

## Where to Find God

*"Today people try to find God in religions. God is to be found not in religions but in your own mind (heart). It is only when the mind is controlled and purified that God can be recognised," observed Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His divine discourse on Christmas day, in the over-full Poornachandra Auditorium.*

*There was an unprecedented gathering of devotees from overseas, who were blessed earlier in the morning with Bhagavan's darshan from the balcony of the Prasanthi Mandir.*

*Addressing the gathering, Bhagavan said:*

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

God is complete love incarnate. This love shines equally in every human being. The fragrance of a flower remains the same whether it is held in the right hand or the left. Likewise God has no distinctions such as the favoured and the excluded. Different persons, proceeding from their own likes and dislikes, attribute to the Divine the differences existing in their own minds. God has no feelings of difference such as the good and the bad, the likeable and the unwanted, the wicked and the virtuous. The sandalwood tree imparts its fragrance even to the axe that fells it. Likewise God is ever prepared to love, foster and protect equally everyone without any distinction. But narrow-minded persons cannot easily grasp the Divine's equal-mindedness. Indeed, how can a fishmonger know the value of diamonds? Everyone apprehends God's powers and attributes according to his own limited conceptions and experiences.

### **Man and God**

To get rid of such narrow ideas, the first requisite is the cultivation of love. How is love to be promoted? By "giving and forgiving" man develops love within himself. In relation to God, this implies that you should always have the attitude of offering your heart to God. Today, far from having such a sacred attitude what we witness is the habit of "getting and forgetting".

Today man receives the love, the blessings, and the grace of God, but shows no gratitude and is immersed in his own selfish pursuits. This accounts for his narrow outlook.

Sanjaya declared at the end of the Gita that where Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Partha, the valiant archer, stand together, there is victory. Man makes various efforts to achieve prosperity, success and bliss. But the means of achieving them is for man to take his stand by the side of Bhagavan. "Partha" means the son of the Earth (Prithvi). It applies to every man. Sanjaya's declaration means that victory is assured when either man is by the side of God or God is beside man. Neither of these happens today. Man leads a life remote from God.

followers of different religions have enquired into this question of the purpose of life. As a result of these enquiries, different religions arose. Jesus is the founder of the Christian faith. For centuries before Christ, Judaism existed as the religion of the Jews. The Jews believed in the coming of the Messiah to protect the people of Israel.

### **From messenger to merger**

When Jesus was born, three kings came from the east to bless the infant in Bethlehem. The first king, seeing the child, declared that he would be a great lover of God. The second one declared that God would immensely love the child. The third one declared that Jesus is God and God is Jesus. What is the inner meaning of these statements? The first statement implies that all who love God are messengers of God. When God loves a person, he becomes a son of God. When a person gives up the sense of dualism and merges his consciousness in the Divine he becomes one with the Divine.

### **Jesus' life and mission**

[Swami described the childhood years of Jesus and how during a visit to Jerusalem, Jesus had been lost in the crowd and after a frantic search Mary found him in a temple listening intently to the speech of a priest. When Mary told Jesus about the trouble they had gone through in searching for him, Jesus said: "Mother! When I am safe with my Father in His home, why should you worry about me? This is the temple of God. It is my Father's mansion. Nothing will be lacking here. In this eternal and sacred home I am perfectly safe and well protected." This shows that even by his twelfth year, Jesus was full of Divine qualities and was imparting the Divine message to those around him. Christ declared to the world three important things: (1) God is one. (2) He is omnipotent. (3) Do not hurt anyone. God is the indweller in every being. Christ embarked on his mission and went about calling upon people to earn the love of God by developing love towards God.

Swami described how Christ's teachings provoked the antagonism of the priests and how he came to be crucified. Swami went on to relate how Christianity developed in spite of the persecution faced by the early Christians.]

### **different names but one God**

Bhagavan said: People professing different faiths worship God under different names: Vishnu, Siva, Ganesh, Allah, Christ, and others. The truth is there is only one God. People today try to find God in religions. But God is to be found not in religions (mathamu) but in the mind (mathi). It is only when the mind is controlled and purified that God will be recognised.

People claim to make offerings to God without knowing where He is. There is a pretence of offering everything to Brahman, but they do not know where Brahman dwells. The Lord has declared: "I am residing within you in the form of Vaishwanara and am consuming all the offerings you are making. I am digesting everything and providing the sustenance for your body." While the Lord is ever by the side of man, he is searching for God all over the world. By exploring the external, you can never purify the internal. It is essential to transform the

your actions. Adhering to the righteous path, with a pure heart, you have to divinise your life. All spiritual disciplines have been designed only for this purpose. All the prayers, japas and pujas that are offered are intended only to purify the heart.

### **Conduct alone counts**

All those who have achieved greatness in any field—education, science, etc.—have been able to do so solely because of their conduct. Neither physical strength nor wealth, nor even intellectual ability, can make one respected and honoured. It is the way one lives that confers honour and dignity on him. Therefore, it is only through our actions that we should strive to realise the Divine. Without right conduct, all other spiritual practices are of no avail. Hence, all devotees should acquire good and sacred qualities in furtherance of their striving to realise God.

*You all are in the Kingdom of Sai!  
You all are in Sai's Home!  
You all are in Sai's Light!  
You all are in Sai's Heart!  
I will bless you, I will bless you in  
this Holy Night  
This is your right.*

(Bhagavan's benediction in English was greeted with cheers.)

If you entertain proper thoughts, you will realise that all of you are in God's home. The whole universe is the mansion of the Lord. Once you recognise this truth, how can any differences arise?

### **The ways of the Divine**

People imagine that God is angry, or indifferent. Such persons have no understanding of Divinity. If there is a tumour in the stomach, the surgeon uses a knife to remove it. Is the operation done out of ill-will towards the patient? Not at all. It is for his own good that the operation is done to make him well again. Likewise, when a person has developed some bad qualities, a surgical operation has to be done to rid him of his vices. When this is done by the Divine, God is said to be angry or displeased. This is the mark of a petty mind. Those who have understood the Divine's love principle will not make such a mistake.

### **Duty of old students**

Today is the birthday of the founder of a great religion. Christians revere Jesus as a Messenger of God and the Son of God. On this sacred day, the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur, who have formed an association called Messengers of Sathya Sai, celebrate their annual day. "How shall we show our gratitude to the institution which has educated us and done so much good to us?" was the question put by an old student, who is the President of the association. "How shall we show our gratitude to Bhagavan?" she asked. Dear old students! Wherever you may be, go into the society and render social service in all possible

the girls have to put up with various restraints imposed by their in-laws and husbands. Admittedly, the Bharatiya culture and tradition circumscribe the freedom of women. On the other hand, boys enjoy greater freedom and liberty to act as they please. Whatever job they take up or business they may carry on, whatever country they may go to, they have considerable freedom. There will be none to restrain them. If they want to do social service, they can do a great deal. Unfortunately, they are not filled with such noble urges. Women who have those sacred impulses to serve society suffer from handicaps and restraints. At least from today, I desire that young men and women, who have studied in the Sai educational institutions, will show their gratitude to their alma mater by engaging themselves in social service and stand forth as ideals for others by their dedicated lives. By merely acquiring degrees, you do not become educated persons.

Using education only for securing a mess of pottage is puerile. You must use your knowledge for bettering the lives of others. Of what use is a mountain of book knowledge, if you cannot secure real happiness as a human being? Will not God take care of man if he places his faith in the Divine? What is it that is achieved by ceaseless preoccupation with earning a living, forgetting the all-pervading Lord?

Everybody clamours for peace, saying, "I want peace." But can peace be found in the external world, which is only filled with pieces? Peace has to be found within oneself by getting rid of the "I" and desire. Peace is being destroyed by the ego and by insatiable desires. Restrain your desires. Man is haunted by endless worries of many kinds. Only by turning his mind towards God can he get rid of the worries. Men have to reduce desires and cultivate detachment (Vairagya) so that they can have real peace of mind.

What is it that students, who have spent ten or twelve years in Sai educational institutions, can show as evidence of their having benefited from their education? It should be evident to some extent from their conduct and practices. If this is not present, what is the use of their studies? If they have not learnt during this precious period in their lives to practise self-control and self-discipline, they will be guilty of having wasted their great opportunities. The essence of education consists in the cultivation of good qualities and the development of right values for meaningful living.

I bless you all students in the hope that you will dedicate yourselves to the service of the people and thereby earn the grace of the Lord.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajan binaa sukha santhi Nahi*" in which the entire gathering in the auditorium joined. Swami then sang His favourite English bhajan: *Love is my Form Truth is my breath Peace is my food My life is my message Expansion is my life*. This was followed by the bhajan, "*Subrahmanyam! Subrahmanyam!*")

—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 25-12-1989

It was summer. Some Sai devotees had assembled near the leprosy asylum for seva. The bhajans started. Students of the Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School had also gathered there. After bhajan, fruits were distributed to the inmates.

It was really a sad sight to see the patients in the asylum. I wondered what karmic law had brought on this dreaded disease to the afflicted persons. As I was thinking about these things, an elderly gentleman, leader of the Seva Samiti, came and said: "Why don't you, being Swami's students, come and talk to them?" I didn't have enough courage to go in. I looked around and noted that even other friends were hesitant. We had to give in as the elders said, "Don't worry, we won't go into the interior. Just speak to them for some time."

A small boy came closer. The old gentleman told him: "See, they are Baba's students." His eyes glowed with admiration. We boys moved back a little. Suddenly, he said: "Don't be afraid. I won't touch you." We were 'touched' by this statement. Then he started speaking in Marathi. He was aged 12 and the disease was in its early stages. He said that he saw Baba in a dream and described how Baba comes out for darshan, the Prasanthi Mandir, and the college buildings. He had never seen Baba! He said Baba often came in his dreams. He said: "You are so close to Swami, please pray for my healing." This brought tears to our eyes. We said, "Surely we will pray for you."

Then suddenly the elderly devotee said: "If anybody has the Vibhuti given by Swami, why don't you give it to him?" While going home for the vacation, Swami gives us Vibhuti prasadam and some of us had Vibhuti packets readily in our pockets. Immediately we gave the lad some packets.

Back at Prasanthi Nilayam after the vacation, we resumed our studies. One day I received a letter from the Samiti leader saying that the boy whom we had met at the asylum had refused to take any medicine and was only applying the Vibhuti given to him, and praying to Swami. The Hospital authorities were a bit apprehensive about this and rather displeased with the Sai devotees for interfering with the treatment they were giving to the boy.

After two weeks, the doctors examined the boy. There was no trace of leprosy. He was healed!

—*Hari Prasanna,*  
**M. Sc., Vidyagiri**

Saint Thyagaraja begins one of his compositions with the line "Adigi Sukhamu levvaranubhavinchiriraa Aadimoolama Ramaa".

We are taught to believe that, just as it is natural for parents to take care of the comforts of their children, God, the Universal Father, protects and suitably provides for those whom He has created. But man in his ignorance and with his ego regards himself as his own provider and protector and turns to God only when he finds himself at his wits' end.

We are further told that every one receives worldly benefits in accordance with his past Karma. Even those who wholeheartedly pray to God for relief from agony or seek worldly benefits from Him are reckoned as the Lord's devotees. In the Seventh Chapter of Gita, Lord Krishna says: "The virtuous ones who worship Me are of four kinds—the man in distress, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of wisdom, O Lord of the Bharatas." Thus the man who prays because he is in distress and the seeker of wealth too are counted among these who worship the Lord.

Forgiving man for his ignorance and out of His grace, the Lord might answer a devotee's prayer and grant him his wish. Fulfillment of one's wish might however sometimes have consequences altogether different from what the devotee had intended and looked forward to.

It is in this context that Thyagaraja says, as if blaming the Lord, "Oh, Rama, the Primal Cause of the Universe, whoever has enjoyed happiness, having asked you for it?" The composer implies that none has and goes on to give illustrations in support. Rama's divine consort Sita had once expressed a wish to spend some time in the Ashrams of the great sages; the result was that she was banished to the forest and had to live in the Ashram of Sage Valmiki. The great devotee Narada had once asked to be shown the Lord's power of Maya. He got what he wished to have but in the bargain he became entangled in the coils of worldly existence for a long time. Devaki and Vasudeva did penance to have the Lord born to them as their son; the wish was fulfilled; however, not only had they to live in prison but Devaki had only the travail of bearing the child. It was Yashoda who had the good fortune of bringing up the divine child and enjoying His pranks. Other examples too have been given in the Saint's composition but these are enough to make the point how satisfaction of one's wish might come about in an altogether unforeseen and perhaps unpalatable manner.

### **Wishing dangerously**

The point is well brought out in a famous one-act play in English, "The Monkey's Paw", by W. W. Jacobs. A retired Major of the Indian Army who had settled down in a small English town cultivated the friendship of a neighbouring family consisting of a homely aged couple and their only son, who was employed in a local factory. The major was in the habit of calling on his friends and regaling them with tales about his life in India. One evening talking to his friends about his strange experiences, he took out of his pocket an ugly looking shrivelled object. He told his friends that it was the paw of a monkey and that it had the power of granting to a person

were not unexpectedly sceptical and were inclined to dismiss it as one of the major's usual yarns about the mysterious orient. The major was insistent that the object had indeed the power he had attributed to it; at the same time, he cautioned them not to put the matter to test as it might lead to undesirable consequences. The warning was however brushed aside; the head of the family took the paw in his palm and wished that he had a thousand pounds to clear the mortgage on his house. They soon dispersed, the youngster leaving for his night shift at his factory, where he began to narrate to his colleagues in a lighthearted manner the major's tale about the strange power of the monkey's paw, treating it as a joke. While he was doing so, his outstretched hand got caught in the machinery and soon he himself was sucked into its fast moving wheels and got killed. Next morning, just about the time he was due to go back home after the night shift, the aged couple found a stranger dressed in black knocking at their door; it was a representative of the factory management who informed the couple about the fatal accident to their son and delivered to the old man a letter of condolence from the management; they disclaimed responsibility for the young man's death but enclosed a cheque for a thousand pounds as ex gratia payment to the bereaved parents. The rest of the story does not concern us here; but the author has convincingly made his point that satisfaction of one's wish might sometimes bring in its trail sorrow and suffering and that it is perhaps best not to ask at all!

### **When prayers fail**

In the mid-sixties when Bhagavan Baba had more time, He was gracious enough to give me a long interview. There was no one else present. During the course of the interview, I asked Bhagavan whether it was right and proper to pray to God for satisfaction of one's worldly desires; there is hardly anyone who does not pray to God for relief from worldly troubles or for satisfaction of one's cherished worldly ambitions. The embodiment of compassion that Bhagavan is, He did not condemn the almost universal tendency of praying for mundane benefits or for relief from pain and sorrow but Baba spoke at length on the subject of the appropriate reaction of a supplicant whose suffering remains unmitigated or whose ardent wish remains unfulfilled in spite of hard endeavour and devoted prayer. In His characteristic style, Bhagavan gave me a telling example, which often comes back to my mind.

In those days, there used to be a metre gauge train running between Secunderabad and Bangalore via Guntakal. Leaving Secunderabad at night, it used to reach Guntakal next morning at breakfast time. Baba said to me: "Suppose you are travelling to Bangalore by this train; before going to bed, you tell the conductor that you want breakfast at Guntakal. On arrival at Guntakal, however, you find that no breakfast is served to you in spite of your having asked for it. It is certainly the responsibility of the Railway administration to provide you with breakfast but through some mischance you do not get it and you feel not only hungry but vexed with the Railway. Your hunger and vexation will not make you abandon your journey to Bangalore. Satisfying your hunger by whatever means come your way, you will pursue your journey to Bangalore. Not only then, but as and when there is need for it, you will continue to visit Bangalore, travelling by the same train. In a similar way, even after your hard work to attain a certain worldly object and in spite of your prayer for its realisation, your efforts and prayers might some times turn out to be futile. Nevertheless you should neither abandon your endeavour

your deserts. Your goal is spiritual progress and you have chosen, after deliberation, to follow a certain path either on account of Swami's teachings, or the preachings of some great saint. Even when you encounter worldly disappointments and the minimum worldly comforts you seek are elusive, you ought not to give up either your longing for spiritual advancement or your chosen path for attaining it."

Baba's emphasis was thus on the way one should react to "the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to."

Saint Thyagaraja concludes the composition thus "Neeke daya butti brothuvo brovavo, Nee guttu bayalaaye..." Broadly it means and implies, "whether out of your grace you grant the devotee's wish or not is not known; but your secret is out. While the devotee seeks one thing, you might, while apparently fulfilling his wish, do so in an unexpected manner."

It is wise, therefore, not to ask for this or that benefit but to pray sincerely, "Thy will be done." We frail humans intellectually realise what is wise but do not cease to act otherwise.

In two essays entitled "Reflections on the Lord's Prayer" Aldous Huxley suggests that the invocation, "Give us this day our daily bread", really means a prayer to the Lord for divine and spiritual nourishment-the grace of God. In the same manner, "Ask and thou shalt be given" perhaps means not that all our worldly desires will be achieved through prayer but that divine grace can be attained through intense devotion to the Lord.

**A faltering pilgrim  
(Hyderabad)**

### ***The Saviour Descends***

Clouds, dark clouds, of deep disbelief,  
Covered the near sight, and the far horizon  
Of a mankind, doomed, on its march towards a destination  
Shrouded by chaotic omens of dreadful devastation!

The light of truth lost,  
it lost its mooring,  
to move in darkness,  
from peril to peril,  
losing its meaning,  
its purpose or goal,  
in a senseless quest,



In time, at last, as hopes dwindled,  
the Saviour descended  
to save His creation,  
to lead His creatures away  
from delusions of falsehood,  
vices of doubts,  
from dangers of disbelief,  
germs of destruction,  
towards the light, a new vision.  
gleaming with virtues,  
the rays of perfection!

Uniting in Faith  
Creeds and colours,  
Nations and peoples  
Of countries and continents,  
Banishing barriers of false separation,  
Across the frontiers of many illusions,  
Towards a bright Dawn  
On a New Horizon.

—*Dr. Manmath Nath Das*

### **The President's visit to Prasanthi Nilayam**

"The Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is a unique institution educationally, culturally and spiritually, " observed Sri R. Venkataraman, President of India, at the end of a three-hour visit to Prasanthi Nilayam on December 16th.

Although Sri Venkataraman had been expressing a keen desire to visit Prasanthi Nilayam and pay his respects to Bhagavan Baba, the visit could not materialise earlier for various reasons.

The President, accompanied by his wife, Srimathi Janaki Venkataraman, and the Governor of Karnataka, Sri Venkatasubbaiah, flew by an IAF helicopter from Bangalore and arrived at the Hill View Stadium at 10.10 a.m. The President and party were received on arrival by Col. Joga Rao and Sri R. Janakiramaiah, representing the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, and Prof. S. N. Saraf, Vice-Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute. The Institute band played select tunes to greet the President. The students and staff of the Institute, in their smart white uniforms, had lined up the entire route from the helipad to the guest rooms in the Poornachandra Auditorium where the

overseas devotees, who had come to Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhagavan Baba's birthday celebrations, extended cordial greetings to the President on his way to the Nilayam.

Shortly after reaching the Poornachandra, the President, wearing the typical South Indian jibba and dhoti, proceeded to the Mandir, with Srimathi Janaki, for a private interview with Bhagavan.

After the interview, which lasted nearly an hour, the President was taken on a visit round the Institute campus starting with the imposing Administrative Building on the top of Vidyagiri. Beside the Chancellor's chamber, in which there were many striking paintings, the President was taken round the Academic Council hall, where there were many interesting exhibits, including a transparent model of the human circulatory and nervous system, with a tape-recorded commentary explaining how the system works.

The work of the Examination Reforms Unit of the Institute, which has been conducting research into the reform of the examination system in collaboration with a score of other universities in India, was explained to the President.

The President evinced keen interest in the Computer Centre and the Institute's Library, where he was informed that the library was equipped with the latest books on various subjects to enable postgraduate students to pursue their doctoral studies. The machines in the Computer Centre, he was told, were being fully used by research scholars and others.

The President had a brief look at the college auditorium, with its impressive fresco panels of the founders of different faiths.

On Mr. Venkataraman's return from the visit to the campus, Bhagavan Baba hosted a lunch to the President and party. The President had an opportunity to acquaint himself with the unique features of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute as a seat of higher learning, which combines modern academic studies with the development of spiritual ideals and ethical conduct.

The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Srimathi Kumudben Joshi, who had come from Hyderabad to welcome the President, presented him with a portrait of Sri Venkataraman drawn by an Andhra artist, Mr. Vidyabhushan.

Before leaving Prasanthi Nilayam, the President met pressmen to whom he conveyed his impressions of the educational institutions at Prasanthi Nilayam. His visit, he said, had served a good purpose and he felt that the excellent educational system obtaining at Prasanthi Nilayam, under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagavan Baba, should serve as a model for every part of the country.

The President and party left for Bangalore at 1.30 p.m.

Mr. D. McDowell Sr., an American war veteran, who came to Swami ten years ago moving in a wheel chair and who regained the use of his legs by the grace of Swami, came to Brindavan in September-October 1989 to get a book of his on Bhagavan, blessed by Swami. After his return to California, he had firsthand experience of the severe earthquake that rocked San Francisco on October 17th. Describing his experience, Mr. McDowell writes

"I arrived back in the States on the 5th of October just 12 days before the 7.1 earthquake struck Santa Cruz. I was outside our mobile home sitting in my wheel chair watering the flowers when I heard a noise that resembled a squadron of army tanks coming down the street. Then the mobile home began shaking as though it might have been a rag doll in the jaws of a large shaggy dog. And my wheel chair started bouncing up and down like a rubber ball keeping time with it. It was difficult for me to keep from being thrown out. It lasted for 15 seconds and I expected every second to see the mobile home disintegrate and fly into space. All I could think to do was to hang on to the wheel chair and repeat Baba's name. It was evidently enough, for when I went inside, everything that could fall on the floor, had, except Baba's picture and the two vases of flowers on each side of it in the Puja room which were undisturbed. The mobile home next door to me had major damage. The only damage we had was a few glass tumblers and one glass table lamp broken. Jane and her sister were at Carmel at a Retreat where the quake was a lot less severe. Jai Sai Ram!"

