in bringing the Sai message to the ethnic nationals of my motherland.

I submit that whatever happens to you in life, be it joy, sorrow, happiness, cancer, disablement, or whatever, is for your ultimate good. I have come to believe this, beyond reason, in the core of my higher self. To those who aspire to become quality devotees it is the highest faith you will achieve. Perhaps this is why Swami always says: '*Why fear when I am here?*'



**STUDENTS' CORNER:**

## **One Holy Morning**

Swami's compassion is like a perennial and nectarine river, flowing ceaselessly. When He showers compassion, it pours like rain from the heavens. So sweet are His actions, so loving and so elevating.

On the evening of 24th December 1987, all the boys in Prasanthi Nilayam were in a festive mood, busy preparing many greeting cards with the confident hope of offering them to Bhagavan the next day—Christmas day. Although I was not in a mood to do anything, the enthusiasm of other students prompted me to think of preparing something. Slowly and steadily, I prepared a greeting card with Swami's portrait in the centre. And around it I drew some floral designs. On the top I wrote "ISA SAI."

All the while a voice inside me was asking: "Will He accept it? What if He does not?" My thoughts went jumping to and fro: one moment hope, the next moment despair. Moreover I started thinking of all the mistakes I had committed previously. They ranged from not attending Suprabhatam to dozing off in the class, gossiping and what not. With all these racking thoughts, I made something like a greeting card and tried to sleep. But I could not. I was tormented by all kinds of thoughts the whole night.

Somehow I got up the next day, got ready and went to the Mandir for Sai's divine darshan. All the while, no other thought entered my mind, except the doubt whether Bhagavan would accept my greetings.

There was a serene silence in the atmosphere. The eyes of all those present shone with love for Lord Sai. Suddenly, the doors of Swami's interview room opened and Swami came out in His most gracious manner. What grace! What love! Slowly, He glided towards the long line of devotees, blessing them, consoling them as He passed. Slowly He approached me. All the while I prayed like one possessed. I am sure I had never prayed like that in my life. My heart beat fast. "He is coming, coming," I thought. He came, but did not see my greeting card, but simply said, "Koorcho, koorcho," which means "sit down." He glided away slowly. With that all my hopes and expectations evaporated. Tears welled out of my eyes. Immediately, I started cursing myself, levelling accusations against myself. Whether it was by Bhagavan's grace or not, there was a teacher sitting beside me, who had observed everything and consoled me by saying that when we offer anything to Swami, it is His will whether to accept it or not. That hardly gave me any solace. However, somewhere in a corner of my heart, hope lingered on. After the morning programme and Arati were over, devotees started leaving the Mandir. "Why not I sit in the front?" I asked myself and sat in the front. Time passed. Once again my long lost hope returned.

us left. The other students added to my misery by saying that He would not come and things of that sort. Something inside me was urging me not to budge from the place. Nearly an hour passed after Swami had gone inside the interview room. My hopes were dwindling. In my desperation I was also about to go when I heard a click of the door and Swami came out again. He was more gracious than ever and smiled intriguingly as He emerged. His gleaming eyes were brimming with love. He had barely come out one step from the room when I started running towards Him with the greeting card, almost in a state of frenzy. Swami lovingly stopped me, accepted the greetings, autographed it, and smiled at the word I had written at the top: "ISA SAI." Swami said, "very happy" a few times. He graciously allowed the five of us present there to offer Namaskars at His lotus feet, blessed us, and patted us. He filled my heart with joy divine. Having filled the cups of our hearts with love to the brim, He went back to His abode of peace.

I was too dazed even to move. I was thrilled and stunned by the experience. Swami's inscrutable ways of showering His love are among the most fortunate and unforgettable blessings in our life.

—V. S. Vijayasathy, *I B.Com.*

"Education has to promote and develop certain basic value systems. It is not only the individual value system that is important. What we need is a value system shared by all. We are held together as a nation by values, beliefs and attitudes that all of us share. It is this bond of shared ideals that provides cohesion and strength to our society, despite all the tension that life involves," observed Sri Brahmananda Reddy, Governor of Maharashtra, delivering his address to the Seventh Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, in the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 22.

Besides the large number of candidates from three campuses of the Institute who were receiving their degrees at the Convocation, there was a large gathering of educationists and devotees from all parts of the world, who had come to participate in Bhagavan's birthday celebrations.

The academic procession to the Auditorium started from the Prasanthi Mandir at 4-40 p.m., with the Registrar bearing the mace and two students carrying the emblem of the Institute, with the motto: "Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara."

The Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, the Chief Guest, Sri Brahmananda Reddy, and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. N. Saraf, led the procession, with members of the Institute Trust, the Governing Body, the Academic Council and the Deans of Faculties following them in pairs. The Institute's Band troupe, in their shining white uniforms, went ahead of the procession, playing several tunes. A large group of students reciting Vedic chants came behind the band group.

After the Chancellor and others had taken their seats on the dais, the proceedings began with invocation by the students, consisting of hymns from the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Welcoming the Chief Guest and others attending the Convocation, Dr. Saraf, Vice Chancellor, explained the distinctive "philosophy" of the Sathya Sai Institute, inspired by Bhagavan Baba. He recalled Sri Brahmananda Reddy's role in the freedom struggle and his subsequent career as Minister and Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh and as Minister in the Union Government in charge of various portfolios.

### **First batch of Ph.D. awardees**

Referring to the progress of the Institute (Deemed University) in recent years, Dr. Saraf pointed out that education was free at all levels and admission of students was entirely on merit. A large number of students were receiving scholarships. A fine cadre of research scholars has been built up over the years. Dr. Saraf said: "This is the first year when a large number of Ph.D. Research scholars of our University have completed their doctoral work. These scholars are Mr. K. Devsen, Department of Mathematics; Mr. Sundaresan and Mr. Nageswara Rao, Department of Chemistry; Mr. Vijaya Kumar, Mr. Prabal Mall and Mr. Gopichandran, Department of Bio-Sciences, Mr. Sudarshanam, Department of Physics; Mr. Sundar Iyer, Mr. Mayur Pandya

Their contributions have been outstanding. They will be awarded Degrees by the Revered Chancellor personally and presented with Gold Medals. Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath and Dr. Sankar Subramanian, who received Doctorate Degrees from the University in 1984 and 1987 respectively, will also receive Gold Medals."

Dr. Saraf said that the first batch of students of the course in Master of Business Administration, who completed their two-year Degree Course in April 1988, will be awarded Degrees. The second batch of B. Ed. students will also receive their Degrees. "This year we added yet another dimension to our academic profile. Our Revered Chancellor inaugurated on June 23, 1988, Sri Sathya Sai Centre for Computer Sciences at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. It is fully equipped with various levels of computer systems to cater to the needs of students, research scholars and teaching staff of the University. We propose to start Advanced Course in Computer Science and employment-oriented short-term proficiency and diploma courses for our students." "The Graduates of the year," he concluded, "will embark on a rededicated life, one for which the strategy and goal is human excellence."

The Chancellor then declared the Convocation open.

The candidates for degrees belonging to all the Faculties, other than that of Business Management, were presented to the Chancellor by the Dean of Science Faculty. The candidates for the M.B.A. degree were presented by the Dean of the Faculty of Business Management. All the candidates stood up in their seats and bowed to the Chancellor when he conferred his benediction on them. The Vice-Chancellor administered the Institute's pledge to the new graduates.

### **Gold medalists**

The Registrar then read out the names of candidates who had been awarded gold medals for all-round excellence and for their performance in their fields of study.

The medals for Sri Sathya Sai all-round excellence were awarded to Hariprasanna Kumar and Kumari Leena Bardoloi. In addition to gold medals, the awards carry a cash prize of Rs. 500 each.

For academic excellence, the following candidates who came out first in their respective final year examinations were awarded gold medals

S. Kini Rahul (B.A.)  
G. Sayee Krishnan (B.Sc. MPC)  
Kumari Nangia Namita (B.Sc. Home Science)  
Kumari A. K. Gayathri Devi (M.A., Philosophy)  
Kumari Sreekala M. Nair (M.A., Philosophy)

Kumari M. Praphulla (M.A., Telugu language and Literature)

M. Radhakrishna Reddy (M.Com.)  
Arun Manohar Dhareshwar (M.B.A.)  
Kumari Sowmya Roopa (B.Ed.)  
Suman Majumdar (B.Sc., Bio. Sci.)

The names of the candidates who had been awarded Ph.D. degrees were also read out and each of them was presented with a gold medal and degree by the Chancellor.

All the awardees went up to the dais to receive the medals from the Chancellor and get His blessings.

### **"The Bond of Shared Ideals"**

Sri Brahmananda Reddy then delivered his Convocation address:

"The main purpose of my coming here," he said, "is to pay my respects to Baba on his birthday and to seek his blessings, in the divine value of which I have unflagging faith and reverence. My delivering the Convocation Address is merely an act of humble obedience to the command of Baba in whose presence I do not consider myself competent to give words of wisdom and advice expected on such an occasion."

"My student friends, you should be proud of being the alumni of this great Institution... The very rural setting of the Institute is congenial to the development of the individual and his vision through communion with nature. I can say with pride and happiness that Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has become a model for all educational institutions in the country.

"Education has to promote and develop certain basic value systems, Social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought and expression, equality of status and opportunity, dignity of the individual, are all values that our Constitution seeks to secure for all our citizens. If these values have to become real, they should be living and growing in our lives. What we need is a value system shared by all. It is this bond of shared ideals that provides cohesion and strength to our society, despite all the tension that life involves. It is this strength that helps us to rise above the conflicts that bedevil the society, which gives our nation its unity, integrity and capacity to endure."

### **Value-based education**

"All the Sri Sathya Sai Schools and Colleges are already preparing students to become responsible citizens of the country by inculcating a profound sense of Indianness, self-discipline and selflessness, sense of service to fellow human beings, development of character and correct attitudes necessary for the full development of the individual, a sense of unity and integrity, faith in God and a sense of spirituality and divinity inherent in man. The highest standards of value-based education in all Sri Sathya Sai Institutions constitute an example worthy of emulation all over the country. The credit for this path-breaking experiment undoubtedly goes to the inspiring guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I am sure that my young friends who pass out of

of public good. I am also sure that these young people will carry the message of true education imbibed here, to every nook and corner of the country and help in character building and promoting the prosperity of the nation."

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His benedictory address (details of which are published separately).

The Convocation came to a close with the playing of the National Anthem by the Institute band, with the entire gathering standing.

Bhagavan Baba, Sri Brahmananda Reddy and others then returned in procession to the Mandir.

### **Play with a message**

Later in the evening an English version of a play which Bhagavan had written in His ninth year, "Cheppinatlu chesthaaraa?" ("Do you practise what you preach?") was presented by a cast which included a number of postgraduate students and children of the primary school. The theme of the play was an exposure of the kind of double life led by parents and teachers and how a young lad, who is profoundly moved by this exhibition of insincerity and double standards, brings about a change in the attitudes of the parents and the teacher. The role of the young boy, Krishna, was played by Srikanth, an eighth standard student, who carried the palm for his performance. The denouement in the play is reached when the young Krishna breaks down emotionally and expresses his revulsion at the failure of elders to live up to what they preach and the futility of an education that ignores right living.

At the end of the play, Swami materialised a chain for young Srikanth in appreciation of his superb acting. The principal actors in the play were the father and mother of Krishna and the teacher. Among the supporting characters were a pompous pandit, a blind beggar and an indigent student. Excellent background music was provided by students playing on the flute, the veena, the tabla and other instruments. All the actors did very well and the entire play, with its powerful message of the need for harmony in thought, word and deed, was immensely enjoyed and appreciated by the vast gathering that filled the Auditorium. Sri S. B. Chavan, Union Finance Minister, and Sri Brahmananda Reddy, who watched the play with intense interest, were deeply impressed with the acting and singing by the participants in the play. Nearly thirty children from the primary school were in the cast and proved themselves lively actors.

Bhagavan, who not only provided the inspiration and the script for the play but had directed its production at every stage, blessed all the actors and presented them with shawls.

Many, many questions have  
I tackled many problems of the truth  
but the Grandaddy question on them all is...

What's the difference between 'Him' and  
you?

He says He is God He says we are all God  
yet something inside me keeps on saying  
there is more to being God than just  
affirming

'I am God'

He says we are all waves  
as He is the ocean  
and all that is between us is  
just monkey mind and emotion  
yet if I control my mind  
and sit on my emotions  
I still don't feel I'm exactly Him  
so what is More about the ocean

I have been trying very hard  
I've weathered every test

but it wasn't until just recently  
I really knew my best

yet I know I am not Him  
not all that is Him is me  
for I am nearly the substance pure  
but I will never be He

for it is our task to wash away and pick out  
the bits that are not pure rice  
and when that's done we are for Him  
all that's pure and nice  
and He helps us ever in our work  
with love and a fatherly eye  
and keeps in check the monkey mind  
and the urge to desire and deny.

Yet I know that I am the wave  
and He the sum of the ocean  
and only when we are all pure waves  
will we know the synergy of the ocean....

—S. E.

## Serve and Survive

We all know (or should) that giving compassionate service to those in need is held in high regard by Baba. Also, many of us have experienced an expanded sense of well-being and fulfillment when we turn our efforts to the needs of the many unfortunates in our communities. We need only recall Sai Baba's ringing announcement many years ago that He did not incarnate in order to surround Himself with devotees or to create a new religion, but to call us all to love and to serve.

A condensation of an article in *American Health* magazine states that an "explosion of new research is pointing to the benefits of altruism." It reports the results of a University of Michigan study of 2,700 people over a period of fourteen years which indicates that people, especially men, with no close social or community relationships have a death rate 2½ times that of people who are actively involved with other people. A University of California study of 7,000 people

shunned community organisations had more than twice the mortality rate of others—regardless of race, income, physical activity, or other life-style factors."

Researchers are starting to look for the reasons behind these figures. Hans Selye, a pioneer in modern stress research, was of the opinion that by helping people you inspire their gratitude and affection, which somehow helps protect you from stress. The warm feeling which results from such activities is thought to come from endorphins, the brain's natural tranquilizers. Through the neural link between the mind and our immune system, such altruism may result in an increase of the cells, produced in bone marrow and the spleen, which are needed to fight infection.

A Harvard psychologist discovered that showing his students a film of Mother Teresa working among Calcutta's sick and poor resulted in an increase of immunoglobulin A, an antibody that combats respiratory infections. In one of the "Type A and Type B" personalities, a University of Florida psychologist found that many characteristics of the Type A profile were harmless. "Only a few of those characteristics—anger, irritability, and aggressive competitiveness—seem to put people at a higher risk for heart attack." A Duke University study found that the more hostile the person, the more blocked his coronary arteries were.