**DEEPAVALI SANDESH:**

### **The Divine and the Demon**

*What is the reason for all the violence in the world?  
With the decline of selfless service irrational desires have grown.  
The pursuit of mundane desires without fear of sin  
Has led to a waning of the love for God  
Men have lost their humanness—  
As a consequence peace in the world has been shattered.*

*"I am in the light; I am the light. The light is in me. The light is me." The Wise One who realises this truth Becomes one with the Supreme.*

*Embodiments of Love!*

God is the One who manifests Himself in the cosmos with a myriad heads, a myriad eyes and a myriad feet. When this eternal Divinity is so near us (by His omnipresence) we are searching for Him all over the universe. This is as foolish as the person who goes abegging to his

senselessness on the part of man to search for God outside him when the Divine is within him.

No one can comprehend or describe the glory and mystery of Nature (Prakriti). Nature is a reflection of the sport of the Divine. It is animated by the three gunas, which are manifestations of the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva). God is nourishing and promoting Nature by using the three gunas in multifarious combinations and forms. The purpose of life is to experience the sacredness of Nature as a projection of the Divine.

### **Value of time**

Time is supremely precious. It waits for no one. Everyone has to submit himself to Time. It is not subject to any one. It is only when Time is utilised properly through right actions that the human can rise to the level of the Divine. Man's foremost duty is to make the right use of Time through the bodily vesture given to him. Man is bound by actions in this phenomenal world.

While the Divine is all-pervasive, man is failing to recognise it. He cannot grasp the air that surrounds him. He is unable to see the light that is within him. The Reality which you are seeking everywhere in the outside world is within you. The Supreme Lord is present inside and outside, everywhere in the cosmos. Man today looks only at the outside world like any animal. To look inward is the mark of the true human being. Obsessed with the external and losing the internal vision, man has forfeited his power of discrimination.

When we enquire into the significance of the Deepavali festival which we are celebrating today, we find that traditionally it is a joyous festival to celebrate the destruction of the demon Narakasura by Sri Krishna. It is only when we first understand the meaning of the Krishna Principle will we be able to understand the significance of the Naraka Principle. Krishna is the embodiment of the Five Elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth). He is also the embodiment of the five life-breaths (Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana).

"Kleem-Krishnaaya-Govindaaya-Gopijana-vallabhaaya-Swaah." This mantra contains the essence of the Bhagavata. The five names represent the Five Pranas (vital airs). "Kleem" refers to the earth. "Krishnaaya" refers to water. "Govindaaya" refers to Agni (the Fire-God). "Gopijana-vallabhaaya" refers to Vayu (Air). "Swaah" refers to ether (or sky). When we recognise that the Divine is immanent in the five elements, we will realise that there is no place in the cosmos where these five are not present. The human body is composed of the five elements. These elements, because they constitute the body, can affect only the body but cannot affect the Atma in any way.

### **Symbolism in Bhagavata**

In commenting on the Krishna story in the Bhagavata, many writers have indulged in all kinds of misinterpretations. One such misinterpretation relates to Krishna's wives.

In the human body, there are what are called "Shad-chakras", six spiritual centres. Of these, the two most important are: the Hridaya-chakra (the Heart Centre) and the Sahasrara (the

kamala) and the Sahasrara is called the Thousand- Petalled Lotus. The lotus of the heart has eight petals. These eight petals symbolise the eight worlds, the eight directions, the eight guardians of the world, the eight spirits (bhutas) and the eight parts of the earth. Because Krishna was the lord of these eight petals, he was described as the husband of eight queens. The master is called "Pathi" and those under him are described as wives. This is a symbolic relationship and not a husband-wife relationship in the worldly sense. It is because the esoteric significance of these relationships was not properly understood, the Bhagavatam came in for misinterpretation.

It is also stated that Krishna was wedded to 16,000 Gopikas. Who are these Gopikas? They are not cowherdresses in physical form. In the human head there is a lotus with a thousand petals. Each of these petals has 16 kalas. The Lord is described as the embodiment of the 16 kalas. As the Lord of the Sahasrara (thousand-petalled lotus), He presides over the 16,000 kalas which are present in this lotus. The Kundalini Shakti, which starts at the bottom of the spinal column (Mooladhara), rises and merges with the 16,000 entities in the Sahasrara. This is the esoteric significance and the meaning of the role of the Divine within the body. Oblivious to this inner meaning, people indulge in misinterpretations and perverse expositions.

### **Krishna and naraka**

Krishna's encounter with the demon Naraka has to be understood against this background. "Naraka" means one who is opposed to the Atma. Naraka does not mean a demon. It is the name of a satellite which revolved round the earth. When people were filled with apprehension about the threat to the earth from this satellite, when it seemed to be approaching the earth, Krishna removed their fear by destroying the satellite. Dangers from the planets are apprehended from time to time. For instance, some years ago, people expected great danger to the world from the combination of the eight planets ("Ashtagraha"). Five thousand years ago people dreaded the approach of a planet near to the earth. To allay their fears, Krishna came to their rescue and averted the impending danger. The celebration of Deepavali as the day of deliverance from Narakasura commemorates Krishna's victory. The day is observed as an occasion when the Divine leads mankind from darkness to light.

The legendary version of the Narakasura episode describes the demon as master of Pragjyotishapura. The symbolic meaning of Pragjyotishapura is that it is a place which has forgotten the Atma. The inner meaning of this is that demonic forces dwell in any place where the Atma is forgotten. All the chaos and evil in the world today are due to the fact that men have forgotten the Atma (the Supreme Spirit). Every man is conscious of the body and of the individual soul, but is not conscious of the Divinity (Paramatma) within him.

### **From food to bliss**

Man is encased in five sheaths (Kosas): Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Kosas. The physical body is the Annamaya sheath (the sheath based on food). Man takes good care of the body. Man also takes care of the Pranamaya Kosa as he cannot exist without the life-breath. Without the Manomaya Kosa, (the mental sheath), man cannot accomplish any of his desires. Man today has progressed up to the stage of caring for the first

calls for internal vision. It leads to the understanding of the Anandamaya Kosa (the sheath of Supreme Bliss). Starting from the sheath of Food man should progress towards the sheath of Bliss and not get stuck up midway in the mental sheath. This is the reason for man getting filled with demonic qualities, which can only lead him to hell (Naraka). The demonic qualities (symbolised by Narakasura) have to be destroyed to avoid being thrust into Naraka (hell). By taking refuge in Krishna, the destroyer of Narakasura, man can get rid of the demonic qualities in him.

### **Significance of Deepavali**

On Deepavali day, we light numerous lamps with one candle. The light with which other lamps are lit is a symbol of the Divine. The other lamps are Jivana jyotish (individual lamps). They derive their light from the One Supreme Light. It is to teach this truth to men that the Festival of Lights is observed.

Thus every festival has an inner meaning and purpose. Forgetting this, the holy days are observed only as occasions for feasts and fun. Holy days in Bharat are all full of spiritual significance. Forgetting this, people are lost in meaningless observances.

According to the legend, Krishna killed Narakasura with the help of Sathyabhama. What does this signify? Each of us has to fight and destroy the demonic forces within each by resorting to Sathya (Truth). "Sathaymeva Jayathe" declares the Upanishad. "Truth alone triumphs". "Speak the Truth" is a Vedic injunction. Once the Goddess of the Earth went to Vishnu and lamented that she can bear any kind of burden but not the burden of carrying those indulging in falsehood. One must be prepared to make any kind of sacrifice for upholding Truth. That is the lesson taught by Harishchandra, who sacrificed his kingdom, wife and son, for the sake of the pledged word. He stands out as the supreme upholder of Truth.

Everyone should endeavour to adhere to Truth. Truth is God. With faith in God and adherence to Truth, all demonic forces can be vanquished.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha Manase Kaho*")

**(From Bhagavan's discourse at Brindavan on 28-10-1989)**

### **The Compassionate Lord**

It is always a unique experience to stay in the presence of Bhagavan who is Divinity itself in human form. Whatever He does is Dharma, whatever He speaks is Truth. He speaks through His actions. That is the glory of the Sai Avatar.

significant things come to my mind. Many things that Bhagavan does escape our notice and even if we observe them we forget over a period of time. I still remember a small but significant incident which took place during the Dasara festival of 1987. During those nine days Bhagavan blessed everyone by giving His discourses on all the last seven days. One day, an elderly gentleman gave a speech which preceded Bhagavan's discourse. After his speech, he sat down on the stage near Bhagavan. Bhagavan rose and began His discourse in His sweet voice, which filled the Auditorium with its melody. After the discourse, when the elderly devotee on the stage was about to get up, the shawl which covered his shoulders slipped down. Immediately, Bhagavan Himself bent down and picked up the shawl from the floor and placed it on the old devotee's shoulders. Bhagavan took hold of his arm, helped him to get up on his feet and led him outside!

This simple but very significant act of Lord Sai opened my eyes to His humility. This one deed transformed me and gave me a glimpse of the multifaceted personality that Bhagavan is.

Humility is one of the greatest virtues. One who is full of ego can never experience joy and peace unless he opens his heart to the Lord who resides therein. If only humility is practised by people, all evil thoughts would vanish.

—Y. S. Yijayasarathy,  
II B.Com., Vidyagiri

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

## **Religions and Morals**

*Dear Students!*

The truth proclaimed by all religions is one and the same. The ultimate goal of all religions is the same. The primary object of religion is to cure man of his follies and make him a real human being. Equally, religion aims at promoting righteous conduct by transforming the mental attitude of man. Religion is concerned with developing in man faith in the Spirit, besides his preoccupation with the needs of the body. For all religions the foundation is morality. If morality declines, humanness will decline together with the eclipse of religion.

Morality is the basis of right conduct. Whether it is the State, the society or the individual, the basis for all of them is morality. When morality goes, all the three will be undermined. All prosperity and happiness are based on moral strength. It is to make man realise the value of the ethical life that religions came into being.

Religion aims at promoting the harmony of body, intellect and mind through righteous conduct. Right conduct in its totality represents morality. It is otherwise known as Dharma

real value in life. When one leads a life governed by moral values, he achieves the most precious things including name, fame and prosperity. Material objects have their value, but Dharma (Righteousness) is invaluable. No price can be set on it.

### **Dharma and human values**

Dharma is otherwise known as morality (neeti). Morality is equated with selfless love. Religions were instituted to foster the well being of society through the promotion of love. The ancient sages laid down certain rules and precepts in accordance with the times, the place and the circumstances of the country. These were intended to foster human values and were based on the Scriptures and the Vedas. No one can determine the precise date, place or authorship of these regulations. The sages believed that these disciplines were conducive to the promotion of the highest human qualities and were divinely ordained to help mankind. With the efflux of time and because of the predilections of different sages, these rules got divided into branches and sub-branches (shakhas and upashakhas), with the names of the respective sages attached to them. The names of sages like Vasishta, Gautama, Parashara, Vishwamitra are associated with these branches (shakhas). They were all designed to promote social well-being. No one can fix the date or the name of the founder of the religion of the Bharatiyas. The fountain source of all the sects is the Veda.

### **Post-vedic religions**

Apart from the Vedic religion, some other religions came into existence 2000-2500 years ago. The founders of these religions took note of the prevailing social conditions and sought to promote unity among the various sections through their teachings. There was basically no conflict between these different faiths. Unfortunately, the differences among the individual followers of these faiths resulted in the growth of narrow loyalties and creedal conflicts. In each religion there were some virus elements which promoted hatred of other faiths. In truth, there is no conflict between one religion and another. The religion of the Bharatiyas is the most ancient in origin. Having regard to its Vedic basis, it has been described as Hinduism. The essence of this faith is its universality as expressed in the saying: "May all the peoples everywhere be happy" ("Lokaassamasthaas sukhino bhavanthu.") The Bharatiya faith laid stress on the happiness of everyone.

The objective of Islam, the religion of the Muslims, is also the same. In Persian, "Islam" means "surrender" or "peace". The inner meaning of this term is that man should surrender to God and live in peace with his fellowmen. The holy book of Islam, the Quran, contains many sacred precepts. "Salaath" is one such precept. It enjoins one to worship God with steady faith. Another precept is "Zakaath", which enjoins the believer to practise charity for relieving fellow-beings in need or distress. In the scriptures of the Bharatiyas, a similar duty has been laid down in the saying: "It is meritorious to help others and it is sinful to cause harm to others." ("Paropakarah punyaaya paapaaya parapeedanam.")



Truth, peace, love, forbearance and compassion were regarded as the five life-breaths of their religion by the Bharatiyas.

### **Religious differences**

Even the Quran declared that in discussing matters of religion and the teachings of different religions, acrimony should not be imported into the debate and the differences should be considered without bitterness. This is affirmed by every religion. But the followers of each faith, forgetting this fundamental truth, raised barriers based on creedal differences which were really verbal and not fundamental.

Today various kinds of differences are arising among religions. This is not a good thing. Everyone should base his life on the divinely ordained morals and verities and endeavour to foster them. Morality should serve as the beacon light for everyone. Without that light human life will be plunged in darkness.

The ancient sages made known to the world that by their earnest quest for God, they had been able to experience the Divine. "We have seen that sacred effulgent Lord (Purusha) in our hearts." "We have seen Him beyond the darkness (Tamas) of ignorance", they declared. But the purpose of human life is not merely to secure a vision of the Divine or to experience the bliss of that vision. Those who love sugar must seek to become sugar itself. "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi." ("The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself.") Religion aims at bringing about such a transformation. Making him a man to begin with, it seeks to transform him to Madhava (Divinity itself). Religion, which has such a sublime purpose, is being degraded to serve petty ends.

### **Universalism of Hinduism**

The Veda is dualistic. We have in India the followers of Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhvacharya, representing three schools of philosophy. These sects are the products of individuals, but Hindu religion itself is not the creation of any individual. The basic Hindu faith is not for Indians alone but is for all mankind. The word "Hindu" is composed of the two syllables "Him", meaning Himsa (violence) and "Du", meaning, "distant". Hinduism is the faith that makes violence distant. That is the reason why Hinduism alone stands out as a religion that strives for the well-being of all peoples, in all countries, at all times. Hence the appellation, "Sanathana" meaning ancient or timeless. No one knows when it was revealed and who was its founder. Other religions have their chronology. The Hindu religion knows no growth or decline. It belongs to all countries. It is acceptable to all people.

Though people may call themselves Muslims, Christians, Hindus and the like, there should be no differences between them. Students should be completely free from sectarian differences. They should respect all religions because what you cherish in your religion is found in other religions also. If you adhere to your own religion, you need not worry yourself about other religions.

enquiry or otherwise, to experience what they believe. Students! Don't entertain religious differences. The God that is worshipped in all religions is one and the same. With that conviction, respect all religions. Realise that the essence of all religions is one. Don't enter into futile controversies or criticise other religions. It is fraught with danger. When you attack another religion, you are really guilty of assailing your own religion. Therefore, show your reverence to every one. "Whatever deity you adore, the worship reaches the One Supreme Lord."

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Prasanthi Mandir, on 23-7-1989**

### ***WHO IS A REAL BHAKTA?***

*There is the story of a rustic who sat among a gathering of devotees and listened to the exposition of the Gita by a great pundit. All were wonder-struck by the scholarly commentary which the pundit gave and his learned disquisition on each word and phrase; and the rustic, though the exposition was very much over his head, seemed to attend very closely for he was all the time in tears! When at last the pundit asked him why he was weeping, he surprised everybody by the sincerity of his Bhakti. For, he said that he wept at the predicament of the Lord, who had to sit at the head of the chariot and half turning his neck hold forth so long to convince the dull-witted Arjuna. "How much pain must He be suffering in His neck?" he asked and wept. That was real devotion, a sure passport to spiritual victory. He had identified himself with the participants in the episode and the whole setting had become alive for him.*

**—Baba ("Chinna Katha")**

### **Muslim Devotees' Memorable Experience**

There is a Sanskrit saying that not a blade of grass will stir except by His will. It was by Bhagavan's grace that on November 11, a batch of 11 Muslim devotees had the opportunity to meet and converse with Bhagavan and receive His blessings at Prasanthi Nilayam.

We reached Prasanthi Nilayam in the morning. We were seated in a row in the darshan line. Bhagavan was happy to see the Muslim devotees and put several questions individually to each of them, asking their names, their occupation, etc. Swami told them that He would call them for interview on the 13th.

On the morning of the 13th, Swami called the 11 Muslim devotees alone for a separate interview. Speaking individually to each of them, Swami enquired about each one's problems and revealed His prior knowledge of their difficulties.

Swami told them that Prophet Mohammed's father's name was Abdullah and the mother's name was Amina. Mohammed was a posthumous child, born after the death of his father. His mother also died when he was 6 years of age. He was brought up by his grandfather, who passed away shortly thereafter.

Mohammed had to face considerable persecution for the sake of the faith he propagated. He was equal-minded towards all.

Bhagavan told them that He regarded people of all faiths, whether they were Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or others with the same love. Swami said that different persons showed preference for different kinds of sweets—jangri, jilebi, gulabjamoon and so on—but all of them were made from sugar, though the names were different. Likewise, God may be worshipped under different names and forms, but He is only one.

One Muslim devotee asked whether the performance of animal sacrifice by Hindus and Muslims in certain festivals was right. Swami said that killing animals was wrong. What should be offered as sacrifice are the animal instincts in man like lust and hatred. Swami hoped the practice of animal sacrifice would be given up.

Swami presented the Muslim devotees with new clothes and various tokens of His love materialised on the spot. The Muslim devotees were deeply moved by Swami's overwhelming love.

—A.S.R., *Nellore*

### *Students' Corner:*

#### **Lord: Be Our Guide**

We know, Lord, that as the years roll by  
You will have more work to do.  
Then we will have to admit with a sigh  
"The rest of the world is waiting too."

Give us now, Lord, a few memories to cherish  
To which we can turn in times of trouble  
And say happily, before 'tis our time to perish,  
that "the Lord guided us through life's rubble."

We know, You will have more to attend to,  
As time rolls by and the years fly past;  
When it will be a rare event to behold You,  
Unless we have the faith that's steadfast.

But, please, Lord, let us be guided by you  
Even during those busy days  
So that our faith will take us through,  
And we can follow you always.

We know, Lord, that the time has come  
When Your message will spread far and wide  
And people will hasten to Your clarion call  
Rushing to You from every side.

But, please Lord, give us a chance to work for You,  
And give us Your grace, to be Your worthy tools,  
In shaping this world into a place, good and new,  
Where all can dwell, guided by Your rules.

We know, Lord, that many times we strayed away,  
And in Your infinite mercy, You led us back;  
You taught us never to tread again the wrong way  
But ever to follow Your Divine track.

Forgive us, Oh Lord! if we commit any fault—  
Which we may do, knowingly or not;  
Help us to give our wrongs a halt  
And come closer to You as we have sought.

*—P. Gopi Krishna, XI M.P. C.*

### **"Life is an Aeroplane"**

Manish Sarma (of the XII Standard), who spoke at one of the meetings in the Prasanthi Mandir in June last, compared life to an aeroplane. The son of a pilot in the Indian Airlines, who is also a firm devotee of Bhagavan, Manish said that just as a plane is not to be kept idle in a hangar, the aeroplane of life has to be used to take man to his destination. To enable a plane to fly, provision has to be made for forward thrust and upward lift. In the case of the human being, the Divine has provided the forward propelling force of faith and the upward lift of surrender, while inevitably there is the initial drag of doubt and the downward pull of ignorance. "What we have to do", Manish said, "is to fill this plane of ours with the fuel of love and the baggage of devotion and follow the Divine commands. We have to develop the forward propelling force of faith, which will overcome the drag of doubt, and when we surrender ourselves at Bhagavan's

by the Lord we shall fly to unimagined realms.

"Swami's love is unfathomable. Once Swami said: `You may love God, but do you act in such a manner that God may love you?' We must do our work mindful of the fact that if we do as He commands, we shall find ourselves moving closer to Him and in the process our love and faith in Him will become purer and firmer. The other day Swami said that God is always near us but it is we who create the distance between Him and ourselves. This distance we can cut short by implicitly obeying whatever He commands.

"It all depends upon us whether we want to take the plane of Atma through the runway of life and, with the help of the forward propelling force of faith and the upward lift of surrender, soar to the skies leading us to the airport of Love where we shall find the Lord waiting for us with His arms wide open, as though saying, `Welcome back home, my child.'"

*It is essential to inquire into the credentials one has before one formulates one's prayer. That inquiry will reveal whether one's thoughts and resolutions, hopes and desires arise from firm Faith or not. How to test and discover the truth? People take a piece of gold and draw with it a line on a piece of stone; then they examine that streak and assess the quality. The test which will reveal the quality of your Faith is whether you are practising sincerely the injunctions laid down by God. Your beliefs and actions must be expressions of Faith. They must have holiness as their core. They must be so full of Love and compassion that they attract on you the Grace of God.*

—Baba

## **Interview—Inner View**

"Interview! Interview!" Every heart throbs for Interview,  
But how many seek to seek the real Inner view?"  
"When you are in MY view—is sufficient Interview"  
the Lord takes pain to explain: for it is in  
His view that we must start the precious Inner view.

"Why have I come? Not to Prasanthi but to this world so wide:—  
Is it to live a life unfulfilled as so many who have lived and died?"

But our Inner view is shrouded by a veil of desire, anger and hate,  
of selfishness, of envy—every thought becomes a bait.

The Interview may come—and our hearts with joy abound,

In chains of Love, and sacrifice and service to all mankind.  
Then Interview or not—He will always hold our hand.

—J. Jagadeesan, Kuala Lumpur.

### ***I ASKED SWAMI ....***

In my prayer

I asked Swami to let me see Truth with His eyes, and to let me know Truth with His Mind.

I begged Swami

to allow me to experience True Love with His Heart and to permit me the joy of observing  
Truth in action with the Compassion of His Soul.

"Yes. Yes. Yes", He said smiling.

"I will grant all you ask... Just as soon as you stop focusing your eyes and your mind and  
your heart on the false world you have built to disguise the Truth of Mine."

—Jay Jarrett, U.S.A.

### ***Sai, the Sadguru***

*Have faith in Baba  
He will wipe out your papa (sins)  
He is the preceptors' Preceptor  
Place your burdens at His altar.*

*Be devoted to Him forever and ever  
You will be drawn to Him nearer and dearer.*

*For heavenly bliss and salvation,  
With guarantee for no starvation,  
You need Baba's grace and protection.*

—R. Y. Giridhar

## His Will and Ours

The crucial question of 'how am I best to do God's will?' applies to everything we undertake. The ways in which we arrive at the answer doubtless vary considerably from person to person. Depending on our age, capacities, circumstances, opportunities or challenges, we try to find out our personal way ahead in accordance with *dharma*. The general teachings of Bhagavan Baba give the major outline of how to act rightly. Swami mostly provides guidelines and warnings to aid us in judging on what basis to make decisions, though not which decisions to make. Here are some refreshing words of Baba that guide us:-

"If desire comes, analyse it. If it is good for you and not harmful to others, go ahead. If not good, put it aside at once. If you are uncertain, do nothing until the uncertainty is clarified."  
(Conversations *with Sri Sathya Sai Baba*).

"Fluttering without perfect repose is the very nature of the mind! Only to worry over this peacelessness is wrong. Watch it without any perturbation, the peacelessness can no longer remain."

"The mind assumes the form of the objects with which it is attached. If it gets fixed on small things, it becomes small; if on grand things it becomes grand."

### How swami responds

In daily life we have to decide how God's will applies to ourselves in respect of which specific plans we will make and try to realise. It is well known that Baba gives many and varied forms of subtle guidance, making use of words, body language, dreams, appearances, visions, the distant materialisation of objects and manipulation of events and so on virtually *ad infinitum*. This fact may lead one to hope or believe that Swami will answer any questions by such means. Is there any incontestable method of knowing with reasonable certainty when a question put in prayer, meditation or otherwise *has* been answered?

Considering the many well-reported experiences of such phenomena we know how Swami is capable of leaving us in no doubt whatever when His specific agency has been at work. His answers take full account of the idiosyncratic workings of the mind of each questioner so that confusion will not arise, when He so chooses.

We are sure Bhagavan's will is directly at work when we observe someone win the darshan line lottery four times running for a place in the very front. It 'happens' to those who are 'in luck'. Yet the huge odds against it convinces us that even chance has here had to conform to the higher law of Swami's gracious will.

What can one do if there remains a modicum of uncertainty about Swami's direct influence in some matter? In an interview in August 1986, a Dane asked Swami whether throwing certain coins inscribed with 'Om' would give one answers from Swami. To this Baba replied only: "Om is everywhere." Some chose to interpret this as a 'yes', others were certain it only meant that Swami wanted us first to find God in ourselves. The answer does imply that 'Om' is no more present in the coins than in anything else in one's entire life, including our various human faculties.

We speak of 'sheer chance'—that is to say unpredictable events not following any law whatever—which makes it notoriously risky. If one's uncertainty can be removed by casting a coin, then it cannot have been so serious. If chance really does occur and the pendulum or the coin thus can happen not to express the will of God (whether of Swami or one's inner divinity), then trusting to it could be fateful or even fatal.

It is an observable fact that non-rational or impulsive decisions can have disturbing consequences for those who are relatively insecure in themselves, gradually inviting mental imbalance and worsening any previous loss of reality-sense. Only in matters where the outcome makes little or no difference does good sense suggest a gamble on the toss of a coin. Thus casting one's fate to the winds is like avoiding responsibility for exercising free will and its consequences. Self-confidence, which is based on faith in the divinity within and without, is likely to be lacking if one has to depend instead on a coin.

There is a time-honoured idea that we have a destiny that we may, or may not, fulfill. It all depends upon ourselves, not upon 'fate'. Fate is what befalls us if we fail individually to act to fulfil our destiny. Our true destiny becomes known to us inwardly through use of our many faculties such as discrimination and sound intuition, not by staring ourselves blind at whatever befalls us.

### **The knock on the door**

In our relative ignorance of the actual God within, it is tempting at times to ignore the fact that divine qualities are present in the very faculties that we have been given: our 'normal' discriminative conscience, self-intuition, intelligence, common sense and perceptivity. It is easy to jump to conclusions by imagined hopes, by magnifying one's own thoughts to be an independent 'inner voice', importing one's wishes into interpretations of texts and generally forcing results by a 'psychic' act of will that itself must rather conceal the Omni will than express it. Instead of coming in a supernormal mysterious manner, the answer can just as well arrive in the form of an opportunity knocking on one's door. Can we not therefore just say that every knock on the door must be the will of God?

"'I do not know' conveys the same meaning as the statement 'It is the will of God.' One is no wiser at the latter statement than after hearing the first." (Sathya Sai Vahini p. 23)



tomorrow for tomorrow. One day at a time, each day for itself, each moment for itself without a past, without memory, without conclusions. Conclusions bind. They press on the mind. Dare to remain inconclusive. See the endless quandaries of the mind as divine leela, His Sport."

Where Swami gives no answer or no definitive directions and leaves things up to us and our designs, there must be a reason for it. We may simply have to `Wait, wait' for the answer, or else exercise our discrimination and exert wit and will-power to solve the matter! However, Baba often encourages us to take fortune into our own hands (while dedicating them selflessly!):-

"Act, act with all your might and with all your mind; make full use of the skill, capacity, courage and confidence that you are endowed with." (*Sadhana*)

"The result of any action is dependent upon the amount of confidence with which it is done. We might not have confidence or faith in what we're undertaking, yet at the time asking God for great gifts. If a person wants to benefit in what he is doing, he must have a steady mind and a vision that is not so easily shaken." (*Spirit and the Mind* p. 178)

### **The right to ask**

Bhagavan told Dr. Hislop that it is our right to ask things of God. He is, after all and before all, our nearest and dearest. Whether definite word comes or not, events themselves may bear the clues one needs. Contemplating on them can lead to the answer from one's personal inner conviction. The frame of mind adopted towards what one must do or the dedication in one's choice can itself alone make all the difference between right and wrong. Yet uncertainty can be unavoidable and may then prove to be a test for sharpening one's discrimination and learning not to waste time and energy in futile speculation. In this life, evidently, trial and error cannot be entirely avoided, as the following also confirms: -

"Either I must grant you the thing that you crave for, or you must realise its very absurdity and conquer that worthless yearning." (*Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram IV* p. 102)

"Welcome disappointments for they toughen you and test your fortitude." ... "The primary aim is to become Masters of yourselves, established in intimate and constant communion with the Divine who is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part." (from *BABA* by *Arnold Schulman*)

### **Need for patience**

At times in life one's present livelihood or way of living seems to be empty and unmeaningful (in my experience) or simply too full of problems and compromises. Finding a new orientation and task can be a hard challenge. It is clear that timidity can make molehills into mountains while mental courage can do the reverse. Yet if desperation for major changes and improvements tends to set in, there is reassurance in knowing that Swami teaches the need for patience and that safe arrival depends upon driving slowly.

reports, to depend largely on the developmental needs of the particular individual whom He approaches.

We cannot presume to comprehend His motives, yet it is evident that some people, such as those who suffer from chronic indecision, often need to be left to make up their own minds and thus to strengthen themselves. Others may require the benefit of direct corrective advice. Meanwhile, the common signposts for all to follow are clear enough, the general directives and teachings given are at once simple and comprehensive. It is a question of learning where and when to apply them in personal action. The self-confidence and self-reliance Swami advocates so often involve striking an equal-minded balance between the pull of outer and inner influences:-

"Do not imitate others in your spiritual *sadhana*. *You* have your own feelings, your own ideas, your own opinions, your own will. Why then imitate? Follow your own *sadhana*. Let your own experience of God be your guide, master and *guru*. *Do* not go into the grave weakly imitating others."

"There are many ways to serve the world. You can serve just as actively by your serenity. Everyone need not do all things."

"The Lord will not examine the wealth, the family, the status or the sex. He sees only Righteousness (*Sadbhava*). Those endowed with such righteousness He considers as deserving His Grace, whoever they are, whatever they are. Therefore develop goodness and righteousness. Live and act in joy and love. These two are sufficient; salvation can be attained without fail." (Prema *Vahini*).

—**Robert Priddy, Oslo**

### **"Best Ever" Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam**

The 1989 Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam were in Swami's words "The best Christmas ever."

Christmas activities began seven days before Christmas day, with daily Satsang, choir practice and rehearsals for a children's play on the 25th.

The harmony and sweetness of Satsang, with devotees from different countries singing, in their national language, their most favourite songs and bhajans, uplifted the spirit of love in every heart, as everyone joined in.

On Christmas Eve, the choir and all overseas devotees were given permission to assemble at Darshan in front of the Mandir, to sing Christmas songs before Swami. As we sang, Swami gave

Swami sat in His chair on the verandah of the Mandir, in full view of all those present for almost an hour. Swami obviously enjoyed the singing, as He swayed His hand and body to the beat of the music, while we all sang our praise and love to the Lord. This programme was then followed by the usual Indian bhajans.

### **A glorious nagarsankirtan**

Christmas morning began at 5.00 a.m. with thousands of devotees, overseas and Indian, joining the Nagarsankirtan with lighted candles, singing Christmas carols while walking around the Ashram grounds.

All of them arrived at the Mandir, singing, "Joy to the world! The Lord has come!" and waited for Swami to give His dawn darshan.

Suddenly Swami emerged from the double silver doors on the balcony of the Mandir dressed in a pure white silk gown. This was the first time Swami had come in a white gown during Christmas. It was a thrilling sight as Swami raised His hands to bless everyone.

After the Arati, Swami gave the most beautiful darshan, walking slowly along the full length of the balcony of the Mandir, as we all hummed: "Silent Night, Holy Night." First walking on the men's side then slowly across to the ladies' side, Bhagavan showered one and all with Divine Love, to begin this Holy Christmas day.

### **Divine discourse**

In the afternoon everyone assembled in the Poornachandra hall to hear Swami's Divine discourse on the life and message of Jesus and to see the drama staged by the children.

The programme began with speeches by three old students of Swami's Women's College at Anantapur. They spoke on their experiences with Swami and the important role women must play in society in rendering service to the needy and in improving the lives of the people.

This was then followed by three western speakers from Australia and the United Kingdom, who spoke about the unique experience that can be obtained from spending Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Bhagavan Baba.

Swami then delivered His Divine discourse, speaking on the divine life and ministry of Jesus. (Details of Bhagavan's discourse are given elsewhere in this issue). Swami concluded His discourse with three bhajans, "Hari bhajan bina", "Love is my form", and "Subrahmanyam, Subrahmanyam".

Swami then moved down to His chair in the aisle of the auditorium to watch the Christmas play, performed by children from many countries who were spending Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme of the play was "See God in everything".

showing the life of Jesus and how he taught the people to love all. In the final scene, all types of objects, trees, animals, stones, etc., are asked if God is within them. The response comes in the form of 12 'little Sai Babas' jumping out from the back of these, forming a line along the whole stage. The applause from everyone was spontaneous. Bhagavan was the happiest of them all.

When the play ended, the children moved forward on the stage and were joined by Bhagavan Baba, who was surrounded by the many 'little Sai Babas' as their photograph was taken. Swami then went behind the stage and allowed all the children to do Padanamaskaram and blessed all of them for their good performance.

### **Christmas dinner**

After the drama, all the overseas devotees had their Christmas dinner in the overseas canteen. The dinner included a Christmas cake as well as ice cream offered as Prasad by Swami for the occasion. The choir started singing during the dinner and were quickly joined by many hundreds of singers, making this Christmas a most memorable and spiritually uplifting experience.

Shortly after Christmas day, for the first time, Swami invited all overseas Seva workers who had done voluntary work, to assemble separately next to the Mandir for special darshan. As Swami approached, He remarked: "How is this gang of hard workers?" A request was made to Swami to allow Padanamaskaram to all of those present. He allowed all to touch His Divine Lotus Feet as He walked slowly between the rows of volunteer workers, talking to some, smiling at others. How happy He was, how happy He made us all, filling our hearts with such love at the end of this most holy of Christmases!

Swami confirmed to us that this Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam had been, in His words, "the best ever". Thank you, Swami, for inviting us all to be here with you for this most Holy and Loving Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam.

**—Terry Gallagher, Prasanthi Nilayam**

GURUDEVA VANI:

## Sports and Spirituality

*What greater misfortune can there be  
Than the failure of Bharatiyas  
To understand the true greatness  
Of their ancient and sacred culture?*

*To cavil at others' faults  
And to be blind to one's own;  
To jeer at others' looks,  
Not noticing one's own ugliness;  
To make fun of others  
And not see one's own follies;  
To have such qualities from birth  
Can there be a greater sin than this?*

Students, boys and girls, and teachers, embodiments of love!  
The observance of morality in daily life, the divinisation of all actions and thoughts related to life, and adherence to ideals together constitute culture. Students today do not make the requisite efforts to understand the sacredness and value of this culture. 'Sanskrit', 'Sanskriti', 'Sanskara' are all terms which have been derived from the roots, 'Sam' and 'Krit'. Bharatiya culture (Sanskriti) is a composite of purity, divinity, sublimity and beauty. This combination is reflected in sports and games.

Although there may be differences among nations in their food and recreational habits, the spirit of harmony and unity displayed in sports is a gratifying example to all. It is a distinctive quality of sports that differences are forgotten and persons engage themselves in games in a divine spirit of friendliness and camaraderie. Sports help the players not only to improve their health but also to experience joy.

Students, however, should not be content with realising these benefits. Man has another body besides the physical. It is the subtle body, otherwise known as the mind. It is equally essential to promote purity of the mind and develop large heartedness. True humanness blossoms only when the body, the mind and the spirit are developed harmoniously.

The enthusiasm and effort which you display in sports should also be manifested in the spheres of morality and spirituality. You must endeavour to experience the divinity that permeates Bharat's sacred culture.

Bharatiya culture is not a product of narrow-minded ideas and ideals. It is filled with profound, sublime and ennobling ideas. "Lokasamasthas-sukhino-bhavantu—May all the people be happy" is the benedictory motto of Bharat.

### **Unity in action**

There is a prayer in the Purusha Sukta which students recite regularly, but they do not understand its full meaning. "Sahaanaavavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavaavahai." What is the inner meaning of this mantra? "Let us grow together in harmony; let us move about in friendliness; let us spread together the light that we have gained from our studies. Let us live in harmony without discord. Let us promote in harmony the use of our talents and skills." This is the profound inner meaning of this Vedic hymn.

No other language can stand comparison with Sanskrit in its sweetness or range of expression. The sages prayed for the happiness and well-being of everyone on earth. "Sarve bhadrani pasyanthu" "May all see only what is auspicious." Such were the benedictions pronounced in the Sanskrit language.

Many European languages have a large number of words which are derived from Sanskrit roots. Words like mother, father, brother, etc., in English are derived from Latin words which are themselves derived from Sanskrit words like, Pitru, Matru and Bhratru. Thus English is like a grand-daughter, while Latin is a daughter and Sanskrit is the mother of languages. Sanskrit enjoys this privilege of being the ancient mother of many languages.

### **The glory of Sanskrit**

A great French scholar, Louis Renou, spent many years in India studying the Sanskrit language. On the eve of returning to his native country, he was given a big farewell party by many teachers and students. At that gathering Louis Renou was full of tears, feeling sad at having to leave India. Controlling himself, he said he was feeling extremely sad to leave India. "Indians are treating the immortal Sanskrit language as a 'dead' language. Educational institutions and students are not making adequate efforts to study Sanskrit. Having this immortal language with them, they are not making any effort to enjoy its glories. There can be no greater misfortune than this," he lamented.

Max Mueller was another savant who explored the greatness of Sanskrit. He traced the Sanskrit origin of many English words. After completing a study of the Rg Veda, he inscribed an introduction to his work in Sanskrit in which he described himself as a native of Germany who had received his education at Oxford University. He coined Sanskrit equivalents for Germany and Oxford ("Sarmany" and "Gothirthapura") and Sanskritised his own name as "Mokshamula Bhat." When great foreign scholars and savants show so much regard and esteem for Sanskrit, it is regrettable that Indians do not have the same regard for this great language.

### **Bharatiya culture**

Bharat's entire culture is based on Sanskrit. Culture means that which sanctifies the world, which enhances the greatness and glory of a country and which helps to raise the individual and society to a higher level of existence. Culture contributes to the refinement of life.

The process of refinement or transformation is essential for improving the utility of any object. For instance, paddy has to be milled and the husk has to be removed before the rice is fit for cooking. This is the process known as "Samskriti" or transformation. This means getting rid of the unwanted elements and securing the desirable elements. With regard to men, Samskriti (or

culture) means getting rid of bad qualities and cultivating virtues. The cultured person is one who has developed good thoughts and good conduct.

In Sanskrit, the term "Atma" refers to the self ("I") and "mine". Where the "I" and "mine" are present strong attachment develops. This is described as "Atma-abhimanam", attachment to the self. Even in relation to trivial matters, when there is mention of "I", the person concerned places his hand on his heart. This shows that the self ("I") that is referred to is not the body but the spirit. When a person declares, "Whatever the disaster, whatever the trouble I may be confronted with, I am not afraid", he reveals his confidence in his Atma (Self), which is the basis for his fortitude. Unfortunately, nowadays it is attachment to the body that is cherished, with the result that one's outlook becomes narrow and limited. It should be recognised that the Atma (the indwelling Spirit) is one and the same in all beings. You have to develop this spirit of oneness and equality. Then the divinity in you will be manifested and your human nature will get sanctified and divinised. In every action, you should be comradely and cooperative. Today such a spirit prevails in the sphere of sport, although occasionally there are deviations from it.

### **Commercialism in sports**

In the beginning, sports and athletics were intended mainly to promote health and experience joy. Today these objectives are being forgotten. Everything is being commercialised. Self-interest is getting predominant. Consequently, peace and happiness are being lost. If a person is invited to sing, he asks: "How much will you give me?" In cricket and tennis matches today lakhs of rupees are involved. When sports become a kind of business, there is no room for human values and peace becomes a casualty. It is essential, therefore, that the sense of spiritual oneness should prevail, transcending differences of nationality, language and religion. Only thus can real bliss be experienced.

During the past five days, our boys and girls have been engaged in games and athletics with enthusiasm and vigour. The teachers should also attend these events to sustain the enthusiasm of the students. Teachers should not confine themselves only to their classrooms. In the Anantapur campus the teachers have given great encouragement to the students in their sports and games programmes. In the Brindavan campus also the teachers have actively promoted the students' preparations. Above all, in the Primary School at Prasanthi Nilayam the teachers have worked hard to train the children in various games so that they could present a delightful programme at the Snorts Festival. The teachers laboured all night to stitch the dresses and other materials for the programme. It was because of their efforts that 700 small children could put up such an impressive show. All credit goes to the 45 teachers who are rendering dedicated service without any salaries.

### **Teachers' role**

In the years ahead, it is the responsibility of teachers to train the students to become ideal citizens of Bharat. In the Prasanthi Nilayam campus we have Dr. Sunder Iyer, who practised day and night himself and also trained a number of students to perform a variety of gymnastic feats. It was because of his enthusiasm and encouragement that so many students in the Prasanthi Nilayam campus could win so many prizes in the various events. His own performance was astonishing. There are many other professors and senior students like Dr. Sunder Iyer. They should also take active interest in games and sports.

The teachers have a great responsibility not only to encourage the students' participation in sports but also to promote in them the qualities of good citizenship. Students by themselves are very good. They have plenty of energy and enthusiasm. What they lack are an adequate number of teachers to enthuse them and encourage them. The students should be given proper guidance and encouragement. If these are provided, our students can develop into exemplary models for the whole world. There is no doubt about this.

### **The love for Swami**

Even in their classes many students achieve "O" grade in their subjects (This means securing 90 percent marks in the examination.) That students getting "O" grade have taken part in the sports events testifies to their all-round abilities. These talents are not given to them by their professors. They have been developed by the students' own intense efforts. The basic reason for all this is their devotion and love for Swami. All of them have come here for the sake of Swami and not for the sake of any specific learning. If for such students, the teachers can also serve as helpful guides, how much can be accomplished!