### **Service and bliss**

Such research findings certainly tie in well with Baba's teachings on service. True, Baba doesn't—to my knowledge—promise us radiant health through service. He does promise bliss, and I am tempted to suggest that improved personal health is certainly a step along the way. Baba has stated that you cannot make spiritual progress with an ailing body. If, to secure good health, we are given the choice between gulping wonder drugs (with all their side effects, including the economic one) and helping in some small way to make the world a better place, how could anyone choose the former? Yet, we may very well be making just that choice right now.

In one of His many discourses on Santhi, or enduring peace, Baba says, quite logically, that we cannot find unchanging peace in an ever-changing world. He admonishes us to "arise and work (for) work is the mission of man." The key, He says, is to establish a worthwhile goal and the proper environment for achieving it. "Until you fix upon a certain direction for all your thoughts and activities, you will only be building shadowy castles in the air and roaming about in them."

### **One good turn**

I wonder if Baba had anything like my workshop and toy-making in mind when He spoke those words, but they seem to apply. The toys are all donated to local children's shelters, day-care centres, homes for abused children, etc. One of the most pleasant aspects of the project is the cooperation I've received from local merchants. When they learn that what I make is donated thus, they supply me all the materials, power tool repair and replacement parts, saw-blades, drill and router, and such, all free or at considerably reduced prices.



When I have attempted to thank them by giving them a completed toy for one of their children or grandchildren, they insist on thanking me for the toy by donating more materials or equipment I And so it goes. It is, as Baba says: The more you give, the more you have to give; you never run out.

For several months my health was going downhill in a hurry. I centered my thoughts, plans, and activities on the toys. I established the goal of making 250 this year and improving its efficiency (the proper environment).

Since then my health has improved dramatically.

—Jay Jarrett

*From the U. S. Sathya Sai Newsletter, Fall, 1988*

*Devotion to one's motherland is as important as devotion to God. Honesty and integrity are essential for the bright future of the individual. Likewise, national character and patriotism are necessary for the welfare of the country. When integrity and patriotism are developed in an individual his vision becomes broad, and his outlook balanced. Every student and every citizen should utilise the wealth of noble character acquired by him for the uplift of society. Without expecting any reward in return, without hankering after ephemeral and illusory fame, honour or recognition, everyone must consecrate to the nation in a selfless manner all his powers and possessions.*

—Baba

**THE CHANCELLOR SPEAKS:**

**"Make Others Happy"**

*"Be happy. Make others happy.  
All will be happy. God will be happy."*

Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, concluded His benedictory address to the Seventh Convocation of the Institute, with this exhortation to the alumni of the Institute and the large gathering of devotees present in the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 22. The Chancellor deplored the ignorance among Indian students of the greatness of Bharat's immemorial culture and called upon the new graduates and students of the Institute to become torch-bearers of this culture to the nation and the world.

Bhagavan began His discourse with the poem from Bhartrhari in which the poet extols the many-sided benefits of true education (Vidya) and declares that one without such education is a mere animal.

In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said: Education is an ornament for man. It is his secret wealth. It confers prosperity and fame. It is the teacher of teachers. It is one's unfailing kinsman in foreign travel. It secures the respect of rulers more than wealth.

Education is the basis for leading a purposeful life in the physical world, in the realm of the mind and in society. It equips one with the mental strength and steadiness to face the challenges of life. It enables one to understand the myriad manifestations in nature. It is only when one understands the powers of his mind that he can recognise the relationship between the world and society. Real education should enable one to realise that mankind is one family. It should help one to experience the unifying forces in society.

Unfortunately, education today is not promoting these objectives. We have no lack of intelligent men in the world today. There are any number of scientists. It is because the intelligentsia and the scientists have not been educated on right lines that the world is plunged in chaos and disorder. Education today is concerned mainly with satisfying the senses and developing intellectual skills. It ignores the development of virtuous qualities. Despite the committees and commissions set up by the Government to suggest reforms in education, no resolute efforts have been made to effect the necessary reforms. The main reason for this failure is the lack of unity after the achievement of freedom. All the ills the nation is suffering from are due to the absence of unity and the preoccupation with ephemeral objectives. There is nothing that cannot be achieved through unity.

Education should promote discrimination and humility. The quantitative explosion in the number of educational institutions—schools, colleges and universities—has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in the quality of education. To have no respect for your betters, to be ungrateful to those who have fostered you, to revile even the teacher who taught you, can this be called "progress" in education? There is little evidence of morality in society. There is a general decline in character and conduct. Bharatiya culture, which laid emphasis on plain living and high thinking, has been almost forgotten. Can there be anything more unfortunate for the country?

### **The culture of Bharat**

Bharat, which achieved great heights in every cultural sphere, is today unaware of the magnitude of its greatness. Most students are not aware of even the meaning of culture. Culture refines the human spirit and makes one a complete human being. Today no attempt is made to understand the truth relating to the body, the mind and the Atma. Culture seeks to integrate the various aspects of daily life and develop a unified outlook.

It should enable one to transcend the divisions of caste, creed and community and realise the divine unity that underlies the apparent diversity. Students should realise that Bharatiya culture is not meant only for Bharat but is meant for all mankind to reveal to the world the path to the Divine.

tribal areas are not to be seen among the educated urban population. In fact, wherever schools, courts and administrative offices have multiplied, there we witness an increase in corruption, injustice and wickedness. In seeking to lead a free and unrestrained life, people are falling a prey to the desires of their senses. Educational institutions, which should be havens of peace and serenity, are haunted by fears of insecurity. The true aim of education is to prepare the student for a useful role in society with the help of the knowledge he has got and for leading an ideal life.

### **Science and corruption**

Science and technology have made great advances in recent years and have a prominent place in education. It is true that science has helped to improve the conditions of living. But the harm it is doing outweighs the benefits. Man has lost peace of mind and the sense of security. The growth of videos, radios, television, cinemas and air travel has been stupendous. But there is no sign of any growth in "Divine vision," with the result that daily life is becoming more precarious. Morality and justice have declined. This must be ascribed mainly to the craze for acquiring modern scientific gadgets. Many middle class people, who have moderate incomes, wish to acquire motor vehicles, TV sets and the like which they cannot afford to buy from their regular incomes. This leads to corruption and bribery. Even education has become expensive and far beyond the means of middle class earners. In addition, there is the tendency to show off before others, to appear to be better off than one really is. This kind of ostentation is another cause for fall in moral standards among lawyers, doctors and other professional people. There is nothing wrong with science as such. It is the way it is used that produces bad consequences.

In the reform of the educational system, it is necessary to ensure that students learn about the right use of science. True education must enable one to realise the Self (Atma Jnana). Instead of emphasising this need, modern education creates many problems and difficulties for the students. Acquiring a small fragment of knowledge, a student gets inflated notions of himself. With this sort of conceit he develops a contempt for Bharatiya culture. This is not what true education should aim at.

Education should be divorced from job-hunting. Its primary purpose should be to enable the educated person to lead an honourable and meaningful life in society. If one cannot command respect in society, of what value is his education? Education should make a man recognise his obligations to his parents and others who have made him what he is. Gratitude is a supreme virtue. If one cannot be grateful to his parents, his education is a waste.

Dear students! In the pursuit of your studies, you must place the interests of the nation above your personal interests. If you wish to maintain the greatness of Bharatiya culture, you should fully understand its sacredness and sublimity. Bharat's prosperity will last only as long as its culture is preserved. Bharat will cease to be Bharat if its culture is lost. Consider this hoary culture as your life-breath and as the blood flowing in your veins. The receiving of a degree is not the end of education. Your education will be worthwhile only when you lead exemplary lives in the service of society.

In ancient days high value was attached to education and the students led simple lives. Their clothes and their manners were dignified. Today such simplicity and dignity are not to be seen among students or teachers generally. Discipline is at a discount. More than ever it is essential for educated persons today to conduct themselves as men of honour and integrity and raise the moral level of society. Even in pursuing the spiritual path, the process should not be from Nature to Spirit but from Spirit to Nature. By seeking to master the forces of Nature through education, people tend to become subjects of nature. Live up to the Institute's motto: "Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara" ("Speak the Truth; Be righteous"). These injunctions are not properly understood. Adhering to Truth means living up to transcendental Truth which is the eternal verity that is true for all time—past, present and future. "Dharma" does not mean living as you please. The bonds of love that existed between the gurus and the disciples in the past do not exist today between students and teachers. The guru considered it his duty to teach the disciple what was most beneficial for the latter and the disciple loved to render service to the guru and carry out implicitly his commands. In those days, the students were few and they received intensive instruction. Today the students are numerous and the education is diluted. Far-reaching reforms are needed in the educational system today. The future progress and welfare of the nation depend upon how education is imparted. Students must be imbued with genuine patriotism. Starting with love and reverence for the parents, students should cultivate love and reverence for the Motherland. All your education must be a preparation for serving the nation.

Broaden your vision. Cultivate the spirit of love. Being endowed with the human form, you must strive to develop human values and not stray away from the path of righteousness. Fill your minds with sublime thoughts and your hearts with divine feelings. Consider the entire society as your home. Only then you will realise genuine unity with all. Redeem your lives by revering your parents, honouring your teachers and developing a loving faith in God. In this way you can lead dedicated lives in the spirit of the injunctions of the Upanishad. Be aware of the divinity that is inherent in every being. Thereby you will grow in your own self-esteem. Fill your life with joy.

*Be Happy; Be Happy  
Make others Happy  
All will be Happy  
God will be Happy.*

**JANMADINA SANDESH:**

### **Let Conscience Rule**

*More effulgent than the Sun,  
Whiter than the purest snow,  
Subtler than the subtlest ether,  
Immanent in all living beings,*

*The Paramatma is present in the minutest particle.  
Being in everything, THAT remains unaffected.  
That Universal Consciousness  
Illumines and sustains the three worlds,  
Pervading everything in Creation,  
That Brahman you are, and Brahman is in you,  
You and Brahman are not different.  
What greater truth can I tell you  
Good people who are gathered here?  
I am in the Light;  
I am the Light  
The Light is in me  
The Light is me.  
He who is aware of this  
Is Brahman himself  
And Brahman is he.*

### *Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

Only a human being can understand God in the human form, not others. Hence the human form itself should be respected. "Daivam manusha Rupena," it is said. "God reveals Himself in the human form." God assumes the human form to make His advent in the world, teach humanity the path to Divinity and shower His grace on them.

### **Man and the Divine**

The whole of Nature is a ball of burning fire (energy). This fire is present inside and outside. Likewise the divine Atma principle is present everywhere. The Divine dwells in the entire Universe, from the minute atom to the vastest star. This divine power is present in everything in creation. Only man has the capacity to recognise this power. But in trying to recognise It, he may create some crude form and consider it as the Divine in his delusion.

Today one can give an amazing scientific discourse on the world, society and many other things. One may appear logically convincing. He may even expound in different ways the nature of the Divine in human form. All these are, however, only products of the imagination and not the truth. An eloquent pandit may attempt to describe the Divine, but no one has known or can know the true nature of the Divine in its fullness. Man alone can know the Divine in human form. No one else can see or explain it in any other form. All other expositions of the Divine are speculative or fanciful.

An elephant may wish to worship the Divine. Basing itself on its own nature, it can conceive of the Divine only as a huge elephant. It cannot conceive of any other form. Even a mouse, when it conceives of the Divine, can only imagine the titanic form of a mouse as the Divine. Likewise

terms, man cannot conceive of God, who transcends the human, except in human form.

### **Inexpressible**

A learned and eloquent scholar may describe God in many ways. Some scholars describe God as "Aprameya, Avaangmaanasa-gochara, Atheetha, Nirguna" (One who is inscrutable, beyond the reach of speech and mind, transcendent and attributeless). All these terms are high-sounding but in essence they are just froth. Meanings may be given to these terms and elaborate annotations can be made about them. But they are valueless in terms of personal experience and are fraught with danger. They do not represent the Reality.

### **The pandits and lay men**

Whenever you get a convenient opportunity, put this question to a pandit: "What is the meaning of 'Aprameya'?" He will answer that He is one who is not amenable to any logical proof. Likewise, he may explain that the term "Avaangmaanasa-gochara" refers to One who is not recognisable by speech or mind. But beyond this, can he demonstrate the form of the Divine?

In my view, the layman's conception of God is better than the descriptions offered by these pandits. Because, these terms can be used by even lay men, but they prefer to remain silent. As a result, there is peace in society. The diverse interpretations offered by the pandits give rise to divisions and confusion in society. These disturb the minds of people. Rather than provoke such disturbances and confusion, it would be better for these pandits to observe silence.

From ancient times to the present, all kinds of terms have been used to describe the Divine but no one has been able to demonstrate the real truth about the Divine. The Divine is present in all things and all forms are His. How can such an omnipresent Divine be described or demonstrated? Can anyone declare that something is Brahman and something else is not Brahman? Only the deluded may do so out of human weakness.

### **Appearances and reality**

Divinity is present in man like fragrance in a flower, fire in wood and oil in sesamum, not visible but latent. Unaware of this inner truth, men are carried away by external appearances and consider them as the reality. From early times men have been influenced by such ideas and have been steeped in ignorance. They offer milk to anthills (to feed the cobras which are believed to dwell in them), but kill snakes when they see them. They torture the draught cattle that are used in cultivation, but worship the stone image of a bull (the sacred vehicle of Siva). This is the kind of 'philosophy' that people have practised from ancient times. Causing harm to the living and adoring inanimate objects have been weak traits among Bharatiyas. Men who do not offer even a morsel of food to a starving man will offer all kinds of delicacies as sacred offerings (Naivedya) to the image of a deity. One will drop a bundle of coins in the hundi of Sri Venkateshwara, but will refuse a small pittance to a beggar. All this is regarded as part of our ancient tradition. But how much sanctified will one be if he offers food to a starving man? It is essential to realise the basic truth that God is present in the form of human beings. Is one doing his duty if he inflicts pain on the Jiva (a human being) and offers worship to Deva (the Divine)?

### **Aspects of avatars**

In the world, God has descended in the human form in five different forms. These forms are based on the different aspects of the Divine. One is "Nityaavataram" Second, "Viseshaavataram" Third, "Aviseshaavataram" Fourth, "Leelaavataram" Fifth, "Poornaavataram" "Leelaavataram" is also known as "Amsaavataram".