### **Aim of Sai Education**

To give another example: The children of the Primary School, who conduct themselves with so much humility, discipline and goodness in the primary classes, when they go up to the Secondary School lose some of these qualities. When they go to college, almost everything is gone! What is the reason for this phenomenon? It is the teachers who account for their discipline and good behaviour in the Primary School. In the higher classes, what is done, by way of precept and example, to promote character and spirituality among the students? Unless spirituality and morality are promoted among the students, what purpose will be served by running these colleges? There are any number of colleges in the world. Here you have to impart the sacred precepts of our culture to the students. Along with this, academic subjects have to be taught. Education is for developing right understanding. Work is for earning a living. Today education is sought for getting a job. This is not proper. Students should imbibe culture along with academic knowledge. It is only when teachers understand the basic purpose of our educational institutions will they be able to make a success of them. If a student goes astray, he alone is affected. But if a teacher is bad, hundreds of students will be spoilt. Of all the professions in the world, that of the teacher is most estimable. The teacher has to teach the students what is good and ennobling for them. This is the true relationship between teachers and students. This is what should be developed in our educational institutions.

### **Presentation of special cups**

Let me tell you that Swami alone knows what efforts were made by the Primary School teachers to prepare the children for the sports programmes. They worked all night for several days to prepare the dresses and other materials for the display. All this was done with no masculine help. Even in the Brindavan campus, to get the appropriate outfit for the international dances to be presented by the students, one student went to Indonesia to get the right headgear for the participants. They themselves prepared all their costumes. This shows the degree of their enthusiasm. It is the duty of teachers to foster such enthusiasm and initiative shown by the students.



In appreciation of the special efforts made by the teachers and students of the primary School and the Brindavan Campus, I am presenting special cups as a token of my love. (Swami banded over one big silver cup to two children of the Primary School and another big cup to the Principal, Warden and two students of the Brindavan Campus. There was prolonged cheering when Swami presented the cups and was photographed with the recipients.)

Swami presented Dr. Sunder Iyer a ring as a token of His appreciation of Dr. Iyer's all-round performance.

Swami concluded His discourse with pronouncing a benediction on all students and teachers and sang the bhajan, "Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi. " The prize-giving function came to a close with the offer of harathi to Bhagavan.

—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Institute Auditorium, on 14-1-1990

### **The Giver of All**

The Lord gives you life eternal,  
He will—He will.  
He will show you many things  
You know not how.  
He will let you know He listens  
To your every prayer.  
He will save you by  
The Mercy of His Love.  
He will guide you through life's battles  
And give you power.  
He will answer when you call Him  
Whether 'tis Night or Day.  
He will turn His bright Light upon you  
In your darkest hour.  
He will love you and go with you  
All the way.  
He will take you by the hand  
And lead you as His child.  
Down the streets and narrow aisles of life  
Safe and through.  
He will love you and go with you  
For ever and ever  
If you love Him as your Father, Mother,  
Guru and God.

—Dipanjana Chatterji, I M.B.A., Vidyagiri

## **Spectacular Sports Festival**

They came, they saw and they were overwhelmed.

This sums up the impressions of thousands of devotees from India and overseas and quite a large number of villagers from Puttaparthi and the surrounding villages who came to the Hill View Stadium on January 11th to witness the colourful and spectacular programme of dances and physical feats inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba in connection with the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Swami had advanced the inauguration ceremony by an hour so that the morning's rally and displays by the two thousand odd students from the three campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute could be completed by 10 a.m. But such was the enthusiasm of the participants that the programme lasted till 11.30 a.m. and what began as a cool morning turned into a very warm day when the display ended with arati to Bhagavan.

The Hill View Stadium, which continuously wears a new look because of the additions and improvements made by Bhagavan, had been well groomed for the Sports and Cultural Festival before January 11. The eastern side of Vidyagiri had received a face-lift thanks to the new road leading to the charming Gopalakrishna statue at the southern end. A few more galleries had been added on the hill-slope facing the Stadium, providing accommodation for thousands of more spectators. Every inch of space on the galleries had been occupied well before 7 a. m. when Swami was scheduled to arrive for the inauguration of the Festival. Several special invitees including members of the University Grants Commission were seated on the Santhi Vedika.

Exactly at 7 a.m., Bhagavan entered the Stadium from the northern entrance, seated in His gleaming golden motorised chariot. He was piloted by four motor cycle riders. His arrival was greeted by a 21-gun salute.

Half-way on the route to the Santhi Vedika, Swami got down from the chariot and was received by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Saraf, and the Principals of the Brindavan and Anantapur colleges.

The Institute Band, in their shining white uniforms, played select marching tunes as Swami proceeded to the Santhi Vedika.

### **The march past**

After Swami had taken His seat, the grand March Past started with the little children of the Primary School leading the procession. As each group of students approached the Santhi Vedika, they dipped their flag in homage to Bhagavan. It was a thrilling sight to see hundreds of boys and girls marching past Bhagavan and carrying banners displaying the basic values cherished by Sai educational institutions—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa—and the moral traits sought to be inculcated in the students—Discipline, Devotion, Duty, Discrimination and Determination.

Before the march past began, a float depicting a giant-size eagle, representing the mythological bird Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, was exhibited before Bhagavan. The Garuda was chosen as

the Games Mascot for this particular meet. Garuda being the king of birds, which could fly to the highest reaches of the sky, it was intended to provide the inspiration to the competitors to " Aim High: Soar High". As the eagle soars high into the sky and again humbly lands and perches on low branches of trees, the competitors were also encouraged to soar high like Garuda and then in all humility move like a man of the world. The motto of the meet was "Aim High: Soar High".

By a remarkable coincidence, while the March Past was going on, a white-necked eagle flew over the Stadium.

After the March Past, Swami inaugurated the Sports Festival by lighting a lamp and hoisting the Institute Flag. All the participants in the day's programme were administered the Olympic oath, before they dispersed to their respective places. Swami lit the Olympic torch, which was carried in relays by pairs of runners round the Stadium, and lifted by an aerial ropeway to the top of the hill where the Olympic flame was lit, with students in red uniforms on guard.

### **The children lead**

Then the day's programme of dances and physical feats started with the young five-year old tots of the Primary School executing the 'chakka' dance of Andhra Pradesh. Dressed in dhotis and colourful kurtas, the little children, with 'jalras' in their hands, performed the 'chakka' dance to perfection, with rhythmic movements of feet, hands and body. The zest they displayed in the dance won the applause of the entire gathering.

Then followed a novel umbrella dance by girls, in which the swaying dancers produced the impression of a wave rising and falling. Other items presented by the Primary and Secondary School students included a variety of pyramid formations, a bamboo ring drill by senior girls, gymnastic feats by the boys and a grand formation by all the boys and girls in one impressive display.

### **Yogasana feats by girls**

The girl students of the Anantapur college, who won the laurels last year by their exceptionally varied programmes, started this year's programme with a symbolic presentation of the Sankranti festival as a Garden of Plenty, with the Goddess of Nature heading the procession carrying a Purnakumbham and offering all the flowers and fruits to the Lord.

This was followed by the well-known South Indian "Kavadi" dance performed by devotees of Subrahmanya in Tamil Nadu.

The Anantapur campus has been specialising in teaching yogasanas to the girls and the different items which they presented this year showed how proficient they were in performing many intricate asanas suspended from poles or while dangling from ropes. In the performance of asanas in group formations, the students attempted to project the message of Bhagavan in different ways. One formation was used to project the idea of unity in religions. Another was used to highlight the unique educational ideals of the Sathya Sai Institute.

Bhagavan's oft-quoted statement, "Money comes and goes" was the theme of a play enacted with wooden dolls, with two Greek epicureans playing the money game and losing it.

Then came a display of feats on cycles—monocycles, bicycles, combinations of bicycles—which showed that the college girls could teach a lesson or two to professional circus performers.

The girls did one better this year by performing some feats on motor cycles, including jumping across a high plank, riding through a circle six feet in diameter, and driving through a barrier of bricks. There was an impressive hulahula hoop dance by a group of girls.

The performance of the girls testified to their excellent physical fitness and their ability to perform feats calling for a high degree of concentration and coordination.

### **Lakshmi and Saraswati**

Then came the turn of the boys of the Institute from the Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses.

The Brindavan campus students produced an attractive float designed to drive home the message of Bhagavan that "Education is for life and not for earning a living." A giant balance was installed on the float, with Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, seated in one pan, and Saraswati, the Goddess of Wisdom, in another. Two students of the college figured as the two goddesses. The idea of the float was to suggest that educational institutions, instead of being Lakshmi Nilayams as at present, should become Saraswati Nilayams, abodes of the Goddess of Learning, as urged by Bhagavan. In addition, the float showed how the pursuit of wisdom led to yoga, while the pursuit of wealth led to "bhoga" (enjoyment) and "roga" (disease).

### **Dances of the world**

An innovative item presented by the Brindavan students was called "The World of Dance." It consisted of a mixture of Bharat Natyam (India), a Mexican dance, an African tribal war dance and the 'Dandia' dance (of Gujarat). Each group consisted of about 20 dancers and wore appropriate costumes. The dances concluded with all the four groups dancing together, presenting a picture of unity in diversity.

These dances were followed by a series of exciting gymnastic feats by students from both the campuses, including thrilling leaps over a moving motor cycle and a moving motor car. A variety of stunt performances from moving motor cycles and a demonstration of Karate exercises lent both variety and the spirit of daring to the exercises. There were some quite thrilling moments when the student leaped through burning rings, calling for excellent timing and absolute precision in making the jump. Some feats of physical strength and will power included breaking a pile of tiles with one blow of the wrist, shattering a coconut to bits with a single blow and crushing a bottle by a powerful pinch. Stick fights and sword fights were among the minor sideshows of programme.

The students' programme concluded with a demonstration of yogasanas performed on a pole carried by two moving motor cycles and a variety of formations on motor cycles by boys of the 9th and 10th standard of the Secondary School.

The festival was appropriately brought to a close with a group song by all boys in praise of Bhagavan, the inspirer and guiding spirit of the entire Festival. Not the least significant part of the day's events was the reverence and devotion with which the boys participating in the programme went up to the Santhi Vedita to offer padanamaskar to Swami and get His blessings as well as being photographed with Him.

It was altogether a memorable and supremely delightful morning for the thousands of devotees, who watched every item with keen interest and unalloyed joy. Bhagavan was the keenest spectator of them all, who felt doubly happy over the remarkable performance of the students, young and old, and the joy experienced by the devotees.

During the next two days, a large number of contests in games like football, volley ball and basket ball and in athletic events like long jump, high jump, etc., were held in the Stadium.

On January 14th, Bhagavan gave away the prizes and certificates to the winners and runners-up in the various competitions, including essay and story writing competitions, and quiz contests. The function, which was held in the Institute Auditorium, was largely attended. After giving away the prizes, Bhagavan delivered His discourse. Prasadam was distributed to the devotees.

—N.

### **This Loveable Planet**

Oh, it'll be fine to rocket through space  
To see the reverse of tire moon's dark face,  
To travel to Saturn, to Venus or Mars  
Or maybe discover uncharted stars.

But, d'you think they have anything better than we?  
Do you think, for instance, they have a blue sea,  
For sailing and swimming"  
Do the planets have hills with raspberry thickets  
Where the song-sparrow fills the summer with music?  
Do they have snow, to silver the roads  
Where the school buses go?

Oh, I'm all for rockets  
And worlds cold or hot.  
But I'm wildly in love  
With the planet we've got.

—Trusha Reddy, Durban, S. Africa

**VIDYARTHI VANI:**

## **Life is a game: play it!**

Many a great thinker, scholar and philosopher has attempted to comprehend the true nature of human life. Some, like Shakespeare, have stated that the world is but a stage, where the men and women are players. Others have said that "the sole purpose of human birth is to achieve God." Nevertheless, all these different views highlight one important aspect of human existence, viz., that man, in order to achieve anything, has to endeavour ceaselessly, no matter what walk of life he may be in. It is this basic truth of life which the popular adage, "Life is a Game: Play it", attempts to convey to us.

One may ask: why is it that life has been compared to a game? The answer lies in the fact that life, like a game, is filled with uncertainty. A writer once observed that "uncertainty is the only certain thing in human existence." Man has to learn primarily to accept and live with this uncertainty. The journey of life can be compared to a "ride in a roller-coaster", with all its ups and downs, and man must be able to derive joy and happiness even from this.

Just as in a game, the result of the contest, whether a team or an individual will be victorious or otherwise, lies beyond the knowledge of the players, so also in life, the results of the actions and efforts of men are tainted with the element of uncertainty. However, a good player one who does not get disheartened at the thought of losing, but puts forth his best effort to achieve the goal. When he fails he does not give up but keeps on trying till he achieves success. This principle holds good for life at large also. A good human being is one who never shuns failure, but strives ceaselessly to achieve his goal, believing in the dictum that the "edifice of success stands on the pillars of failure."

### **Defeat and victory**

Another important facet of any game is that there can be only one victor and therefore necessarily one or more losers. It is necessary for any sportsman to bear defeat with the same dignity as he would have borne his victory. To lose a game is not as shameful as to lose it unsportingly. So also in life, if a man is dogged by failure in spite of his best efforts, he should learn to accept that failure with dignity and honour. His greatness would lie in his ability to learn from each failure and use the experience to ensure victory in the future.

A very good example of a man, who is not only a sportsman on the field but even off it, is the Australian cricketer, Dean Jones. Being an asset to the Australian cricket side, Dean Jones, by his "never-say-die" attitude saved and won many a Test match for Australia. As fate would have it, in the summer of 1988, he was taken ill and was discovered to be suffering from cancer of the bone—a deadly and practically incurable form of cancer. While the doctors nearly gave up hope on him, Dean Jones, thanks to his "never-say-die" attitude, which he had so often exhibited on the field, battled against his cancer. So great was his determination to be in the Australian cricket team again that, to the astonishment of his doctors, he recovered fully within a short span of seven months and was once again back in the Australian cricket team.

Thus, we see that, in order to live his life fully, man should realise that life is in many ways similar to a game which he must play to the best of his ability and in the right spirit. It is only

when man adopts this attitude towards life that he would be bestowed with happiness and joy throughout his life. It is this attitude which will endow him with the moral courage to face all difficulties and trials in life.

Rudyard Kipling, in his memorable poem "IF", brings out the idea that life is a game which should be played in the right spirit, when he says:

"If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!"

Truly life is a game and he is a man who realises this and plays it according to the rules and without concern for victory or defeat.

—(From the prize-winning essay of Dharmesh Pandya, III B. Com., in the essay competition for undergraduates held in January, 1990.)

## **Two Sirens**

There are two evil sirens that entice youth into futility and frivolity, diverting them along the paths of ruin. One of them is called, Dame Cinema, and the other is named Dame Novel. The film contaminates and corrupts; it pollutes young and innocent minds; it teaches crime, violence and greed; it destroys the basic humanness and degrades it into bestiality. Even ochre-robed monks are steadily dragged down to sin by its insidious influence.

Dame Novel too corrupts equally, with salacious pictures of bestiality. They both lead the young away into the wilderness of vice. They do not know, nor do they care to know, how to shape the young into self-reliant, self-confident, self-knowing citizens.

—Baba ("Chinna Katha")

## **Morals Make the Man**

"It is often declared that knowledge is power," says Baba. "No, No." He asserts, "Character is power. Nothing can be more powerful than character. Riches, scholarship, status, authority are all frail and flimsy before it." The dictionary defines 'character' as "the aggregate of peculiar qualities which constitutes personal and national individuality." Mankind values persons who have had flawless character; the character that is power, is that which does good to all; they are the ones that are remembered. Baba says, "Note that the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Sankaracharya and Vivekananda, great Sages and Saints and devotees of the Lord, all these are treasured in the memory of man even unto this day! What quality has made them memorable for all time? I say, it is the character of each one of them." Then Baba explains, "Without character, wealth, education, social status, all these are of no avail. It is the fragrance of the flower; it gives value and worth.

Poets, painters, artists and scientists may be great, each in his own field, but without character, they can have no standing in society. "

Then Baba goes on to discuss and dismiss certain doubts that affect the minds of men. Baba answers, "Doubts will certainly arise whether all those who are now greeted with respect by society have the character which we consider essential to greatness But I am speaking of a society and a character, which cling to certain unchanging values. Ordinarily however, society attaches varying importance to certain qualities from day to day and fashions in character change with the vagaries of society. In the real sense, character is immortal, being associated with another immortal entity, the Atman."

### **Morals and position**

Baba also speaks often of the three heroes of the Indian Independence movement, Lal, Bal and Pal; of the three the only name still remembered very much is of Balgangadhar Tilak because he was of impeccable character and a man of God, who loved and lived the Bhagavad-Gita. It might appear that society often respects people who have no character, because of the positions they occupy, or the fear they impose on people. In a free society even such persons can be dissected and discarded, for society values faultless character above all and expects the highest morals from those occupying positions of trust and authority.

### **Habits and character**

Baba lists the qualities that make up character, "Love, Patience, Forbearance, Steadfastness, Charity" and proclaims, "These are the highest, these have to be revered." Baba elaborates on the subtle way by which character is shaped. "The hundred little deeds that we indulge in everyday, harden into habits: these habits shape the intelligence and mould our outlook and life." Character is built up by our every little act, every little thought. Has not the poet said, " Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character! Hundreds of chisel strokes shape the recalcitrant rock into a beautiful image; each stroke is as important as the next. A wrong stroke may disfigure or distort or destroy. Baba says, "All that we weave in our imagination, seek in our ideals, yearn in our aspiration leave an indelible imprint on our mind. Distorted by these, we form our knowledge, our picture of the world around us, and it is to this picture that we get attached. Our point of view of the world is, therefore, a subjective one! Man's present is but the result of his past and of the habits formed during that long period." But there is hope for mankind; character attained need not be retained indefinitely. Baba says, "Whatever be the nature of the character that he has come by, it can certainly be modified, by modifying the accustomed process of thought and imagination." The same process which shaped our character, i.e., the indelible imprints of a hundred little thoughts and acts, can be used, stroke by stroke, act by act, to reshape and correct it. It needs only the determination to modify.

The question may arise whether deep rooted traits can be nullified. Nothing is impossible provided there is firm resolve and uninterrupted endeavour! Baba says, "The wickedness of no man is incorrigible. Was not *Angulimala*, the dacoit, turned into a kind-hearted person by the *Buddha*? Did not the thief *Ratnakara* become Valmiki, the sage? By conscious effort, habits can be changed and character refined. Man has, always, within him, within his reach, the capacity to challenge his evil propensities and to change his evil habits. By selfless service, by renunciation,



by devotion, by prayer and ratiocination, the good habits which take us along the divine path can be instilled in our lives."

The Avatar is very much concerned with our using the brief span of life wisely for refining our character and attaining Divine Bliss. Baba says, "Two men, in appearance the same, ostensibly of the same mould, grow under the same conditions, but one turns out to be an angel while the other stays on with the animal nature. What is the reason for this differential development? Habits, and the behaviour formed out of these habits, and the character into which that behaviour has solidified. Man is the creature of character." Baba marks out the steps which the aspirant has to take, "Man has taught the eye, the ear and the tongue, the luxury of constant novelty; now he has to teach them the opposite tendencies. The mind has to be turned towards the Good; the activities of every minute have to be examined from that standpoint."

### **The truth-speaking thief**

Baba is aware that abrupt changes will not last long. That is why He advises that change should be effected gradually. He has illustrated this by a story of how a wicked man went to a guru, who advised him to give up at least one of his bad habits; he gave up uttering falsehood! Continuing his profession, he broke into the king's treasury that night. He found another person (the king himself in disguise!) who pretended that he too was a thief bent on the same nefarious plan. As per the honest thief's suggestion, they left behind one diamond for the impoverished king! Next morning the king asked the minister to investigate and assess the loss through burglary. The minister found the single diamond left behind by the thieves, and pocketed it; then he reported that all the diamonds had been stolen. But the king, who knew that one diamond was left behind, sent for the 'honest' thief, whose address he had himself given when asked the previous night. Since he had given up uttering falsehood, he admitted that all the diamonds, except one, were stolen half by him and the other half by a chance accomplice. The king ordered the Minister to be searched, and the diamond was found in his pocket! The king dismissed the minister and in his place appointed the honest man, who had promised his Guru that he would desist from one bad habit only. That one step led him to many more and transformed him into a trustworthy minister.

Baba has been stressing that "the end of education is character." Baba says, "Today there is knowledge but character is seldom seen with it. Without character, man becomes the plaything of every passing wind, like a kite whose string has broken. He is a counterfeit coin moving about, without benefiting anyone." Baba also stresses, "A strong virtuous character cannot be earned from the study of guide books; it has to be earned only through intimate involvement with society." In fact, character involves values, and values have to be forged and fashioned in the crucible of society. Knowledge gives power to decide or dominate; but character adds love, generosity and grace. Knowledge without character brings evil into action. Knowledge with character uses Power for the Good of society!

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

## **Fifth World Conference of Sai Organizations**

The Fifth World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations will be held from the 18th to the 21st of November, 1990, and coincide with the celebration of Bhagavan Baba's 65th Birthday. The theme of the conference will be: "How, more and more devotees can be involved in the activities of the organization."

There will be no limit to the number of devotees who may attend from each Overseas Sathya Sai Baba Centre. Members as well as officers are eligible to attend as delegates.

An Exhibition of books in different languages by or about Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba is to be presented. The books to be exhibited would be largely translations of books published by the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam. The Central Office at Prasanthi Nilayam wishes to receive two copies of each book by September 30, 1990.

A photo exhibition of Sai Organization activities conducted in various countries is also to be presented. Posters, charts, and other visual displays will be included. The Central Office would appreciate having such materials, along with suitable write-ups, by September 15, 1990.

## **Words that Transform**

There are three questions that most people today will answer in the affirmative. They are:

- At times does your interest in life touch rock bottom?
- Do you ever feel that you are mentally and physically at a low ebb?
- Do you go through a phase when you feel, as Hamlet did,

"How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world."