"Nityaavatara", "Viseshaavatara" and "Aviseshaavatar" have only 5 to 9 aspects ('kalaas') of the Lord. Only in the Poornaavatara are all the sixteen aspects ("kalaas") of the Divine present. The ancients regarded only the Poornaavatars as the full manifestation of God.

### **Every man an avatar**

In this context, every human being must be deemed as "Avatar" (as he has some aspect of the Divine in him). It is because he has descended from the Divine, he is entitled to be called an avatar. Except as avatar, God does not give a separate vision of the Divine to man in any other form.

Honour every human being. Show love towards every person. Love is not a crop that can be grown on land or a commodity that can be purchased in a shop. Whether one is a potentate or a commoner, only when he gives up egoistic pride and is ready to make sacrifice will love blossom within him.

### **Embark on the journey**

Do not be weighed down by the feeling that the human estate is weak and subject to delusions and ignorance. It is not easy to be born as a human being. If, nevertheless, one does not realise his true nature and imagines that God is in the external world, it is the mark of utter ignorance. Hence without wasting time, engage yourselves in your duties and embark on the journey towards God-realisation.

If you want to worship God, worship Him in the human form alone. All other forms are artificial and creations of the imagination. They are products of delusion. While delusion (bhrama) remains, Brahman cannot be experienced.

Numerous persons are describing God in manifold ways. The scriptures also describe God in many ways. The expounders are content with reciting the descriptions, but do not seek to experience the Divine. What is the form of the Divine? If you wish to see the Divine, the form you envisage will be only a caricature. Consider your own form as manifestation of the Divine. Esteem yourself (as divine). Respect others. Love yourself and love others. This is true worship.

### **From Brahman to brahman**

It is because this broad-minded attitude to the divine was not promoted from early times, man has been a prey to all forms of ignorance. There is no such thing as God "descending" on earth or leaving it. The body is like a water bubble, which arises, grows and disappears in water. Man is like the bubble and Narayana is the water. This is the truth. Man is born from Brahman, grows

is because of delusion that Brahman is not experienced. Man is dominated by the delusions of ego and possessiveness (Ahamkara and Mamakara).

In what form can you worship the Divine whose form is cosmic? What is it you can offer to One who is everything? The world has worshipped Him under different names—Rama, Krishna, Allah, Zoroaster, Buddha, and Sai Baba. But all these names represent the One Atma. True worship consists in regarding all the forms as one and worshipping the Divine in the form of Love and Truth. It is subtler than a sub-atomic particle 'that is why it is said: "Truth is more fundamental than the atom."

### **Let conscience rule**

There is no meaning in worshipping God as "Sathyaswaroopa", the embodiment of Truth, and not adhering to truth in daily life. Dharma (Righteousness) is born from Truth. This Righteousness emanates from the heart. Righteousness promotes self-satisfaction. It is an expression of self-consciousness. Have faith in the promptings of this divine consciousness. No one should act against the dictates of his conscience. Acting in violation of the Conscience is evil. Acting according to the Conscience is righteousness. True worship consists, therefore, in doing what is right as dictated by your conscience. Divorce between thought and speech is ungodly. There should be complete accord between thought, word and deed.

### **God is love**

God is only one. Your forms of worship, rituals and beliefs are purely personal and do not relate to the universal. "Divinity" means that which is whole, all-embracing. The one Divine is present in all beings. Every being is filled with Truth and Love. There is no one without love. The love may find outlets in different ways, but it is essentially one. That Love is God. Do not go against that Love.

Though God may be worshipped in various forms, it is essential to recognise the unity that subsumes all of them. Worship may assume any form, but worship itself is one and the same. Likewise the forms of the Divine may be varied but the Divine Principle is only one Atma.

Today there is only one important thing you have to take note of: give up the delusion that the Divine is in some remote place. Have the faith: "I am God." When you have the faith that you are divine, you are unlikely to go astray. You will pursue the right path. Believe that God is in every human being, as declared by the Vedas and the Upanishads. Mere scholarship does not make a man a "Pundit" (a man of knowledge). "Pandithaas-samadarsinah" ("pandits are those who see everything with an equal eye"). Pundits should be judged by what they practise and not by their external appendages or what they preach or write.

Regard yourselves as children of God. There is really no difference between yourselves and the Avatars except with regard to the number of aspects of the Divine present in each one. These aspects can be enhanced by right conduct and by developing Divine love.



That is not true love which wanes from moment to moment and waxes from time to time. Only the love that is unchanging and shines brightly always in the heart is true love. It is unaffected by joy or sorrow, praise or blame. Such love is true devotion. A love that grows or declines according to varying circumstances is not true love at all.

When one derives some great benefit or his prayers are fulfilled, he installs more pictures for worship. But if his desires are not fulfilled, he removes the pictures. Can this be genuine devotion?

All the Divine principles—Brahma, Isa and Vishnu—are to be found in man. Brahma represents the creative principle in man, his thoughts represent the Brahma principle. Isa (Siva) is represented by the heart. The Buddhi (intellect) represents the all-pervasive Vishnu principle. Similarly the three divine modes—yantra, mantra and Tantra—are also found in man. The body is "yantra" a machine. All limbs in the body are parts of a machine. Our breath is a "mantra." With each breath, the mantra "So-ham" ("He is I") is pronounced. Our heart is "Tantra" (the manipulating power).

Have the firm faith that Divinity is present in the human form. Perform right actions befitting the human form. Eschew selfishness, the attachments and hatred arising from it. The way to get rid of selfishness is adoration of God.

Bhagavan led the vast gathering in reciting the bhajan: "*Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*" (There can be no happiness or peace without worshipping Hari.)

**—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on November 23, 1988**

## **How to Find Your Way**

**—Dr. Mehdi N. Bahadori**

Several years ago I went to Milan, Italy, to attend a conference. I booked a hotel at a central location and decided to take the airport bus and then a taxi to my hotel. This, I had figured out, was less expensive than taking a taxi from the airport directly to my hotel.

When I asked a taxi driver in town to take me to my destination, he told me that it was very near and I did not need to take a taxi. He further pointed out the general direction where- my hotel was. I thanked him and started walking in that direction. After asking another person for direction, I found my hotel.

Later that night a question came to my mind as to what would have happened if there were nobody to take me to or help me find my hotel? I did not have a map, and had not been to Milan

reached my destination. But that could have taken me a long time to do so. Without a car to drive around, I would have had to walk all the streets, looking for the name of my hotel until I finally found it. With the help of a reliable map, or with the help of people whom I could trust for direction, of course I could reach my destination sooner. The easiest way of all would have been, of course, to take a taxi, whose driver I could trust, to take me to my final destination in the shortest time. Since I was unfamiliar with the streets of the city, I needed to surrender to his way of taking me to my hotel.

### **Surrendering to Bhagavan**

In our life (or in the University of Life) we can move about in a haphazard way to reach our goal of self-realization or God-realization and take a long time, or follow a reliable and undistorted map (or religion), or take a "taxi". When we choose to take a "taxi" to reach our destination, we need to trust the driver and completely surrender to the way he is taking us there. We can then sit back, enjoy the ride, and leave the driving to him.

I believe that Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba is the Driver in whose "taxi" we can sit in order to reach our final destination. He knows all the ways, streets, by-passes, etc., and takes us to our goal with the least of difficulties for us. However, we need to pay for this ride. The fare for Baba's "taxi" ride is FULL DEVOTION to Him. This means that we should trust Him completely and totally, surrender to the way He is choosing to take each one of us through.

In other words, the fare for riding in our Baba's "taxi" is FULL DEVOTION. This, in turn, means patience toward all events, acceptance of all people for the ways they are moving along in their methods of reaching their goals of self-realization, and finally trust and surrender to Him. Incidentally, Patience, Acceptance, Trust, and Surrender (PATS) constitute the major curricula of studies in the University of Life.

### **Towards Awareness of God**

The author of the above article, Dr. Bahadori, a Professor in the University of Teheran, was in Prasanthi Nilayam in October and offered to Swami a copy of his book: "The University of Life." At his request Swami autographed a copy for the author's keeping. The following are extracts from the final chapter of this book:

I believe there exists only one thing in the world and it is called "God". He is the first and the last; He is what we see and what we don't see. Everybody and everything is a manifestation or a face of Him. It is impossible to "see" Him as He truly is. We only perceive Him by looking at these faces or manifestations through our limited senses or awareness.

Imagine a building surrounded by a large and beautiful garden. Let's suppose that this building has a very narrow window in one of its walls, and that I look through it. What I would be able to see is very limited. If this garden were full of flowers and trees, arranged in groups, I could only see the ones which were in my line of sight. If roses happened to be in my line of sight, and if someone asked me about the garden, I would tell him that roses were everywhere. *To*

*windows in other walls of the building.* The ideal would be, of course, to have an all-glass building, just the way the control towers in airports are, or simply tear the walls down and be entirely out of doors in the garden.

God has created us with limited senses. Through these, we communicate with our surroundings. For example, our eyes are sensitive only to a very narrow band (called the visible band) of the electromagnetic radiation. There are many animals which have stronger eyesight than we do. The same is true about our other senses.

### **The University of Life**

In manifesting Himself as any one of the millions of species living on this planet, God chose to provide narrow, but different, "windows" (or senses) through which each entity could communicate with its surroundings, thus learning about life. To man, He not only gave the physical senses to communicate with the outside world, but in the walls of the building of His Creation, He also provided a small slot so that man could gain additional awareness of the outside garden. Man could then marvel over the masterpieces of Creation. God further gave man the ability to open this slot and make a window out of it—a window with no limit to its width. God gave man the ability to make this window wide enough to cover all the walls, or even break and eliminate these walls.

He made man so that he could become one with the entire Creation, or the universe. But He wanted man's awareness of his true being to grow gradually. For this purpose, He designed the University of Life and admitted all of us into it. He wanted us to gain experience and, slowly but surely, learn the lessons of life. He wanted us to drop all ideas of separateness, and to believe and feel our oneness with all Creation, our Universe. This, apparently, He did not give the other creatures in the same degree.

God could have created us like the other creatures with a fixed level of environmental awareness. He could also have created us to possess a certain knowledge of our world, so that we would not have to go to school to acquire it. He could have created all of us to be geniuses. He could have done lots of other things. But, He chose to create us the way He did: to gradually grow in awareness of our oneness with Him. Why? I don't know. There are endless possibilities.

### **The cosmic game**

Perhaps He wanted to have variety in His manifestations. Why did He want to have variety, you may ask? The only answer which comes to my limited mind is that He wanted to have fun with Himself. It is all Him, anyway. The Universe is just a "one-God-show".

You may now be asking why we (He) must suffer so much and experience pain through our growth and awareness process. My pain and suffering as a student in this University are due to my ignorance. I am not yet fully aware that I am a true manifestation of the Divine, and that I am representing a face of Him in the most beautiful and unique way. I am still living in that "building with no windows," kept in complete darkness, and ignorant *of* what is going on in the

*made me unhappy and distressed. It is painful to be ignorant. Once I "see the light," however, I can change!*

I can't help but believe that, by designing the University of Life, and sending us (Himself) through it, He is accomplishing something important. He is making us become gradually aware of who we truly are. Perhaps He just wants to have His best faces displayed on Earth and to enjoy His own cosmic game. I believe that everything, being a manifestation of God, is only beautiful; that it is only with our limited awareness or vision we see it differently; that everything is wonderful as it is; that it is located in the right place, and it is functioning in the most perfect way. Therefore everything deserves my adoration.

### **Acceptance of things as they are**

The above concept is of significance in my life in that *I choose to accept things and people as they are*. Everyone is learning his or her lessons the way they have chosen to. At the same time, I do not expect anything from anyone, knowing that *everything I need is given to me by God*. I also believe that I do not need to worry about anybody or anything, because they are all taken care of by God, and are all in good hands. Of course, this does not mean that I should be passive and do nothing. Just the contrary! I will use all I have in my power, including (most importantly) prayer. I will ask God for guidance in discovering what is best to do in any given circumstance. I will then do it. The "best" always is for the benefit of all concerned and not just myself. With all these practices, if what I want to accomplish does not materialize, I will accept whatever comes, believing that it must be better for me. I realize that the Divine Will always knows what is best.

This acceptance is similar to my going to a country restaurant, looking at the menu to see what I like most and what "sounds" good, and then ordering a meal. The lady who is running the restaurant and who knows the contents of all the foods begins to serve me a different meal, saying that this one is better for me. This proprietor, who is like a loving mother to everyone, makes it clear to me that because of my lack of awareness and familiarity with her foods, what I have just ordered contains a great deal of fat and salt which are not good for my health.

Although I had taken all the necessary steps to eat (I did not stay home saying that if God wanted me to eat, someone would knock on my door and deliver a pizza or something else) and had used my judgement to select the best meal I knew, I found myself being served something entirely different from my expectations. The important thing is that I must not fight and become miserable. Rather, I will learn to accept what has been offered me by this loving lady, and then learn to enjoy it. This is how I adapt to God's will.

### **Growing in God awareness**

How are the events or the decisions we choose (or "need") to make in our lives everyday any different than the above example? In every event I must make use of all my abilities and all that I have at my disposal, to reach the best decisions and act upon them. If what I wanted to happen did not come about, I would not fight the world and become miserable because of it. I learn to

everything in my power to effect positive change, both in myself, and on this planet. If I wanted change, I take action. I am persistent and faithful. Yet, if life brings something entirely different, I learn to adapt.

In my everyday life I meditate and pray to the Master. I ask Him to show me how best I can live my life, in order to be of service to all the students in this University. I will ask God to give me the ability to trust Him and totally surrender to His wills. This way, I may accept whatever happens to me or comes my way as part of the unfolding curriculum of Life. This curriculum gives me the lessons I need to learn in order to grow in God awareness in THE UNIVERSITY OF LIFE. I pray that He may give the same to all His other students, *the one family of Humanity*.

### **Bhagavan's Birthday Boons**

Bhagavan's birthday has always been an occasion when the Lord gives different kinds of presents to sevaks, students, teachers, devotees and many others. His is the hand that always gives and blesses. But of all the cherished gifts Bhagavan gives, nothing is more valuable than the spiritual injunction which He gives to the mammoth gathering of devotees who come for His birthday.

In recent years, Bhagavan has been giving a specific message for devotees each year which is intended to be practised by them as a sacred commandment of the Lord.

In one year, Bhagavan gave the simple direction that each devotee should set apart a handful of food-grains each day, which could be collected at the end of each month for use in Narayana Seva (poor feeding). Bhagavan drove home at that time the message that of all forms of charity the giving of food to the starving is the highest.