Pressure, tension, anxiety, stress- all these have become the warp and woof of the fabric of modern life. Ennui looms large on life's horizon and creeping paralysis spreads over our thoughts and actions. In such black moods, when one desperately seeks something or someone to lift one's spirits, Swami's personality and His words shine like the light at the end of the tunnel, filling us with hope, re-stimulating and refreshing the springs of life.

Some years ago, I discovered that an effective way to keep oneself always calm, happy and unfluctuatingly enthusiastic was to simply memorise certain passages from Swami's speeches, writings and songs, store them in the mind, repeat them inwardly and condition my mind with them. Even a vividly etched image in my memory of a look, a smile or a gesture of His has been a tremendous source of optimism and renewed joy.

A distinguished, former Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, a regular visitor to Brindavan, used to carry in his pocket printed bookmarks carrying the sayings of Bhagavan and distribute

them to all the devotees. Tall, erect, carrying his seventy and odd years with great dignity, the General radiated energy, composure and cheer. He passionately believed in the sayings of Bhagavan and wanted to share the joy they gave him.

Bhagavan's word is literally Gospel—God's word. They are packed with dynamic wisdom. They release a force in minds that revitalises the thought processes and gives new direction to our lives. Jesus said, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." This is proof of the Divine Word. Scripture and Gospel are dynamos of verbal power. Nowhere is the dictum "Mind over matter" better demonstrated than in this instance.

There is nothing artificial about this nor is it self-deception. One does not practise any tricks on one's own mind by seeking this course of lifting one's spirit. This feeling of uplift is the result of the action of Truth on minds craving for Truth. It is the perennial proof of the healing power of Truth. It is the eternal witness of the revitalising power of Truth. It is the tranquil testimony to the compassion of the Lord.

Bhagavan's words send their vibrations to the deepest recesses of our subconscious—tapping hidden resources to rescue us from apathy and drift. His words mould and give meaning to life. Tolstoy said, "To know God is to live." Jesus said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Faith and intense love for God is to live. The workability of these principles has been time and again demonstrated by the great saints and mystics of the world. There are also thousands of unknown people who have made these ideas part of their lives and reaped great joy and success. Bhagavan helps us to enter into a life that is more wonderful than anything we have ever known by the power of his teaching, the WORD.

The Word or Logos in Greek and Hebrew metaphysics is the link between God and Man. The Old Testament Prophets believed that the wisdom of God activated all life, all consciousness through the power of the declared word. The repeated use of the words "God said" in the Book of Genesis to describe the whole six-day sequence of creation is significant. The drama of creation unfolded as God willed and verbalised the idea of all creation. Here we see the three-fold process of Will, Word and World of creation. The Divine Word is the thing, through which all reality is given the dimension of existence. In Vedanta "Aum" is the articulation of the Absolute.

It is this sublime transforming power that we feel today in Bhagavan's words. Millions of people who have been blind to the truth have found His words to be a real eye-opener. In today's world of dried up, dehumanised and synthetic ways of living and feeling, Bhagavan's message brings a pure stream of life-giving waters to a parched world. The welcome sweetness of His voice and message recalls Wordsworth's lines:

No nightingale did ever chant  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands.

—Prof. D. Narender (From "Smruti")

*Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of commonsense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that failed to inspire: these serve no useful purpose. In addition to knowledge derived from the sacred texts, one should gain wisdom through experience. Knowledge without personal experience is futile.*

—**Baba ("Sathya Sai Vahini")**

## **The Avatar on the March**

With remarkable precision the Sai Avatar, over the past quarter of a century I have known Him, has transformed the world.

The mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba unfolds each day. Just as a pebble dropped in a placid pool creates miniature waves, ever expanding, so the great spiritual power of Sai touches all shores of the world's great oceans and seas.

Those of us who have been privileged to catch glimpses of His greatness are aware of the external and internal changes He is causing in those of great power who control the destinies of the masses all over the world.

Although hundreds of thousands are drawn here to Prasanthi Nilayam, there are also myriads of seekers coming into His Orbit of Love and Peace due to their yearning for God.

### **Role of the Divine**

Just as Gabriel with his horn caused the walls of Jericho to come tumbling down, we are now witnessing the walls of concrete, iron and steel, crumbling under the might of God within man. The era of the dictators of men is fast coming to end, and the fearless, armed with the power of Love, are destined to rule the earth. This is the Divine Love that you and I are cultivating while our Avatar guides and watches over each of us.

The Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan ashrams have never ceased to grow in size, purpose and beauty since the '70s. They show that the Divine has a great part to play in shaping the course of man.

His messengers are carrying forth to the world His teachings. Each of the messengers exemplifies the future course of man. They are selected for being pure of heart, and in thought, word and deed. Peace will rule the world and God will be felt in the hearts of men everywhere.

Our Avatar on the march colourfully demonstrated His spiritual purpose at the spectacular Sports Festival on January 11. The Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, with the imposing monuments of Siva, Zoroaster, Jesus on the hillside, is a symbol of the integral education that is aimed at by Bhagavan Baba to develop in the younger generation strength of body, mind and spirit.

The divine theme of the Festival was the increasing need to infuse the studies and games of the students with spiritual awareness and moral discipline.

The banners carried by the leaders of different groups of students—each allotted to a specific "House" in the hostel—proclaimed the five human values—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa—and Bhagavan's Five spiritual D's—Duty, Devotion, Discipline, Discrimination and Determination. As hundreds of boys and girls—from the five-year olds of the Primary School to the post-graduate students in their twenties—marched past Bhagavan in the morning's grand rally, one could sense the shape of things to come. Here is a new generation, inspired by love and faith in Bhagavan, schooled in academic excellence and spiritual discipline, which is being transformed and equipped to provide the moral leadership for the world. It was heart-warming to witness the spontaneous outflow of love and reverence for Swami from the students as they came to offer their namaskars to Him.

The presence of thousands of overseas devotees at the rally testified to the global significance of the Avatar's mission. In the midst of these profound undertakings the Avatar is reaching the hearts of true seekers round the world. His love belongs to peoples of all races and religions. The time is fast approaching when there will be one religion—the religion of Love. There is only one God and that God is within you and me.

**—Charles Penn, Prasanthi Nilayam Jan. 13, 1990**

### **"Awaiting the Lord...."**

Never had I experienced deeper joy,  
than when awaiting the Lord.  
Prasanthi Nilayam without Him  
has a lost view,  
is like an empty vessel.

Sitting along the Mandir,  
brightly enlightened,  
close devotees eagerly waiting  
on the veranda,  
students sitting at the temple door,  
the light shining on top of the Mandir,  
a mild, refreshing breeze,  
silent praying, urgent awaiting,  
and above all this,  
the shining of a full moon,  
with His darling Head on it.

And then ... at last,  
a hush, the whistling at the Gopuram,

His red car, majestically,  
slowly entering the temple-gate,  
enlightening the soft sands  
in front of the Mandir,  
the excitement of all who  
so eagerly waited.

And then...  
the gracious little Figure,  
the orange robe,  
the halo of curly hair,  
the slightly bent back,  
His swift march towards the temple,  
and most impressive, most endearing:  
in the dark of this divine evening...  
the waving of the camphor flame,  
the OM JAI JAGADEESA HARE!  
Because He, the Lord,  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba is again home,  
Prasanthi Nilayam is full of  
His loving and lovely Presence again.

Now we can rest now He is back,  
it was divine,  
awaiting Swami coming home...

—Linde, Holland

## **No Walls in Oneness**

By the grace of Swami, I came to Prasanthi Nilayam in 1988, bringing with me a very important question—important for the whole Sathya Sai Baba Center in Berlin, West and East. Since December, 1987, in accordance with His Will, several members of the Sathya Sai Center in West Berlin have gone regularly every four to six weeks to meet interested people in East Berlin. We held bhajan meetings there, brought books and tapes about the teachings of Sai Baba and photographs of Him. We also brought vibhuti and japamalas, and from time to time we showed moving pictures about His life and His message. So, step-by-step, we became an East-West Berlin Sai Baba Group. But it also became more and more clear to us that we were in a somewhat difficult situation. Bhagavan Baba teaches us to be strictly law-abiding, and our meetings in East Berlin were against the law of the German Democratic Republic. It could be dangerous for the people in whose homes we met, and yet the meetings seemed too worthwhile to be given up.

So, the question whether or not we were doing the right thing became uppermost in my mind, and I was determined to exhaust every possibility for getting an answer. As soon as I arrived, I

started bothering the gentlemen in the Central Office, but obviously the question was one which could only be answered by the Avatar. In His great compassion, He called me for an interview. I was able to ask Him personally, but even then His answer could not at first penetrate my limited ability to understand Him and His ever-caring love. When He answered me in His very compassionate way, He said, "That is a country problem. I will look after it." I was not satisfied with this answer at all. I wanted Him to tell us what to do, not realizing that He was already doing everything that needed to be done. So I persisted in my questioning. He patiently and lovingly replied: "There is no East, no West; it is all One."

I took His message home to our brothers and sisters in East Berlin, thinking that it was meant only in a spiritual sense. How could any of us imagine that this, promise of the Avatar: "I will look after it," and "There is no East, no West; it is all One," was meant very practically.

The interview in which these words were spoken took place on October 3 '88. Exactly one-year later the peaceful movement in the German Democratic Republic started. For a few days, the situation was really strained. There was danger of a civil war. But, as a sister from East Berlin said, "He turned the whole situation around in a way that only an Avatar could do." It is almost unbelievable that since November 9, 1989, the wall in Berlin is open. The whole government has changed, and it is no longer a crime to meet in His name. How can I ever express my gratitude for this immeasurable gift of Divine Grace for our whole nation? I can only say, "Thank you, Swami, and please protect us from building new walls in our hearts and minds."

—Weronika Roberts, Berlin, Germany

### **Earning God's Love by Surrender**

Man surrenders his dignity and status to other men for various purposes in life; wealth, fame, possessions, pomp, power, etc. But rarely does he get the chance to surrender to the Lord for the sake of the Lord! How can he get the urge so long as he craves for the Aadheya and not the Aadhaara? He longs for the object but does not long for the base on which the object rests. He wants the gift not the giver! ... the created not the Creator, things *from* the Hand, but not *the Hand*!

Vyasa said that if you want the Love of God, you must give up love for other things. It is easy to acquire the Love of God and you will not find any trouble at all. When you are bound down by several other forms of love, you will meet with a lot of difficulties if you want to acquire the Love of God. This process has been described as surrender. When certain insects look at a bright light, they are attracted by the brightness and even lose their lives. The deer which is attracted by music comes close and gets trapped. The bees attracted by the honey inside a lotus get trapped. In a similar manner, when you want the Love of the Lord, you should be fully prepared to completely surrender yourself to the Lord. You should have no attachment to your body nor pay attention to your own honour or respect. Your mind should be fully concentrated on God. Until we rise to this high level of surrender, we should participate in Divine and sacred activities such as Bhajan, Dhyana and develop the aspect of Prema.

God is All-powerful; God is everywhere; God is All-knowing. Adore Him so long as you have breath, so long as you are conscious. Have no other thought than God; no other aim than knowing His command, no other activity than translating that command into action. That is what is meant by surrender. Render yourself unto Him.

The Vedas insist on the dissolution of the ego, the Quran insists on surrender, the Bible emphasises humility and charity.

### **Meaning of surrender**

Surrendering to the Lord is surrendering all thoughts and actions, not wishing for the fruits of action, not doing action to gain its fruit but doing the action because it is one's duty.

Surrender to God and to life means the absence of duality and being of the same nature as God. But such a state is beyond man's will. Surrender is when doer, deed and object are all God. It comes naturally to a heart filled with Love for God.

Both Krishna and Sai Baba say: "Give up all Dharmas and surrender Me. I shall liberate you from all sins." This is to say, give up Ahamkara and Mamakara, pride in the ego and in possession and feelings of I and mine. Destroy the identification of the self with the body, get firm in the belief that all this is Paramatma and nought else.

One should accept both pleasures and sorrows with the same feeling. Trials purify love strengthen our virtue, increase our merit and keep us humble. We should welcome all Swami's designs for our souls.

Cultivate faith and surrender; then grace will flow through you into every act of yours, for they are no longer your acts, they are His and you have no concern about the consequences thereof. All acts, words and thoughts will thereafter be pure, saturated with Love, conducive to peace. Cleanse your hearts so that God may be reflected therein, in all His Splendour, in all His myriad forms.

It is only when you accept and when you believe that the Divine is present in every human being and in every living thing, that Divinity is Omnipresent, then only can you understand the meaning of surrendering in thought, word and deed, and you will also become one with God.

A devotee wishing to imitate Sai Baba determines to curb his own natural inclinations and to apply himself in all earnestness to submission to God. He lovingly embraces every occasion to please Swami by accepting the duty assigned to him.

Energy arises from surrender to God. Energy comes when the heart expands. A small closed heart has no energy. If Swami is known in the heart, then the heart expands.

### **Humility and sanctity**

St Therese of Lisieux was deeply moved by Jesus' words: "I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven... Whoever, therefore,



humbles as this little child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." These words made her understand the necessity of being humble and small before the heavenly Father and of having recourse to His help in everything. And she made this thought the principal element and keynote of her spirituality, of her "little way": "It is impossible for me to make myself any bigger. I must endure myself with my countless imperfections. But I want to seek the means of going to heaven by a little way that is very straight, very short, a little way that is altogether new." To remain small is to acknowledge the necessity of grace, to ask for it, and to abandon oneself to it with filial trust. This smallness is the principle of greatness, since it is the principle of God's grace. It is of the very essence of humility and sanctity to acknowledge sincerely our need of Divine help. To quote St Therese again "Holiness consists in a disposition of heart that makes us humble and small in the arms of God, conscious of our weakness and confident to the point of audacity in His Fatherly mercy." And a few days before her death, she said: "Holiness is to acknowledge our nothingness and to expect everything from the good God."

### **Spiritual childhood**

The devotee who possesses this spiritual childhood puts his judgment and knowledge to submit to Swami's will; like a little child he accepts his duties, lays them aside when told, receives reprimands, harsh or unkind words or congratulations in all simplicity because such is the will of God and he wishes to conform himself absolutely to it. Swami teaches us how to be simple, not only in our exterior conduct, but also in our intentions. To live in His Love we must see God only in all we do, think and speak and we must act from the sole motive of loving Him.

You must develop this attitude of 'merging with the Divine' in all that you do, this attitude of surrender to His Will. This is the best means of realising Him.

(The above report is a summary of a talk given by Betty Foster, a deaf and dumb devotee of Baba, who communicates with people by writing or hand signs. She is involved in all Sai activities in Sydney, especially service to the aged.)

### **Song of Nature**

I saw the leaves swirling to dust. 'We are the resurrection and the life'  
they cried as they danced before the wind. 'We are the resurrection  
and the life. Cling not to outward forms, for they shall perish.  
But dwell with the spirit, for therein is eternal life.'  
I saw the flowers dying, the petals falling like silken tears.  
'We are the symbols of everlasting beauty' they cried.  
'Look not to outward forms, for they shall perish.  
But let beauty blossom in thy soul for ever and ever.'  
I saw a Light, lighting the whole substance of the earth.  
In every bush it shone, in every stick and stove. I saw it shining on  
human faces and glowing through the eyes of creatures. 'Ah!' cried I,  
'This is the Light of the world!'  
I looked up and saw the same Light, like flame within the lantern of

all creation, shining through stars and suns, painting the clouds,  
illumining all the days of men. 'This surely', I cried, 'is the Light of God,'  
Then, suddenly, I knew. I knew the song of the swirling leaves; the  
message of flowers that fade and fall. Down the long ages came the  
Voice that never dies—'Ye are the light of the world!'  
Now I go forth all through the Seasons, my heart singing, my being  
rejoicing. The peace of the green grass is mine; the beauty of the  
world blossoms in my heart. Outward forms may perish like Autumn  
leaves, but I walk the ways of immortality and my spirit sings the  
song of Nature. Down the long corridors of time and into the vaults of  
space I call—'I am the resurrection and the life!' And the grass leaps  
with flame; and the trees are all trembling with joy; and the  
mountains and the hills break forth into singing. And the Light shines.  
How the Light shines!

—Derek Nevill

### **Excellence in Action**

Karma is activity! But "activity", does not cease with the completion of a particular act! The fruits of the activity can bind you into more 'activity'. In fact even in the performance of a good activity, the fruits can lead to negative activity by the performer of the beneficial act.

What does this mean? Any activity undertaken has the potential to bear not one but many fruits. Often individuals who perform a worthy or beneficial activity are able to surrender some of the fruits but hoard others, thus rendering their beneficial act not one of Nishkama karma (totally selfless—i.e. activity done without desire).

Let us take an example: There is a beneficial service done at the old folks' home. Those who attend to that activity seek no reward or thanks from the old folks they serve! Neither do they crave for recognition or publicity. Does this mean that Nishkama karma has been achieved? Not necessarily so! Some of those who have gone for the service will begin to wonder why others have not come to help and thus will begin a regime of mental criticism or worse verbal criticism of those who have not come. Thus one fruit is hoarded and rots in the mind of the one who has gone to serve, it causes agitation within and possibly agitation amongst others.

Also during the service itself one person works very hard—but is quick notice others who have come who may not be working as hard and again mental (and/or verbal) criticism, cynicism tree in, causing mental agitation, thus spoiling the sanctity of the service rendered. Another fruit is hoarded and rots within.

### **Seeds of discontent**

Then comes praise for some who have served and others may be left out—or another activity that one individual has performed may not get equal recognition ...thus again the seed of discontent is

planted!! "Not that I want praise but why should that other person be praised when he does not deserve it!" Or "Why was he/she praised and not the rest of us?"

Thus it goes on—one act having the possibility of bearing not one but multiple fruits—some not as obvious as the others. Some, often the obvious fruits, we are able to surrender, but some we keep, we hoard and thus despoil the Karma.

Nishkama karma is thus not merely to give up the fruits of action but also the idea of 'I'—the 'I'ness and "My-ness" of such acts. For in being attached to the I and My of the acts performed the seeds of negative thoughts of "I am the doer" are sown and from that seed, watered by subsequent thoughts, agitations and impulses, the fruits ripen robbing one of the peace of mind and inner contentment that any beneficial activity should give to the performer of the act.

That is one of the principal reasons why often those involved in some noble cause or service gradually give up or slow down. The call for service did not emanate from the very nature of one's being; for if it had, the very thrill of that service, the joy, the inner contentment would have made the server oblivious not only to the fruits of reward, recognition etc of that service, but also oblivious to who else does the service, who else does not do and to what extent, and who else gets the credit, deserving or not.

### **Karma yogis**

Thus those who engage in karma—any outer activity, at home, at work or in social service—should *strive for an inner excellence of thought and feeling while trying their best to establish an outer excellence of achievements and results*. Such a person truly becomes a karma yogi, a lighthouse of inner contentment and joy while at the same time being an inspiration for others.

A lighthouse shines in brilliance, shows the way and helps one avoid dangerous boulders and shoals in the ocean. Likewise a karma yogi, fully established in inner-bliss, fully cognisant of his role and responsibility, shows the way, but is totally unperturbed if others do not follow the guiding light. He recognises that all are not cast in the same karmic mould, that not all are moved by the same call, the same thrill of inner achievement, of inner excellence, i.e. he realises that everyone has a different perception, right or wrong, higher or lower, more noble or less so than his—and thus who is he to cavil and condemn, who is he to pass judgement?

Such a karmayogi is ever-content to do his best and leave the rest.

Such a karmayogi is not one who necessarily wears the ochre robe of renunciation, but one who wears the robe of tranquillity, the robe of sacrifice, the robe of joy, and one who renounces all negative thoughts. Such karmayogis are from common flock of devotees—all can yearn to be such I

—J. Jagadeesan, Malaysia

## No Retirement from Service

*Flowers bloom and give perfume before dropping, whereas man, when his end , is approaching, has only a long face. He should be like the flower, and do something good and bright when dying.*

*(Conversations with Sai Baba, by John Hislop, Indian edition p. 70)*

Baba says that man should regard selfless service as the purpose for which he is given life. We were born to serve the community. Baba says there is no retirement from service, and that we are to do service until our last breath.

I often wondered what he meant by this last statement, as when we are about to take our last breath we are not likely to be thinking of doing service. The following story helped me to understand what Baba meant.

A Sai Baba devotee, who had been in Mt. Olivet Hospital in Brisbane for eight months with an incurable disease, decided he should do something for all those looking after him. Several members of the Brisbane Centre had been visiting him regularly, so he asked them to help. Gladly they planned an afternoon tea party, which included a 'thank you' cake made by clients of S.W.A.R.A. (Sunshine Welfare and Remedial Association).

All the doctors and nurses who looked after our friend Peter received a carnation with a thank-you note, and seemed very touched by this gesture. The whole staff became involved in the party—they brought food, and decorated Peter's bed with balloons and streamers.

Doctors, nurses, other staff and the patients in the ward all joined in, and top level administrative officers of the hospital came to take part in this unique party.

The party went on for over an hour and everyone had a wonderful time. A doctor, who was a fellow patient suffering from a terminal illness, said he had never seen anything like it—and he wanted to have one too. We told him this one was only a rehearsal—the next one would be better.

The doctor-patient was very anxious to know what group was doing this service. We told him about the Brisbane Central. Service Group, and explained that this group was able to fill in some of the gaps which other larger organisations were not able to cover and that it was made up of a cross-section of the community.

Peter really carried out Baba's instruction to do service until we die. In the one simple step he took—to do something for the hard-working hospital staff who looked after him and the other patients so devotedly—he began a chain reaction.

He involved S.W.A.R.A. clients (who made the cake), members of our centre and the hospital staff themselves, who were delighted to contribute to the party preparations. And, of course, the other patients in the ward really enjoyed the warmth and gaiety of the party which was the highlight of conversation at the hospital for weeks afterwards.

The following Christmas I was privileged to have an interview with Baba. He asked me, "How is the man in hospital?"—referring to Peter.

I said excitedly, "Swami, I was going to ask you that question!" Baba replied, "Yes, yes I know. I know everything. I will give you vibhuti for him." Swami also commented that Peter was always taking vibhuti and saying 'Om Sai Ram.'

Peter, the man who did service until his death, died shortly after I return and told him what Baba said in interview.

—Valmai Worthington, Brisbane

### **The Lord and You**

You must—  
Cry only for God.  
Speak only the Truth.  
Walk only on the Sai Path.  
Eat only to live.  
Live only to let others live.  
Work only as worship.  
Play only with fairness.  
Fight only what's evil.  
Lose only the ego.  
Enjoy only bliss.  
Experience only the Divine.  
Forget only others' faults.  
Remember only His grace.  
Seek only Peace.  
Save only your self-respect.  
Wait only with faith.  
Oppose only injustice.  
Seek only to learn.  
Study only with understanding.  
Sing only from the heart.  
Serve only as an offering.  
Pray only to surrender.  
Trust only the Lord.  
Praise only His glory  
Love only for Love's sake.  
Die only as a Hero.

—Ajit Popat, U.K

*People aspire only for the fruits of authority; they shirk the responsibility that authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India, it is the attitude of aspirants all over the World today. Power is sought but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the World today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but do not discharge the responsibilities of those positions. No one is entitled to such position who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they may be, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold.*

—Baba

## **This and That**

*Poornam adah poornam idam  
poornaath poornam udachyate  
poornasya poornamaadaaya  
poornam eva avasishyate.*

This invocation that precedes all the Upanishads which belong to the Shukla Yajur Veda is often quoted by Swami in His discourses. The word poornam is generally interpreted to mean 'full' or 'whole'. Swami has translated the word as 'Divine' (Sathya Sai Speaks, V. XI), which is very appropriate since divinity implies fullness. In this verse the terms 'idam' and 'adah', 'this', and 'that' merit closer scrutiny.

What do these words refer to? All that is perceived by our senses and is time- bound and space-bound, the entire manifested universe, is referred to as 'this', while 'that' refers to the transcendental Reality that is beyond our sense perceptions. Who conceives these two entities? Man is the only creature who has been endowed with the capacity to enquire into the nature of 'this' and 'that'. He is the greatest mystery in the universe and is the only one who can question about his own reality. Srimad Bhagavatam states that "the Divine after projecting the various lower forms of life was not satisfied at heart. He then projected the human form endowed with the capacity to realise the Divine and became extremely pleased." Bhagavan Baba says, "the first place was given to mankind and My knowledge was placed in his mind." (Golden Age, 1980). Thus man is unique in all creation. Now scientists have gathered enough evidence to show that the key to the understanding of the universe is man himself. To quote Swami, "If we are able to understand the truth of the individual we shall know the truth about the universe." (Sathya Sai Speaks, V. XI)

### **No empty space**

The entire universe is a manifestation of the Absolute Brahman, which is Pure Awareness filling the entire space and pervading everything. It is the beginningless primordial original state uncaused and independent. Gita (II-7) says, "avinaashi—to tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam".—"Know that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded.") "Ishavaasyam idam sarvam", as the Ishaavaasya Upanishad declares. In the subatomic level the physicist finds that particles appear from nowhere, exist for a fraction of a second and disappear into nowhere. In that context the scientists have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as empty space in the universe. The so-called empty space is apparently filled with something which forms the source of the packets of energy and an unceasing activity is going on in it.

### **Cosmic energy**

This dynamic phenomenon goes on endlessly everywhere but, as Swami says, "There is no change in the quantum of cosmic energy, either increase or decrease; it is ever the same ever established in itself." (Sathya Sai Vahini). This continuous dance of energy when it reacts with our senses gives us the false notion of solid matter and thus from the scientific point of view, what appears to us as the world is not the reality. The scriptural point of view is that everything

is only a projection and not creation in the usual sense of the term. The Mundaka Upanishad (II. 1:10) states, "Purusham evedam viswam" (The Purusha—Supreme Person Himself is all this universe.) The Awareness has pervaded the whole universe and has become all 'this'. Viveka Choodamani (227) says, "Yadidam sakaldm viswam naanaaroopam pratitam ajnaanaat tat sarvam brahmaiva pratyastaa shesha bhaavanadosham" (All this universe that, through ignorance appears as diverse forms, is nothing but Brahman which is free from all limitations of human thought.) To quote Mundaka Upanishad again, (It. 1:9) "atas samudraa girayas cha sarve asmaat syandante sindhavas sarva roopah"—(From Him all the seas and the mountains, from Him flow the rivers of every kind.)

When the Universal Consciousness takes a human form to come as an Avatar, It testifies to the same fact. Says Krishna (Gita X-8), "Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate". (I am the origin of all, from Me all things evolve.) Again, there is no end to His divine manifestations. "Naanto'sti mama divyaanaam vibhutinaam" (Gita X-40).

### **Man and the cosmos**

Who is perceiving this universe? Of all living creatures we are the only ones looking at the universe critically and we are part of the universe. That means the universe is looking at itself. What is our relationship to the universe? Ashtavakra Gita says, "tvayaa vyaaptamidam viswam tvayi protam yatharthatah". ("You pervade the universe and the universe exists in you.") What does this mean? There are two angles to our perception of the universe; one is the illusory aspect and the other is the splitting of what is whole. What is this illusory aspect of our vision? Scientists tell us that the world cannot be described except through our concepts which depend on our consciousness. If one is unconscious there is no world for that one. This fact is well brought out at the subatomic level, where the physicists have shown that the so called particles aren't there until we observe them. In other words the existence of the entire universe for an individual depends on his own conscious existence, the sense of 'I am' in him. So the 'I am' is the basis of 'this'. Swami says, "it is indeed strange that the huge cosmos depends ultimately on whether 'I' cognises it as such or not! If you feel it is there, it is there; if you feel it is not there, it is not there!" (Sathya Sai Vahini). So the universe, the way it appears, is only an idea. The scientists concur with this. If the particles do not exist till we observe them, it follows that the world does not exist independent of our perception. However the scientists say that the universe is not completely idea-like but definitely it is not what it appears to be; "Jagat mithya" as Sankara says. Swami clarifies, "as a matter of fact the physical world is like a mango raised by the magicians wand, the product of the trickster known as mind." (Jnana Vahini).

### **All-embracing wholeness**

Now coming to the second aspect of our perception, all views, philosophical as well as scientific, point to one fact: all things in the universe including us are only a part of the all-embracing wholeness and none is ever separate from each other. After studying the behaviour of the subatomic particles the scientists say that it is only their experiments which isolate the particles from an unbroken unity. This has enabled them to arrive at a total view of the universe. So perception of separate parts in the universe is only an illusion based on our ego-bound consciousness. Having fragmented the universe into parts, we make an attempt to find out how



the parts are correlated. But this correlation is only a concept because where there are no parts there can be no question of correlation.

This correlating consciousness now wants to find a cause behind the universe and thus conceives a 'that', a something different from the universe, a something that is transcendental beyond the comprehension of the sense. What is beyond sensory perception becomes difficult to speak about and one is not sure about one's concept of 'that'. This difficulty is beautifully expressed in the Kena Upanishad (11:2): "naaham manye suvedeti no na vedeti veda cha" ("I do not think I know it well nor do I think I do not know it.") What is this difficulty due to? Because we are trying to express the experience in words; but words can take us only to a certain point beyond which only experience counts. Words become a necessity to communicate our concepts. Once words are used duality creeps in since all communication implies duality. Reality which is unity can be experienced only in silence. The very nature of this experience is inexpressible. Once it is given expression to it is no longer Reality. As the Chinese saying goes, "the Tao that is named is not the Tao."

### **Back to the source**

The next step in this conceptualisation process is to consider 'this' as being 'here' and 'that' as being 'there'. Is there any truth in this concept? The Kathopanishad declares (II-1: 10), "Ya-deveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha" ("whatever is here that is there and what is there again is here"). As Swami says, "Yatnaa andaande thatha Brahmaande" "As in the small egg so in the cosmic egg" (Sathya Sai Speaks, V. XI). In other words, whatever is in 'that' which is 'there' is also in 'this' which is 'here'. When 'that' is pervading the entire universe and thus is present everywhere, the terms 'here' and 'there' become irrelevant. Interestingly the physicist has come to a similar conclusion that at the subatomic level such a distinction is only an illusion because what is 'there' depends on what the scientist conceives and decides 'here'. The behaviour of the particles in experiments has clearly shown that whatever happens in one place is intimately connected with whatever happens elsewhere in the universe, which again is connected to what happens in yet another part of the universe. What does all this lead to? Modern physics has led us back to ourselves, the conceiving and experimenting entities.

Swami once said that after wandering over all sacred places and bathing in all sacred rivers, when you finally arrive at the goal you find that you have arrived at yourself. The same was implied by Swami Vivekananda when he said, "in worshipping God we have always been worshipping our hidden Self."

"Thus reality has no 'within' or 'without', no 'in here' or 'out there', no 'this' or 'that'. These are only creations of our consciousness. This consciousness when linked to the mind and senses conceives the diversity where there is really none but unity. To quote Swami again, "this cosmos which the Divine projected is divine; the Jagat is Brahman; nothing is outside It or beyond It. 'This' is truth because 'that' is truth." (Sathya Sai Speaks, V. XI) The ONE is that which is everything and everywhere and there is nothing which is not 'that'. (Poornam adah) So we also become part of 'that'. In other words the Self in all is all that 'IS ALL'. Swami declares, "It is the source of all, the basis of all, the goal of all, the reality in all and the centre in all." (Sathya Sai

Vahini). The Chandogya Upanishad says (VII 25: 5): "The Atman is indeed below, the Atman is in front, the Atman is to the south, the Atman is to the north, the Atman is indeed all these." Here we are reminded of a similar statement from Swami that He is "Kantane, ventane, jantane, intane"—"in front of us, behind us, by our side and inside us."

To sum up: 'This', the 'I am' consciousness, is only a reflection of 'that', the pure Awareness. So, 'that' becoming all 'this' plays a mysterious drama on the stage of 'this'. "When," as Swami says, "the mystery is cleared and the play is discovered as mere play, the conviction dawns that you are He and He is you." (Jnana Vahini). Then 'this' disappears and 'that' alone which is full and divine remains. (Poornasya poornamaadaaya poornam evavasishyate). The capacity to arrive at this conclusion, "I am That" is given only to man. The first and the most important attitude to be developed by him is to see the world as it is and not as he imagines it to be. Then by eliminating the conceptualising ego he has to realise that 'this' and 'that' are ONE which is always, divine. When that divine ONE has become all, 'this' also has to be divine. (Poornam adah poornam idam.)

—**M. B.**

*The Universe is an instrument to reveal the majesty of God. The inner firmament in the heart of man is also equally a revelation of His Glory. He is the Breath of one's breath. Since he has no specific form, He cannot be indicated by words. Nor can His mystery be penetrated by the other senses. He is beyond the reach of asceticism, beyond the bounds of Vedic rituals. He can be known only by an intellect that has been cleansed of all trace of attachment and hatred, of egoism and the sense of possession.*

—**Baba (from "Upanishad Vahini")**

**VIDYARTHI VANI:**

## **Faith and Fortitude**

Fearlessness is a distinctive characteristic of a true devotee. For fear cannot exist where faith in God dwells. Today man is beset with so many kinds of fear. He is afraid of the future, he is afraid of his neighbour, afraid of income-tax authorities and so on. As a matter of fact, he is living in a state of perpetual fear.

As messengers of Swami the first thing we (students) have to cultivate is fearlessness. This is so because in life we are bound to face stiff opposition. It is very easy to swim with the current, but swimming against the current leads you to your origin. We must possess the courage to face all obstacles. Tagore has written a beautiful poem which should inspire any young man to be proud of whatever Goal has given him, He writes:

*Be not afraid, my brother,  
to stand before the proud and the powerful  
With your white robe of simpleness.  
Let your crown be of humility and your freedom, the freedom of the Soul,  
Build God's throne daily upon the ample bareness of your poverty;  
And know that all that is huge is not great and pride is not everlasting.*

We, the students of Sai, have to be strong mentally, emotionally and spiritually. One has to be very strong to follow the spiritual path. That is why it is said: "Naayam Atma balaheenena labhyah". The Self is not realised by the weak. It is only the man whose mind is made up of the same material as that of a thunderbolt who can follow the spiritual path. If nobody walks with you, walk alone. If nobody holds aloft a torch for you, you have to ignite your own heart and yourself become a guiding light.

Pygmies and dwarfs do not inherit the earth. It is only the giant in intellect who becomes a genius. And the genius does not drop from the sky; he comes from us all. Only he makes better use of his powers. So next time when you are satisfied with the humdrum tenor of life just think whether you have done anything concrete in the world to make people remember you. If the answer is 'yes', you are on the right track.

As Swami's students we have to be bold, courageous and fearless. Swami's assurance, "Why fear when I am here?" is always with us. Let us step out into the world with this assurance of Swami and make this world a happy place to live.

Let me conclude with this prayer:

*Let me not pray to be sheltered from danger  
but to be fearless in facing them.*

*Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain  
but to the heart to conquer it.*

*Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield  
but to my own strength.  
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved  
but for the patience to win my own freedom.*

*Grant me that I may not be a coward  
feeling Your mercy in my success alone.*

*But let me find the grasp of Your hand in my failure.*

**—Yijaya Krishna,  
III B. Com., Brindavan Campus**

## **Tamil Nadu devotees blessed by week-long visit**

To lakhs of Sai devotees in Madras city and from all parts of Tamil Nadu, Bhagavan's week-long visit to Madras in February, within less than a year of His last visit in 1989, was a blissful experience, with several opportunities for having darshan of Bhagavan and receiving His boundless blessings.

The Sai organisation had drawn up a rather crowded programme, but Bhagavan went through it with His abundant love, conferring in the process His grace and blessings on thousands of men, women and children who waited for hours on many days for a mere glimpse of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan left for Madras from Brindavan (Whitefield) early in the morning on February 5th. Before reaching Madras, Bhagavan made a detour to bless devotees in Gandhinagar (Katpadi Township) and Vellore.

Thousands of devotees, who had been waiting for Bhagavan at "Sundaram" for many hours, despite the heat of the day, greeted His arrival at 4 p.m. with inexpressible joy and enthusiasm. Swami was received at the entrance with Poorna-Kumbham and Vedic chants. Bhagavan went round all the enclosures and blessed the devotees. Unmindful of the strain of the journey, Bhagavan sat for an hour, enjoying the Bhajans and giving darshan to the devotees. Swami appreciated the devotion and discipline of the devotees, who had remained at their places for hours.

During the next six days, "Sundaram", where Bhagavan stayed, was the sacred meeting place for thousands of devotees who participated in the Nagarsankirtan (5 to 6 a.m.) and gathered at "Sundaram" for the Vishwaroopadarshan of Bhagavan from the lotus-shaped balcony. Besides the spacious compound of "Sundaram", the devotees overflowed into the road and all open spaces around the building. Participants in the Nagarsankirtan came from all walks of life and included men and women in equal measure. The members joining in the Nagarsankirtan swelled from day to day and were estimated, on the morning of February 11, the day of Bhagavan's departure to Bangalore, at over ten thousand.

Apart from the Nagarsankirtan, most other public programmes were held at "Abbotsbury"—bhajans in the morning and evening and cultural programmes on some evenings. Despite the fact that Bhagavan's stay coincided with working days for the office-going public, the attendance at all the functions was exceptionally large, especially of women. "Abbotsbury" had received a face-lift for the occasion and the arrangements for accommodating the large number of devotees were good. Besides the main halls, the entire open ground in the premises was used for seating the devotees.

### **Children's rally**

On the first day, February 6th, there was an impressive rally by Bal Vikas children from all the four zones of Tamil Nadu. Bhagavan watched the march past of one thousand five hundred children, the boys in their smart white uniforms and the girls in their colourful costumes. The children presented a variety of folk dances. Swami blessed the children as they marched past and at the end of the rally distributed sweets and gifts to all of them. The thousands of parents who were present felt doubly blessed by having darshan of Bhagavan and witnessing the performance of their children.

In the evening, Bhagavan distributed prizes to children who had succeeded in various Bal Vikas competitions. Swami blessed the children as well as their gurus. Later there was a programme of group singing by children belonging to the Madras metropolitan region and presentation of a play on the life of Sant Tukaram by Bal Vikas girls. Bhagavan, as well as the entire audience, appreciated the superb performance of the girls who seemed to excel professional actors. Bhagavan blessed all the children.

On the 7th, Bhagavan gave darshan at "Abbotsbury" to the devotees taking part in the Bhajan, and proceeded to Tirumangalam (an adopted slum near Annanagar) to perform the Pratishtha of Navagraha idols in the Amman temple which was inaugurated by Bhagavan some years ago. The idols had been consecrated earlier by priests according to Agamic rites and Bhagavan blessed the installation of the idols in the separate shrine erected for them. Besides the residents of the colony, several thousands of devotees had gathered there for darshan of Bhagavan. Swami distributed saris and dhotis to the aged residents of the colony.

Earlier, Bhagavan visited the Sathya Sai Clinic in Tirumangalam, run by devotees for the benefit of the slum dwellers, and opened the new pathology wing of the clinic. Swami distributed clothes to handicapped children.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan visited Bharatinagar, an adopted slum near Mambalam—where Sai Seva Dal members have been carrying on various service activities including coaching students for school final examinations. Swami blessed all the slum folk and distributed clothes to the poor and the aged.

Returning to "Abbotsbury", where bhajans were going on, Bhagavan gave darshan to the large gathering of devotees and attended a delightful programme of devotional music presented by well-known playback singers, including Srimathi P. Suseela, Ramakrishna, Srimathi Vani Jayaram, and Krishnachandra.

On the 8th, after giving darshan to the large gathering of devotees at "Abbotsbury", Bhagavan went to the Sai-adopted village, of Ayyapakam, beyond Ambattur, and showered His benediction on the large gathering of villagers who had been eagerly awaiting His arrival since early in the morning. Bhagavan distributed saris and dhotis to many old persons and left after Arati.

### **"The greatest healer"**

In the evening, an immense gathering of devotees had assembled in "Abbotsbury" to listen to Bhagavan's discourse. It was the only public discourse included in the week's programme. Bhajans started at 5 p.m. and Bhagavan arrived sometime later. After going round the devotees' enclosures and giving darshan to all of them, Bhagavan came to the main hall, where He was received by Sri Arjun Raja, Convenor of the Tamil Nadu Sathya Sai Trust. Elaborate arrangements had been made to televise the proceedings for the benefit of thousands of devotees who were seated outside the hall. The meeting began with Vedic invocation by Bal Vikas children.

Thanking Bhagavan for His gracious visit to Madras, Sri Arjun Raja said that lakhs of devotees were blessed by Bhagavan's darshan and looked forward to His divine Sandesh. He requested Mr. Justice Ramalingam, Judge of the Madras High Court, to address the gathering.

Mr. Justice Ramalingam, in a felicitous speech, hailed Bhagavan Baba as Avatar Purusha, who had come "to rehabilitate mankind who have forgotten the real divinity in them." In the deep moral and spiritual crisis through which the world was passing, only a Divine personality like Bhagavan could set right the world and restore human values. He referred to the global mission of Bhagavan and the great work that was being done in the fields of education and social service by Bhagavan and His devotees. He concluded: "The greatest Healer is here ready to rectify the defects which are causing the maladies in the modern human community. But the rectification of a society depends on the response of individuals. So, it is for every individual to follow the Divine directions of Sri Bhagavan and serve mankind with selfless motive."

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse, which was rendered into Tamil by Srinivasa Raghavan. (Bhagavan's discourse is published separately).

On the 9th, Bhagavan arrived at "Abbotsbury" around 8 a.m. while bhajans were going on and gave darshan to the assembled devotees. Bhagavan spoke for a few minutes to the Mahilas, who had been actively engaged in various service activities. Bhagavan blessed a large gathering of slum children and distributed gifts to them. The children presented a short cultural programme before Bhagavan.

### **Visit to Perambur**

From "Abbotsbury", Bhagavan drove to Perambur to lay the foundation for an annexe attached to the "Sathya Sai Nivas", the first Mandir to be built by Sai devotees in Tamil Nadu. A large gathering of devotees in and outside the Mandir was blessed by Bhagavan.

From there, Bhagavan went to the headquarters of the Southern Railway Employees' Union, where thousands of railway employees and other devotees had gathered for darshan of Bhagavan. Bhagavan was received by the octogenarian President of the Union, Sri T. V. Anandan, who introduced Bhagavan to some of the veteran union leaders. Bhagavan blessed the

students of the technical training institute run by the Union, for which Bhagavan had given a donation of Rs. 2 lakhs some years ago.

Welcoming Bhagavan, Sri Anandan said that their union had been uniquely blessed by Bhagavan, who had advised them years ago to abjure strike as a weapon for securing their demands. The union had adhered to the pledge given to Bhagavan. Bhagavan blessed all the devotees present.

In the evening there was a programme of devotional music in which leading playback singers—Malaysia Vasudevan, Jayachandran, Srimathis P. Leela and Vasantha and Ramachandra Rao—participated.