In another year, Bhagavan gave to the lakhs of devotees the simple five-letter mantra in Telugu "Devudunnaadu" ("God is") to be recited and remembered for recognising the omnipresence of God.

In another Birthday anniversary message, Bhagavan exhorted devotees to include in their daily prayers or in the Bhajan programme the prayer for the welfare of all people in the world. "Lokas Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu!" This has been adopted by all Sai Bhajan centres now and at the conclusion of every bhajan the entire gathering repeats thrice in chorus this prayer for universal well-being.

These apparently diverse injunctions have really one deep common purpose their aim is to raise the spiritual consciousness of every Sai devotee to a level where he or she feels oneness with every living being.

When devotees gather for the Birthday of Bhagavan, they should examine within themselves how far they have lived up to His message and to what extent they have spiritually benefitted from His bountiful boons. When they go back to their respective places they should constantly bear in mind the practical application of Bhagavan's message. That is the way to make His message our life.

—N.

### **An Indispensable Man**

*Some time when you're feeling important,  
Some time when your ego's in bloom.  
Some time when you take it for granted,  
You're the best qualified man in the room,  
Some time when you feel that your going,  
Would leave an unfillable hole,  
Just follow this simple instruction,  
And see how it humbles your soul,  
Take a bucket and fill it with water,  
Put your hands in it up to your wrists,  
Pull them out and the hole that remains,  
is a measure of how you'll be missed,  
You may splash all you please when you enter  
You may stir up the water galore,  
But stop, and you'll find in a minute,  
That it looks just the same as before,  
The moral of this is quite simple,  
Do just the best that you can,  
Be proud of yourself, but remember,  
There is no indispensable man.*

—D. K. Sookoo, U. K.

### **Puttaparthi Heart**

Because I cant go see him and sit at his holy feet,  
I've found a way to arrive there that makes me feel complete

Filled with love and kindness overflowing with his grace.

I want to make my heart a holy mandir too,  
With the sounds of sacred bhajans ringing through and through

I want my soul to fly with the knowledge of his care.  
I want my mind to quiet and realize he's there.

I want to use my days to serve him endlessly,  
And disregard the fruits I think should come to me.

I want to act always as though Pm living in his home,  
So I take my Puttaparthi to where're it is I roam.

For though the waters separate and keep us far apart,  
Swami is with me here living in my Puttaparthi heart.

—*J. Ziegler, Arizona*

### **Akhanda Bhajan and Human Unity**

Of all the Sai programmes for promoting harmony and unity among the peoples of the world nothing is so significant and far-reaching as the observance of "Akhand Bhajan" on a global scale, initiated by Bhagavan Baba some years ago. It represents a unique attempt at making people in every part of the world conscious of their Divine essence and to experience the sense of oneness spiritually.

The Akhanda Bhajan, which is observed by Sathya Sai Centres in all countries, from Tokyo in Japan to Vancouver in Canada, from Fiji in the Pacific to Trinidad in the Caribbean, has become over the years the most looked-for event in the Sai calendar, next only to Bhagavan's birthday. Starting at 6 p.m. on Saturday, November 12th with the lighting of the Akhanda Jyoti, the bhajans continue non-stop for 24 hours and conclude at 6 p. m. on Sunday, with the offering of Arati and the distribution of prasadam.

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the Akhanda Bhajan in Prasanthi Nilayam by lighting the Akhanda Jyoti in the Mandir precisely at 6 p.m.

The bhajans started with the singing of "Akhand Jyoti Jalao Sayee Mana Mandir mein" ("Light the Eternal Flame in the shrine of my Mind, oh Sai") and were kept up all through the night and the whole of Sunday till 6 p.m. Thousands of devotees from all parts of India and many overseas countries participated in the bhajans.

At the conclusion of the bhajans, Arati was offered to Bhagavan. Elaborate arrangements had been made for the distribution of prasadam (sweet rice and lemon rice) to all the devotees. Bhagavan blessed the prasadam and saw to its expeditious distribution to everyone.

While devotees present in Prasanthi Nilayam were doubly blessed by their participation in the Akhanda Bhajan, there is no doubt that the presence of Bhagavan in spirit was experienced by devotees in every place where the bhajans were held. The Global Akhanda Bhajan is perhaps the most powerful spiritually unifying force at work to bring all humanity together through loving faith in God, regardless of name or form.

— N.

*Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family all mankind, through the bond of brotherhood; of affirming and illumining the Atmic reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine, which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests; and of instructing all to recognize the common divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal, and rise to Divinity which is his goal. I am the embodiment of Love; Love is My instrument. Those who have recognized My Love and experienced that Love can assert that they have glimpsed My reality, for the path of Love is the royal road that leads mankind to Me*

—Baba

## **A Christmas Gift!**

"Christmas should be spent in prayer;" Baba told us in His "Thoughts for the day" on the 21st of December 1987.

Being in Prasanthi Nilayam at that time, I started praying already long before Christmas. I had a strong wish. I desired from all my heart that my daughter Julia should come to Sai Baba during her Christmas vacation. But I knew that this would be most difficult for her, almost impossible. For this journey Julia needed permission from her father. But her father did not want her to leave for Sai Baba. He is a scientist, he said. He could not accept God or Sai Baba.

What should I do? I prayed. I placed my wish in the hands of our beloved Swami. I told him: "Baba, if it is good for Julia and, if you agree, then please let her come." Although I laid it in His hands, I could not stop to show Baba how much I really wanted my daughter to come for Christmas-to be with Baba and to be with me.

Julia came! She arrived on the 25th in the morning, just in time for Darshan and Prasad. She was so happy-Christmas with Swami. And her father had even taken her to the airport at Frankfurt himself! She could hardly believe that all this had happened. And when Bhajans had



she had arrived.

Being hungry after her long journey, she went to the Foreigner's Canteen. On the way it happened that she saw Swami passing her in His car. She told Him, "Baba, I see you are here. I am happy. But where is my Mama? So many people everywhere! How can I find my Mama?" Baba's car turned to the right, Julia went to the left side, to the canteen. A minute later, she saw her Mama! I was standing there in front of the canteen!

We were so happy. No words can tell how much. How remarkably Swami had arranged everything! It was the greatest Christmas present we ever got—a present only God can give.

And that made us follow His words easily. We thanked and prayed all day.

—*Dr. Karin Lanz, Munich*

*JANMADINOTSAV:*

### **A Memorable Week**

For the tens of thousands of Sai devotees who came from all parts of the world for Bhagavan Baba's sixty-third birthday celebrations in November, the variety of programmes presented in Prasanthi Nilayam during the week from November 18 to 24, including the three inspiring discourses delivered by Bhagavan on November 21, 22 and 23, would be memorable for a long time to come.

The celebrations began on the 18th with the annual Rathotsava, car festival, in which the idols of Venugopalaswami and of Sri Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Anjaneya, in the Prasanthi Mandir are carried in procession in the sacred ratha (chariot) from the gopuram of the Nilayam to the Venugopalaswami temple in Puttaparthi. After the idols had been carried from the Mandir and installed on the ratha, Bhagavan inaugurated the festival by breaking coconuts. A large gathering of devotees filled every available space in and around the Nilayam to watch the festival and have darshan of Bhagavan.