On the 10th, Bhagavan gave darshan in the morning to the devotees at "Abbotsbury" and distributed clothes to children and old villagers from the "adopted" villages in Chingleput district. The children presented a programme of folk dances.

In the evening Bhagavan went from "Sundaram" to the Shirdi Baba temple at Guindy and from there He went to the guesthouse of W. S. Insulators where a seminar was being conducted for the M.B.A. students from Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan delivered the valedictory discourse on various aspects of management.

Bhagavan was expected to arrive at "Abbotsbury" around 5.30 p.m. As it was the last scheduled appearance of Bhagavan at "Abbotsbury", several thousands of devotees were present from 4 p.m. awaiting His arrival. But, as Bhagavan had been held up elsewhere, Arati was offered to Bhagavan's chair in the assembly hall after bhajans had gone on for nearly two hours. Despite their disappointment, the entire gathering dispersed in good order, testifying to the devotion and discipline of the devotees.

The next morning, there was a record gathering of devotees at "Sundaram". Bhagavan went round them and blessed them all before leaving for Bangalore at 10 a.m.

Gen. Mahadevan and his team of Seva Dal members had a tough job regulating the large crowds at "Abbotsbury" and other places. Bhagavan gave special Padanamaskar to all the bhajan singers, men and women, in appreciation of their uniformly excellent singing.

### ***Sivaratri Sandesh***

Bhagavan's Sivaratri discourse, which was delivered in the Poornachandra Auditorium on February 23, will be published in our April issue. -Ed.

## Devotion in Action

*Even though it is said that in the Kali Age even mere reciting the name of the Lord is enough for realising God, Bhagavan Baba said that without active service to the Divine Namasmarana alone was not enough. Addressing a mammoth gathering of devotees in Madras at "Abbotsbury" on February 8th, Bhagavan called upon everyone to combine Namasmarana with dedicated service to the Divine in one form or another. He mentioned Hanuman as the supreme exemplar of devotion based on service.*

*Bhagavan Baba, who arrived in Madras from Brindavan on February 5th, had a crowded programme in which He gave darshan and blessings to thousands of devotees. The meeting on February 8th was the only occasion when He gave a public discourse. In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:*

### *Embodiments of Divine Love!*

The Supreme, who is the embodiment of the eight forms of Divine wealth (Ashtaishwarya), permeates the cosmos through eight potencies. This vast universe of animate and inanimate objects is called "Vishwam". "Vishwam" is the epithet applied to the Divine who enters into every part of the cosmos. "Vishwam Vishnu Swaroopam" "The cosmos is the manifestation of Vishnu." Vishnu means the One who pervades everything. Vishnu is the Cause, Vishwam (the cosmos) is the effect. The universe is a manifestation of the creator and the creation. It is because the Lord is manifest in the Creator-Creation relationship that we are able to recognise the Divine.

In the cosmos, the first manifestation of the Divine is as water. Man cannot live without water. Water is present everywhere, though in some places it will be visible on the surface and below the ground in others. The Divine is protecting all living beings in the form of water. Water is known by another name as "Life" (Jivanam). God is making His presence manifest in the world in the form of water.

The second manifestation is Agni (fire). It is on account of fire that everything is illumined and can be perceived. The same fire is present in man as the digestive fire (Jataragni). It is this fire that enables the conversion of the food one consumes into blood, flesh, bone and other things (seven basic constituents) and sustains the body. Without these seven primary constituents life cannot exist for a moment. For all of them, God in the form of fire is the basis.

The third manifestation is the earth. All living beings flourish on the earth. Birth and death go on on the earth. The phenomena of birth, growth and death testify to the manifestation of God in the form of the earth. Man secures all the things needed for living from the earth. Hence the earth must be regarded as a manifestation of God. As God cannot be experienced in any specific form, He must be recognised in manifestations like the earth.



The fourth manifestation is air. Every moment we are engaged in breathing air. We are sustained by the oxygen in the air. Man inhales and exhales air 21.600 times a day in 24 hours. While inhaling, the sound "So" is produced. In exhaling, the sound "Ham" is produced. Together, they make up the term "So-ham" meaning, "He is I," proclaiming the inherent divinity of man. God is to be recognised in the process of inhaling and exhaling. That being so, what is the need to go in quest of God elsewhere? When the Divine is within us and present in the form of the five basic elements (Pancha bhutas), men strive to search for God everywhere else.

### **The lord's quest**

When the Lord is present everywhere, within and outside you, why go in search of Him anywhere? In this context, the question arises: Is it true that devotees are going in search of God or is God searching for devotees? In my view, it is God who is searching for devotees.

Aakasa (space) is the fifth manifestation. The distinctive quality of Aakasa is sound (Shabda). The cosmos is filled with sound vibrations. Sound is the means of cognising most things in the world. The entire cosmos is permeated by sound waves. Creation itself has originated from sound. When man inhales air, it is this sound that emanates from him in the form of "So-Ham"—"Ham-So". Where is this Aakasa? People imagine it is somewhere high up. Only the clouds are above. Wherever you have sound vibrations, you have Aakasa (space). When I speak, it is Aakasa. When you strike this table, you can experience Aakasa. Aakasa is present in the clapping of hands during the bhajan. Aakasa is present in the process of breathing. It is because of Aakasa that living is possible.

### **The sun, the earth and the moon**

The sixth is the Sun. All living beings are able to survive because of the Sun. Birds, beasts, trees and crops, all thrive on the energy got from the Sun. The world will cease to exist without the Sun. Human intelligence is a reflection of the effulgence of the Sun. The enquiring nature of the intellect is derived from the Sun. Without the power of discrimination man will be a moron.

The moon comes seventh; the moon principle confers tranquility on man. The mind is a reflection of the moon. Man's primary goal is to secure peace of mind. The earth came from the Sun and moon from the earth. The Sun, the earth and the moon are forms of the same substance. These three find their expressions in man in the form of mind, intellect and consciousness (Vijnana).

The eighth element is the authority of the Vedas (Veda-pramanam). The Vedas proclaim the eternal Truth. There is the saying: There is no greater Dharma than Truth.

God, who is the embodiment of Truth, though eternal and formless, manifests Himself in the eight forms in the cosmos. When the Divine is recognised in these forms, man will realise his true nature.

It is naive to try to search for God in any particular place. Man is himself the cause of all his sorrows and difficulties because, forgetting his inherent divinity, he regards the body as real and

pursues mundane and physical pleasures. Man forgets that it is the Spirit that activates all his senses. When a fan turns, or a bulb burns, it is the current that makes them work. When a car is driven, the engine revolves, the horn works because of the current from the battery. Likewise, for the car of the human body, the eyes are the lights, speech is the horn and all sense organs function because of the current from the Atma (the Spirit).

### **The atma and the mind**

The Atma is the unified form of three constituents: Mind, Intellect and Samskara (sacred actions). If anyone is asked, "What is the mind?" the answer comes: "it doesn't matter." When one is asked, "What is matter?" the reply is "Don't mind." If people are not concerned to know what is mind and what is matter, what is it that concerns them in this world? Without understanding mind and matter, how can one enquire into anything?

In the life of man, the mind, which is continually engaged in thought, is most important. All sorrows arise because of the failure to understand the workings of the mind. The mind is constantly engaged in thinking. This important function of the mind must be properly understood. The mind is not a mere physical entity. It is not the body but an expression of the enquiring quality of the Spirit (Atma). Hence it is that the mind is regarded as the cause of bondage or liberation for man. If the mind is turned towards God, it becomes the means of liberation. When it is turned towards the things of the world, it becomes the means of bondage. The God-ward mind results in detachment. The world-directed mind leads to attachment. Hence, turning the mind towards God must be man's primary aim.

The powers of the mind are indescribable. The speed of thought is greater than that of anything in the world, faster than light or wind. Though endowed with this immense power, it is a pity man considers himself a weakling. There is no connection between the mind and the heart. The heart is doubtless a vital physical organ in the body. It is the supplier of blood to every part of the body. But the mind manifests the power of the Spirit (Atma-Shakti).

### **Role of buddhi**

The second constituent is Buddhi (intellect). Buddhi is generally regarded as the power of intelligence (Medha-Shakti). This is not correct. It is really the discriminating power of the Atma. There is a vital difference between intelligence (Medha-Shakti) and Buddhi (the discriminating power). Intelligence exists as a physical entity in man. It is the centre of the nervous system, a kind of control room for man. But Buddhi represents a superior power derived from the Spirit. It is not related to the physical body or to the physical phenomenal world. By its relationship to the Atma, it has divine attributes.

The third constituent is "Samskara". This term is usually defined as "way of life". But it is much more than that. It represents righteous conduct, based on reason and tradition, embodying the mores of the society. Without righteous conduct, man's life is utterly worthless. Righteous conduct must be based on an enquiry into what is transient and what is of enduring value in human existence. The mind and the Buddhi have to be utilised for determining what is spiritual and what is non-spiritual. It is only when knowledge of the eternal verities is obtained by such

enquiry that one's conduct can be reflected in "Samskara" (righteous behaviour), which is the divinisation of life.

We witness today many attempts at reform of society—political, economic, social, etc. But all these are of no avail, because they are ignoring the essential factor of transforming the mind of man.

Many people complain that their troubles have not ended and God has shown no compassion towards them. They would do well to learn a lesson from an episode in the Ramayana.

After Vibhishana had become friendly with Hanuman, he once asked the latter "Hanuman! Although you are a monkey, you have been the recipient of the Lord's grace. Although I have been ceaselessly engaged in the contemplation of Rama, how is it I have not secured His grace?" Hanuman replied: "Vibhishana! It is true that you are ceaselessly chanting the name of Rama. But to what extent are you engaged in the service of Rama? By merely contemplating on the name of Rama you cannot get Rama's grace. When your brother Ravana brought away Sitadevi, what is the help you rendered to her? Did you do anything to relieve even partially Rama's distress?"

### **Precept and practice**

Devotees should realise that by merely uttering "Rama! Rama!" you cannot ensure the Lord's grace. To what extent are you carrying out the injunctions of Rama, Krishna or Baba? How far are you practising the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita? Without practising the precepts, no amount of repetition of the name of the Lord is of any use. It is merely like playing a gramophone record. The Lord's name must get implanted in your heart.

Today, on account of the special prerogative of the Kali Age, people think that it is enough to recite the Lord's name alone for achieving the goal of life. But this is a mistake. Can you have the current merely by having the negative wire? Only when the negative and positive lines are combined will the current flow. Devotion must find expression in dedicated service to the Lord.

Embodiments of love! When you recite the name of the Lord with love, when you carry out with your limbs the injunctions of the Lord, and look upon the world as a manifestation of the Divine, you are bound to receive the grace of the Lord. Have this firm conviction. Do not labour under the misconception that mere chant of God's name alone is necessary and adequate. Along with it you have to take part in sacred activities. You must not mind whatever obstacles you may encounter. This is the lesson which Hanuman conveyed when he overcame everyone of the obstacles he met with when he set out on the search for Sita. Hanuman stands out as a supreme example of dedicated and determined service to the Divine.

### **Devotion and service**

Devote everyday at least five minutes for reciting the Lord's name and a few minutes for rendering some kind of service to the needy and the forlorn. Include in your daily prayers a prayer for the welfare of all people in the world. Do not be engrossed in your own well-being

and salvation. Try to lead a life free from ill-will and harm to others. Regard this as a type of spiritual discipline and redeem your lives.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans, "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*," "*Prema Muditha manase kaho*" and "*Subrahmanyam! Subrahmanyam!*"

**VIDYARTHI VANI:**

### **Our Dreams come True**

It was June 17th last year, I, along with other students who were selected for various courses at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Brindavan Campus, was sitting in the Mandir for morning darshan. We were pained by the thought of going away from Swami, physically, the next day from Parthi.

I was dreaming of an 'interview'. What a surprise! After Darshan, Swami, who knew our feelings, called all the new students for interview. Boundless joy and Jove radiated from Swami and, in reciprocation, our hearts felt thrilled. Swami came inside the room and asked each one of us where he came from. Then Swami asked me, "What is education?" I answered, "That which develops in us perfection." Swami said, "Education is experience. Bookish and superficial knowledge is mere waste. Experience, that is, practical knowledge is most important. Education is for life and not for living. The end of education is character. Nowadays, as man goes on learning higher and higher, his character declines lower and lower."

Then Swami asked, "What is life?" Many boys gave their definition. But Swami said: "Life is love. Love is selflessness and self is lovelessness. The food cooked in a copper vessel which is not tinned turns into poison. Similarly, the food cooked (the spiritual practices, with nine forms of Bhakti as vegetables) turns useless unless the vessel, the heart, is coated with love."

Swami said. "According to Divine mathematics, three minus one is equal to one. Swami illustrated this point with an example. When an object is kept before a mirror, we see three entities, namely, the object, the image and the mirror. When the mirror is taken away, we see only one, that is the object—God represents the object, man the image, and the world the mirror. So we must detach ourselves from this world. Then everything will be God only." Swami signed a copy of the book, "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles" for a student and said, "My greatest miracle is not materialisation of Vibhuti or healing ailments, but it is love!" We were thus happily engulfed in a spontaneous flow of Swami's love. Swami cracked jokes in between and we enjoyed very much those lighter moments too!

Swami said, "God alone is our true friend. Other friends stick to us or never bother about us, depending upon the wealth and fame we have." We didn't realise that more than one hour had

been spent. Swami talked about a lot more of things and this made it all a memorable day for us. We left Swami's room with a heavy heart. But, later in the evening, some lines from a poem I had read long back came to my mind and cheered me:

*The sky is blue  
The ocean too,  
Our dreams come true  
We are flying with You.  
So wherever we go,  
You'll be there, we know.*

May our beloved Lord Sai give us the strength and will-power to grow into ideal students of His Institute, so that we come up to His expectations.

—V. Manoj Das, B. Sc. I Year, Brindavan Campus.

*Among men, each one is himself the cause' of his fortune, good or bad. He is "himself the builder, the architect. Fate, destiny, pre-determination, the Will of God—everyone of these explanations is toppled by the principle of Karma. God and man can be reconciled and affiliated only on the basis of this Sutra or principle of Karma. When man realises that God has no share in causing his suffering and that he is himself the sole cause; that no blame attaches to any other person, that he is the initiator as well as the beneficiary—the cause and the effect—of his acts, that he is free to shape his future, then he approaches God with a firmer step and a clearer mind.*

—Baba

### **Prasanthi Christmas**

*Christmas morn, the world is born  
Anew in Love for Sai the Lord  
Countless flames shine bright, so bright,  
And fill the sky with heavenly light.  
Glad sounds of joyous praises fill  
The air with happiness and still  
More joy awaits the watching ones.  
For, yes indeed, the Lord, He comes;  
With Blessings Pure, Boundless Love  
He showers on devotees from above.  
He is the Moon, He is the Sun,  
He is the Father of the Son.  
The world has waited many years*

*For Him whose glance removes all fears,  
And Peace and Joy ripple out in waves,  
As we sing the praise of Him who saves  
The world from doubt as to the Truth of Man,  
As He unfolds His Glorious Plan;  
To lead all people to tire One,  
The Source, the end, the Infinite Sun.  
Hallelujah! all praises be,  
To Sathya Sai, for we are He!*

*—Phillip Cottingham, New Zealand.*

**When God descends on Earth**

Bells rang joyously to announce  
The descent of the Divine Child.  
From the celestial skies  
A shower of flowers wafted through  
The jasmine perfumed air blowing mild  
A gentle stroke of the silver cradle  
Kept its rhythm with the beat of drum,  
Rapturous, divine music flowed  
From the nearby hills.  
Flutes played melodious tunes  
From this charming Cow-boy.  
Yes! Every soul had a song to hum.  
Sparkling pink light shone  
from the dew-pearled valleys  
and the peacock blue-streams  
Seemed to dance in delight  
At the ecstatic smile divine  
from tiny rose hued lips. His eyes  
radiated a glance of heavenly joy.  
Locks curling down His forehead  
and a small mole on His tiny cheek,  
Indeed a symbol to ward off  
the evil and the wicked,  
a sign of promise to the helpless  
and hope to the poor and the meek.  
His small feet toddled on the sands,  
an eternal home for His thronging devotees.  
Manifesting divine powers,  
He cures the illness and ignorance of the world.  
The Sai flag of Truth, Righteousness  
Peace and Love has been unfurled.

—V. Indira Manasa, Anantapur Campus

## **God is Reality**

There are several world religions. Many battles have been fought concerning which is the right one. The Avatar Sri Sathya Sai Baba says: "There is only one God. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one race, Humanity."

When God incarnates in human form He is called an Avatar in the holy Vedic scriptures. The Avatar Krishna reincarnated 63 years ago in the small village Puttaparthi in South India and took human shape as the Avatar Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A divine manifestation in human form is the reality of the absolute infinite. The creator of the universe Brahman and the Avatar Sai Baba are identical concepts, they are one. Brahman is the ultimate cause for the incarnation of the Indian Avatars Rama, Krishna and Sai Baba. Brahman is the same, as real in the Avatar, in man, in the wind, in the top of a tree and in the scent of a flower. An Avatar is born in possession of all spiritual powers and incarnates when Dharma—righteousness—is in danger, for leading and saving mankind from annihilation and ruin.

What the Bible is for the Christians and the Quran for the Muslims, that the sacred Veda scriptures are for the Hindus. In these scriptures the concept GA means spirit, power and energy. Together they constitute the fundamental concept for the primeval force which in the Vedas is called Brahman.

Brahman is the supreme, absolute, eternal universal creating power behind all cosmic forms and phenomena, which we understand and experience as divine creation. The power of Brahman expresses itself in innumerable forms of creation, known as well as unknown. When we consider what this universal creating power is, we understand that God is immortal spirit and energy, without beginning and without end. The primeval energy we call Brahman is sovereign, uninfluenced, independent and unlimited, omnipresent and omnipotent. For Hindus these are familiar thoughts and concepts, but maybe not so for a Westerner who ponders and thinks about the reality of God.

### **Practice of yoga**

One who is anxiously searching for the truth behind the secrets of the universe asks: "How shall I become conscious about and understand that which I so wholeheartedly want to learn to know, God, the Truth?" One who is familiar with and follows the directions of the Vedas practises yoga, meditation, for learning to know God in his inner consciousness.

Yoga means union. Practising of yoga teaches us to still our thoughts and purify our consciousness. When, through meditation, we reach the spring of stillness, then we have come into a super-conscious transcendental state of pure divine consciousness and can experience how our real true being, our soul, merges in the cosmic soul, Brahman. They always were one and always will be one.

Our ego has created an illusory I-consciousness that deceives us and makes us believe that our inner true being is separated from the divine life-soul Brahman, though we in reality forever are one therewith. Not even death can separate us. Our body dies and becomes soil, but our soul is eternal.

One who during a long time has practised yoga can experience how the higher I liberates itself from the lower I. Man is in God and God is in man. The Presence of God is a concrete fact



in all creation. In our heart we experience it as love. It has no distinct form, we can neither see it nor touch it, but we feel and experience love as a reality in our life. God is love.

One who has reached lasting success in his yoga practising can experience God's pure consciousness. This state is called Nirvana and means liberation from our lower I. Nirvana is merger in God, in cosmic existence. He who through his own struggle and divine grace has reached these spiritual heights is rewarded with bliss and peace. This experience cannot be described with words, it is not of this world.

## **God is one**

Were we only aware of God's omnipresent spirit, we could also accept oneness of life in everything and live in love with each other, free from religious conflicts. Ramakrishna Paramahansa once said to his disciples: "God is like a big container filled with water. Out of this container the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians fetch their water, but they call it by different names. Anyhow, it is the same water they drink."

Why make war and fight about names, forms and ways, or which religious community we belong to, when we anyhow worship the only true God? In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna says: "Whatever outer forms you worship, you worship Me, and I shall lead you to the goal." We all are at different stages of development and must not let theological dogmas hide the way and the truth. Each one believes in his way, and each honest struggle for finding God deserves to be treated with respect.

The Avatar Sathya Sai Baba says: "I know that I am God, but you do not know that you also are divine." As long as we are not aware of our inner reality, we cannot conceive and understand the significance of Sai Baba's words. Two thousand years ago Jesus gave the same message to people when he said: "Truly I tell you, you are all Gods." We search for God outside ourselves in temples and holy places, in the heights of mountains, but if we instead directed our look from the outer to the inner, we would find God within ourselves, in our heart.

## **"We belong to God"**

Jesus said: "I am in my Father, the Father is in me. You are in me, I am in you. He who has seen me, has seen the Father." What Jesus meant was all life is one, we are one with the inner being of nature in the entire universal creation. We are a flame of God's reality, which is the ultimate cause for man's existence. We belong to God, we are His creation. Our life is dependent on God, but God is not dependent on us. God expresses Himself through His creating life energy in our body. We can of our own self do nothing. We are a reproduction of God, an instrument in His hands.

Our ego has created an illusion that makes us identify ourselves with our body. This deceiving illusion makes us believe that it is we who of our own self are successfully effective within various fields of our activities. We cannot distinguish between illusion and reality. Some can conceive and understand more of the secrets of the universe than others can. Therefore truth

and reality become relative conceptions. All knowledge stands in certain relationship to something else.

We human beings cannot apprehend God's total reality. Sai Baba says: "How shall the limited be able to understand the limitless?" In a transcendental state we can experience the divine Presence, hear the divine voice in our inner and get answers to the questions of life. Sai Baba's and Jesus' words, "You are all Gods," remain unreal and incomprehensible for us as long as we are not conscious about our own inner divinity. Then we cannot either comprehend God's true being in other living creatures.