On the 19th evening, Bhagavan switched on a spectacular show of animated electrically illuminated panels depicting scenes from the Bhagavatam and the Ramayana. The panels, installed on the terrace of the row of shops facing the Sarvadharm Pillar (in the large enclosure south of the Poornachandra Auditorium) revealed the ingenious artistry and skill of the young devoted artisans from Calcutta, who had designed and produced them. There were eight panels in all: (1) In this Vasudeva was seen carrying the infant Krishna from the prison in Mathura to Gokulam, crossing the Jamuna, with Adishesha's hood serving as an umbrella; (2) Krishna spraying coloured water on Radha during Holi; (3) The battle between Jatayu and Ravana, while the latter is carrying off Sita in his chariot; (4) Hanuman approaching Sita under the Ashoka tree

arrow; the head falls into the sea; (6) Brahma, the Creator, emerging on a lotus from the navel of Vishnu, who is seen reclining on the serpent Adishesha on the Milky Ocean, with Lakshmi attending on the Lord; (7) A life-size elephant figure serving as a slide over which a boy climbs and slides down the trunk. The elephant is seen moving its feet over a rolling ball; (8) A panel on the top of the terrace of West Prasanthi I showing Chaitanya pulling the chariot of Jagannath, while two disciples play on the "khal" and dance in ecstasy.

Beautifully illuminated with multicoloured bulbs, these animated panels proved a star attraction for the thousands of devotees on all the six days. The most remarkable and realistic of them was the one depicting the aerial encounter between Jatayu and Ravana.

As the Prasanthi Mandir had received a face-lift on the eve of the celebrations and looked heavenly—with its blaze of multicoloured bulbs illumining the entire edifice, Prasanthi Nilayam appeared at night like a divine fairy land. There were illuminated panels at the entrance to the gopuram and at the eastern gate opposite to the Vighneshwara temple, besides a series of illuminated tree-like panels glittering in their many colours.

On the 20th, Swami flagged off a team of hundred homoeopathic doctors (men and women) who conducted two-day medical camps in seven villages in the Sathya Sai taluk. In all, 8572 patients were treated.

On the evening of the 21st, Bhagavan addressed a vast gathering in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the duties of those active in the Sai Seva organisations and the norms to be observed by Sai devotees in general. Bhagavan emphasised the need for self-reliance and complete freedom from dependence on the Government or other agencies in their Seva activities. Bhagavan's name should not be used for collecting money. Selfless service rendered with love should be the basic aim.

Sri Sathyanarayana, Coordinator for all-India, presented a report on the discussions held by State office-bearers regarding the working of the organisations under the new set-up. Sri Anil Kumar, State President for Andhra Pradesh, gave a vivid account of the awakening among the people in all the regions in Andhra Pradesh, especially in the rural areas, to the significance of the spiritual and ethical mission of Bhagavan Baba, which was noticed during the Organisation's recent Silver Jubilee celebrations in the different districts.

### **Cultural rally**

On the morning of November 22, a memorable cultural rally was organised in the presence of Bhagavan by devotees of Andhra Pradesh. Bhagavan and the educationists and special invitees who had come for the Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, watched with interest the pageant of folk dances, bhajans, musical concerts, tableaux, and dramatic episodes from the Puranas presented by the different groups from the Andhra districts as they marched past in front of Bhagavan, who was seated in front of the Vighneshwara idol. Among the interesting items were tribal dances, festival processions, plays featuring heroes from

Pradesh, group bhajan programmes with rhythmic movements by Save Dal members, Pandari bhajans and Chakka bhajans, scenes from the lives of saints like Nandanar, a float decorated as a ship (from the deck of which Bhagavan gave darshan to the devotees on the 24th). The entire rally reflected the rich and varied cultural heritage of Andhra, its musical and dance traditions and, above all, the impact of the Sai message on people all over Andhra. As an encore to the programme, Bhagavan graciously permitted three of the items to be presented on the 24th morning in the Mandir compound—the Bridavanam (chakka) bhajan from Munnangi village (Guntur district), the Pandari bhajan from Kothapalli (Nellore district) and a karagam duet from East Godavari district. Bhagavan presented clothes to the participants in these items.

On the morning of 23rd, as Bhagavan came out from His interview room in the Mandir, He was greeted with specially composed birthday songs in Hindi and English by children of the Primary School.

After visiting the Samadhi of His parents, Bhagavan came in a procession from the Mandir to the Poornachandra Auditorium at 9 a. m. The procession was headed by Sai Geeta, followed by the Sai Institute's band, a large number of students chanting Vedic hymns and a band of senior students performing with vigour the Bhangra dance, wearing colourful Punjabi costumes.

Bhagavan gave a blissful darshan to the immense gathering in the Auditorium and outside.

Prof. Gokak made a felicitous speech on "Sathya Sai Baba and the Golden Age." He described Bhagavan as the great synthesiser whose advent was intended to lead mankind to a new golden era of peace and harmony. He explained the different aspects of Bhagavan's divine personality. "He is a great innovator and takes us to the shores of Light. Let us open ourselves to this Light," he concluded.

Bhagavan then delivered His birthday message (published separately).

The celebrations concluded in the evening with Bhagavan conferring His benediction on devotees from His jhoola. A concert of devotional songs was provided by Srimathi P. Suseela and Ramakrishna.

- N.

*STUDENTS' CORNER:*

### **A Vision Divine**

Swami is inscrutable. He is a mystery. He walks amidst us every morning and evening. He talks and acts like any human being. But, only He knows to how many blessed ones He is granting visions every moment.

He may be talking to us here, but at the same time, somewhere in some part of the globe, He may be talking to a devotee of His in dreams.

I wish to narrate the experience of a grand old lady whom I revere very much. She is my grandmother. Blessed is she, as she has had many divine experiences of Sai's divinity. One particular experience gives me a lot of joy and peace whenever I feel distressed. One Sunday afternoon my grandmother was doing some writing work sitting in front of a room where she used to keep pictures and idols of many forms of the Divine including a framed picture of Bhagavan Baba. While she was deeply engrossed in her work she heard somebody knocking at the door. She had a friend who had a particular way of knocking at the door which only my grandmother could recognize. It was a soft type of knock. Hearing that knock and presuming that it was her friend's special knock, she was about to get up to open the door. But, before she could do so, the door opened from outside inspite of the fact that it was bolted inside. And in came benevolent Sai! My grandmother was stupefied. She could not move. She was rooted to the spot. Her senses became still. So charmed was she by the sudden vision.

She tells me even now that she cannot forget the radiant and graceful Sai form. He slowly glided inside, His golden robe gracefully flowing over the floor, His face was shining with divine splendour. Then, she says, He slowly went into the room dedicated for prayers to the Lord. He did not come out of the room. After a while, my grandmother recovered her normal consciousness. She experienced a sense of ecstasy because of the divine vision. The moment she could get up, she went inside the shrine room with the hope of once again having a vision of the divine. But, Sai had vanished.

Verily, Sai is an inscrutable mystery. He transcends time and space.

—Y. S. Vijayasarathy, *I B. Com.*

*A plant will grow well when the ground all around it is raked and exposed to the sun and rain. I want you to drop old, deep-rooted habits of purposeless talk, vanity, envy, and scandal-mongering, You are not to live like earnest sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) just to please Me, it; is a duty you owe to yourselves. So you must adhere to the rules wherever you are, not merely within the confines of Prasanthi Nilayam. You will notice that Prasanthi Nilayam is not limited by any boundaries. It spreads and spreads until it envelops the universe.*

—Baba