Nothing exists without or can be separated from God's omnipresent spirit. The philosopher Bohme expressed the same when saying; "God is in all and all rests in God." What separates us from Sai Baba and Jesus is that we are not conscious about our inner divinity.

Sai Baba says that we must ask, "Who am I?" "From where do I come?" and "Where am I going?" The school of life implies making us aware of who we really are and understand that we come from God, we are Gods, and one day we shall return to God. God is life.

In deep reverence and humility I bow to Sai Baba's divine Louts Feet in gratitude, for He has led me and let me experience God's reality in life. Sai Ram.

—**Curth Orefjaerd, Sweden**

*If you have the Grace of God, no graha can harm you; maleficent influences even from the most powerful combination of planets with which the astrologers terrify you will disappear in a trice. In order to get that Grace, there are two prescriptions: Priyam Vada, speak lovingly, so far as the world is concerned; and Sathyam Vada, speak the Truth so far as the next is concerned. Prema is the weapon; Vichara is the wheel which must be revolved perpetually to get the light of Prema. Until Prema emerges, you have to be in the darkness of hatred, where even the slightest movement creates fear and suspicion.*

—**Baba**

## **God is Love**

Ramachandran Kumar of XII Standard, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Vidyagiri, speaking at Prasanthi Mandir, on 25th June '89, on Swami's Love, said:

About eight years ago, a little boy, a resident of Bombay, was fascinated when his father sang for him a new bhajan "Gangajathadhara Gauri Shankara Girijamanaramana". A few months later, Swami came to Bombay. The boy, before going for darshan and discourse, stood before the altar in the Puja room and prayed: "Swami, please sing Gangajathadhara bhajan today." Imagine

how thrilled and overjoyed the boy was when Swami, out of His vast repertoire of bhajans, sang this very bhajan that day. The love conveyed by Swami in granting his small prayer gripped the boy's heart, so much so that this very same love subsequently drew him to Puttaparthi to join Swami's school.

I too have experienced this sweet, captivating love of Swami. Indeed, Swami's love is so pure and sublime that no words can describe its tenderness and charm. Not that it is so abstract. In fact, Swami's love is concretised in every act of His, every smile of His, every pat of His, and every glance of His.

Speaking of my own experience, I must say that a subtle perception is necessary to experience Swami's love in all that He does for us or even what He speaks to us, individually or in groups. For instance, one evening, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was passing through a rice-field when he saw the sunset on the horizon brightly lit by multicoloured clouds. This sight appeared so divine to him that his joy and ecstasy sent him into *bhava-samadhi*. How many of us can experience the same ecstatic joy on seeing a sunset? As in the case of beauty, a divine experience too lies in the vision, perception and sight of the observer.

At Prasanthi Nilayam, we are blessed with Darshan by Swami twice every day. What greater sight than this one of Sathyam, Sivam and Sundaram walking before us can there be on earth? The Lord of the Universe, out of His boundless love, even bends forward and stretches His hand to pick up one single letter from an ardent devotee.

Again, last year Swami had fracture of his hip-bone. Not paying heed to the doctor's advice to remain relaxed in bed, Swami came out on the balcony and gave darshan from a wheelchair to cheer up the hundreds of hearts outside sunk in gloom. What is more, Swami signalled to one boy amongst us, who was ill, and asked him whether his fever had come to normal! Swami was concerned about the boy's temperature and not at all about His own bone-fracture and its excruciating pain!

Swami's love answers every good prayer from pure and sincere hearts. For instance, some time back, in U. P., a lady was busily engaged in the inauguration of a Sai Bhajan hall. But her little son was pestering her for a lollipop. Being busy, in exasperation, she pointed to a photograph of Swami kept nearby and said, "If you so badly want a lollipop, ask your Baba for it." The little boy meekly moved away. But when she looked up after a while, she was surprised to see her son sucking blissfully a lollipop. When she asked him from where he got it, the little innocent boy smiled and, pointing his tiny finger at the photograph, said, "Mother, as you told me, I asked my Baba and He gave me this lollipop." Obviously, Swami's love is present everywhere at all times for those who are pure in heart. That is how, though we, Swami's devotees, gather around Him in thousands, each one of us gets His personal attention. For instance, two years back, I had a hole in my left ear-drum and pus used to ooze out from it. Every 60 seconds, I had to clean my ear with a swab of cotton. This went on for an entire year. None of the best doctors in Bombay could do anything to cure it. But last year, when I came to Parthi, just a few words: "Swami, ear trouble" were all that were needed to cure the ear completely.

Indeed, Swami's love has transformed even wicked and sinful hearts. Some years back a murderer, Kalpagiri, while fleeing from the police, happened to land in Parthi, without any feelings for this holy place or for Swami. However, Swami showered so much love on him that the seeds of that love sprouted into sincere repentance for his evil deeds. His stony heart was so much transformed by Baba's love that he surrendered himself to the police, prepared to atone for his sins.

When such is the love of Sai, what should we do in reciprocation? We can only follow His love's footsteps and try to practise love in our own life for others. That, surely, will make Swami very happy. It is not enough that we say "I have God in my heart," but we should be able to say, "I have Swami's love in my heart and I am in the heart of Swami—our God."

*Arjuna had a sharp intellect, pure feelings and a sensitive mind. He was an adept at the practice of spiritual precepts and if he listened to any spiritual exhortation, he would lose no time in translating it into action. Krishna as the Guru gave the Gita to the world through Arjuna because He found a worthy disciple in him. Your lives will become blessed when you develop faith in God, reverence for His words and the resolve to implement His sacred teachings in your daily lives.*

—Baba

## **Baba's Recipe for Stress Management**

In our society today stress has emerged as one of the most critical maladies that individual's experience. Because of changes in values, life styles, occupations, social networks, technology, family relationships, career paths, achievement expectations and uncertainty, stress has become endemic.

In the management of stresses experienced in jobs, a number of factors have been identified such as role ambiguity, performance expectations, work group pressure, lack of integrity in managerial action, work overload, job monotony, unethical standards in decision making, the degree of bureaucracy, high power visibility of supervisors and so on. The stresses operating at a high level create a new phenomenon referred to as 'burn out'.

Many books on management and psychology have now identified a number of physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms of stress. These include in the behavioral category, turnover, absenteeism, work evasion, increasing smoking, use of alcohol and drugs, change in sleep pattern, impulsive behaviour and poor interpersonal relationships. In the psychological category are excessive and rapid swings in moods, worry about trivial matters, magnifying problems, withdrawal, anger, anxiety, increased irritability, depression, low self-esteem, lack of

trust, forgetfulness, hypersensitivity to criticism and feelings of tiredness and lack of concentration. In the physical category are palpitations, pain in the chest, indigestion, muscle tension, persistent headaches, double vision, etc.

### **Vedanta shows the way**

The foregoing account of stress research has ignored some of the more subtle causes of stress and the impact of stress on the individual complex—his ego, mind, desires and senses. This is where Vedanta is relevant since it shifts the focus from external stress factors, in the social network, in the family context and other problematic situations that may generate stress to the individual who must manage the stress. The stress factors manifest themselves in the mind where they are magnified and therefore dilute the order, rhythm, and harmony or peace of mind. Since the mind is related to desires, senses, ego and illusion, these elements are potential individual stressors since they have the power of creating turbulence in the mind.

A desire is an eagerness of the mind to attain or enjoy some object. The desire for money, power, prestige, influence, status, material pleasures and sensual objects create a state of dependency on these elements. The desires acquire power over the individual. The individual becomes a prisoner of his desires. When the desires are frustrated by some agent who has control over these elements, stress is generated. Desires have a tendency to multiply and escalate hence dependency is reinforced and more potential stressors become evident. Hence Bhagavan Baba's first stress-coping strategy is a *ceiling* on desires which reduces the state of dependency, power, influence of objects on individual behaviour.

### **The senses and stress**

The mind processes information through the senses. The senses are gratified through attachment to objects, so sense indulgence becomes a criterion of growth. The senses define and distort reality—they provide a moral and cognitive map of the universe. When sense gratification is blocked, stress is generated. Here Baba's second coping strategy is *sense control* or detachment of the senses from sensuous objects since the senses also determine our goals, priorities, and standards of behaviour.

### **The mind and stress**

The mind is a product of impressions, a stream of thoughts and impulses. If thoughts are agitated and negative, so is the mind. Worry is an extravagant habit of the mind. It dissipates mental and emotional energy. Desires excite the mind and senses. The fewer the desires the less the fluctuation of the mind and its fancies. The fewer the thoughts, impulses, and desires the greater the peace of mind. Emotions, moods, sentiments and thoughts arise in the mind. The mind is fickle and craves for variety and trivial pursuits. When variety and trivial pursuits are absent boredom and restlessness set in and stress is generated. Here Baba's strategy is to "*watch*" *the mind*, to monitor its flow and ebb. Stress manifests itself in the mind through fluctuation and imagination. The turbulence in the mind, the ripples and whirlpool, are all indicative of stress. The tyranny of the mind is one of the major causes of stress.

## Thoughts and stress

The mind is conditioned by its own thoughts. Thought is a dynamic force and is made up of subtle matter. The strength of mind, body, success in life and pleasure depend on the nature and quality of thoughts. A person is created by thought. A person becomes what he or she thinks he / she is. If you meditate on a thought e.g., courage, purity, honesty, self-control, truth and patience you can work it into your character. Thoughts are the sources of all our actions. Habits are patterns of thought in our mind, therefore to change habits we must change our thoughts. The tyranny of the mind is related to thoughts—their fluctuation and imagination. Negative thoughts produce negative emotions and cognitive dissonance. Stress upsets the order, rhythm and harmony of the mind because of negative thoughts. Stress affects thought patterns first and then emotions are affected. Again Baba's "Mantra on the Wrist" is to *'watch' our thoughts* since our thoughts are the genesis of stress. Stress is created by thoughts and magnified in the mind.

## Ego and stress

The ego expresses itself through desires. Desires enhance and inflate the ego. The acquisitive instinct is reinforced by the ego. Desires are multiplied to gratify the ego. The senses process information and define reality for the ego. The ego becomes the centre of one's universe or inner world. Anyone or anything that frustrates the enhancement of the ego causes stress. The preoccupation of the ego with "I" and "Mine" emphasizes the tendency of the ego to be possessive. Lack of possessions such as status, power, prestige, and influence frustrates the ego and causes stress. The ego generates its own stress by creating expectations for the individual which must facilitate the growth of the ego. Any attempt to curtail the growth of the ego causes stress. To be a prisoner of the ego and its demands is a source of stress and illusion.

Illusion is the wrong interpretation of what is perceived through the senses. It is an unreal image of the *self* and *reality*. Illusion creates veils around the mind and blocks perception of reality and the Self. This is done when the mind gravitates to desires, senses, and the ego. Pride, greed, envy, anger, lust and malice, some of the characteristics observed by Lord Krishna, all serve as impulses in the mind and undermine the harmony of the mind. The mind merges with the body through imagination. The ego-mind complex veils the light from the Atma (Self). The body-mind complex is subject to stress but not the Atma. The body-mind complex produces the illusion that happiness comes from material pleasures or from one's senses and desires. The illusion is that happiness comes from maximizing self-interest, the empirical, "I", or ego-self—the doctrine of egoism. That is, happiness comes from ego enhancement. To pacify the mind according to this illusion is more critical than to control the mind. Failure to find happiness from these sources of infatuation causes stress. At another level is Psychic Stress, that is, the alienation from the Self or Atma and the weaving of veils of illusion. These veils of illusion affect the harmony, order, and rhythm of the mind.

## Lesson of the "watch"

Baba has provided an effective strategy for coping with the stresses generated by the mind-body complex in his *Mantra composed of the letters WATCH*. Watch your Words; Watch your Actions; Watch your Thoughts; Watch your Character, and Watch your Heart. Stress researchers have recognized the potency of meditation as a coping strategy for creative

relaxation. But Baba has gone beyond the preoccupation of the West with physical exercises as yoga therapy to the essence of meditation which controls the mind, ego, senses and desires to provide an anchor to life. Self-realization becomes the ultimate strategy for diluting all stresses including psychic stresses.

—Yassin Sankar, Canada

*Celestial spheres are revolving and disintegrating; time is fleeting; age follows age; era succeeds era; bodies that have taken birth, grow and end; but, the urge to sanctify life with good works and good thoughts is nowhere evident; the fragrance of sincere sadhana is not traceable anywhere. Through the process of 'giving up', great things can be achieved. Cultivate detachment, and the Lord will attach Himself to you. The past is beyond recovery; those days are gone. But, tomorrow is coming towards you. Resolve to sanctify it with Love and Service and Sadhana.*

—Baba

### **Eighteen Verses on "Sai Ram"**

The delight in the heart  
which we call Sai Ram  
glows with holy bliss  
and with knowing calm

The gladness in the breast  
of singing Sai Ram  
is a true renewal  
and a tender storm

As long as oceans surge  
with billowing waves  
so long will Om Sai Ram  
in bliss be exclaimed

As long as hills have peace  
and brooklets play on earth  
so long will Sri Sai Ram be  
the gem of highest worth

When bewildering views  
shatter peace like bombs  
let the oneness return

with Om Sri Sai Ram!

Mind's flow is a dance  
the beating heart's a tomtom  
Let the sustaining breath  
be the song Om Sri Sai Ram!

The deep sea and round moon  
are hard to overcome  
replenish your strength  
with Om Sri Sai Ram!

In the Arabian desert  
Sarah sought "Zamzam" spring  
we can drink "Om Sri Sai Ram"  
satisfying, sparkling  
For magical healing  
King Arthur went to Avalon  
we find; the grail  
holding Om Sri Sai Ram!

Ram is all helpful  
all knowing, all calm  
Ram is the light in us  
Guide us, Sai Ram!

The energizing grace  
which vibrates in psalms  
of holy communion  
is Om Sri Sai Ram!

Awed by God's glory  
sing it in psalms  
whisper it secretly  
Om Sri Sai Ram!

In pleasure or pain  
here's something to lean on  
remember the holy name  
of Sri Sai Ram!

As you play on the stage  
of this earthly drama.  
whatever your age



sing Om Sri Sai Rama!

Sail beyond whirlpools  
of senses and traumas  
glide on the peaceful waves  
of Om Sri Sai Rama!

When you want freedom  
and still problems glom  
onto your monkey mind  
repeat Om Sai Ram!

If you need courage  
place palm to palm  
focus your mind  
sighing Om Sri Sai Ram!

It is not magic  
this dear divine charm  
though it's beyond logic  
sweet Om Sri Sai Ram!

**—Dr. Bill Jackson, Indianapolis, USA.**

***Shivaratri Sandesh:***

## **What the Avatars Mean**

### ***Embodiments of the Divine Atma!***

The Atma is the basis for the Divine life. The body enshrines the Atma. Worldly life should be in consonance with spiritual aspirations. Because man today is identified with physical existence as the only reality, he has to be taught the knowledge of the Spirit.

The Divine Will is the determinant of the destiny of the individual or of society. Society itself is a reflection of the Divine Will. It is only when man conducts himself on this basis that he will be able to discharge his duties free from ego. Hence man's supreme duty (Dharma) is to act according to the Divine Will.

Dharma (Duty) is the spiritual expression of the Divine Will in relation to society. The term "Aishwarya" is derived from the word Easwara (The Supreme Lord). The terms Siva or Sankara mean "Auspicious". "Sam" means "Chitaaananda" (Blissful Awareness). "Kara" means "the one who causes it." "Sankara" means the One who causes blissful awareness. Sankara is the One who confers "Chitaaananda" on those who take refuge in Him or adore Him.

### **Symbolism of the Siva form**

The secret of Creation is evident from the description of the form of Siva. The crescent moon on Siva's head symbolises the consciousness in human beings, the Ganga symbolises the Life Force and the snakes on Siva's body represent the myriads of living beings. He resides on a silver mountain. His dearest friend is Kubera, the Lord of Wealth. Despite being endowed with all these, why was He obliged to carry the begging bowl? To demonstrate to the world that every kind of wealth is a hindrance to spiritual advancement, Siva renounced everything. It is through renunciation Siva became the eternal embodiment of supreme bliss.

The Lord has another name. It is only when the love principle underlying this name is rightly understood, the real form of the Cosmos can be recognised. That name is "Saambasiva". "Saa" means divinity. "Amba" refers to the cosmos. "Siva" means "the Supreme Person " (Purusha).

Easwara has yet another name: Yogasikha. The sky is His blue form. The directions (Dik) are His garment. Hence He is known as Digambara. He is also known as Panchaanana—the Five-headed One. The five are: Earth, water, fire, air and Aakasa (space). His five heads represent the five basic elements (Pancha-bhutas).

Siva is also described as Bhuthanatha—the Lord of all created beings. "Bhuta" refers to creation. Easwara is the Lord of every creature in the universe. Hence, the entire cosmos is reflected as an image in the Lord.

### **"Source of all prosperity"**

Siva is known as "Shubhankara"—the one who is ever good ("Shubham"). In the world, whoever takes a bodily form—whether it be humans, deities or avatars—sometime or other the body gets tainted (Ashubham). The prefix "Sri" is affixed to the names of such persons to indicate that without the prefix they are tainted by their bodies. That is why "Sri" is added to the names of Krishna, Rama, Venkateshwara and so on to confer beatitude on them. With regard to Easwara, however, the epithet "Sri" is not applied because Easwara is ever in a state of beatitude. "Sankara" remains "Sankara" without a "Sri". Siva is not called "Sri Siva". Easwara is not referred to as "Sri Easwara". He is the embodiment of all suspiciousness and holiness. Hence he needs no other appellation. He is the source of all prosperity and well-being ("Sakala Aishwarya").

Man is the product of interaction of Purusha (the Supreme) and Prakriti (Nature). Consequently man should have the perennial bliss of the Divine and remain perpetually blessed. Man is made in the image of Nature. Man can divinise himself only by contemplating on the attributes of the Divine (Easwara). The three eyes of Siva represent the three worlds (lokas). Siva's trident is symbolic of the Past, the Present and the Future, the three aspects of Time. The three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas) are images of the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The three worlds, the triune aspect of Time, the three gunas (qualities) are thus manifestations of the Easwara Principle. When the Divine is installed in the heart in this manner, man can raise himself to the level of the Divine.

It is for the well-being of the world that Siva swallowed the Halahala poison. Again, it is for the sake of the world's good that Siva contained the Ganga in His matted locks. Siva bears the moon on His head to confer peace of mind on mankind. When man moulds himself on the pattern of Easwara, he will get rid of all his evil tendencies and offer to the world what is good in him. This is the meaning of the worship of Siva, It is only when man gives up utterly his bad thoughts, evil desires and wicked deeds, he will be able to transform himself into divinity.

### **The realisation process**

The spiritual process may be compared to the conversion of milk into butter. The body is like a house. The heart is the vessel in which the milk of consciousness is boiled over the stove of devotion. The vessel is covered by the lid of earnestness (Shraddha). When the fire of Viveka (discrimination) is lit, the cream of understanding comes up from the boiling milk. To prevent the cat of Maya from getting at the milk, the door has to be barred by the gate of Sujnana (wisdom). After the milk is cooled by Santhi (tranquility) and the buttermilk of the Divine Name is added to it, the curd of Divine Grace is formed. When this curd is churned with the rod of knowledge and the rope of love, the whey of ignorance is separated and the butter of the Atma Reality (the Jiva) emerges. It is such a realised Self who attains oneness with the Divine.

### **Significance of the avatars**

Man today fails to recognise his own true nature. He adores men, but does not realise the humanness in them. He worships avatars like Rama and Krishna, but is not aware of the exemplary ideals offered by them to mankind. Because of his failure to recognise the avatars'

exemplary character, man is a prey to all kinds of doubts. Everyone should try to understand the highest human ideals represented by the avatars. He must consider how far he has lived upto those ideals. Real worship consists in practising the ideals to the greatest extent possible. Instead of worshipping in this manner, man is degrading himself by resorting to mundane rituals. It is by constant control of thoughts and desires that man can purify himself and raise the level of his consciousness. To the extent man reduces his desires, his will power (Iccha shakti) will grow. Today man has lost his will power because of the insatiable growth of desires. In the process, he has weakened his intellect, his memory, his powers of discrimination, his intelligence and his powers of speech and thought.

### **Equality—when and how?**

Without understanding fully your human nature, how can you expect to fathom the nature of the Divine or recognise the divinity present equally in all beings? For instance, you are told that God is present in a cat, a dog, a donkey, a pig, a snake or a scorpion, and you also talk about it. But if your parents, friends or anyone else hails you as "you ass! you swine!," you get angry and feel that you have been insulted. Likewise, if God is described in this manner, is it not an affront to God? When can you experience the sense of equality of all living beings? It is only when you have realised your oneness with God that you are entitled to speak about the equality of all beings. Till then, the dog is a dog, the donkey is a donkey, and a man is a man. As long as you regard yourself as a human being, respect other fellow-humans, show love towards other creatures, but do not go about saying all are one and all are equal.

### **The eleven rudras**

Embodiments of Divine Love! The auspicious and sacred Easwara principle is present in every man. This divine principle can be manifested only through the practice of pure thoughts and actions. Today's Shivaratri observance conveys a significant lesson. According to numerology, the three letters "Si", "Va" and "Raa" make up eleven ("Si"=5, "Va"= 4 and "Raa"=2). These eleven are known as the "Ekadasa Rudras", the eleven Rudras. The fourth letter "thri" represents the combination of the first three letters and "Shivaratri" is the day devoted to overcoming the eleven Rudras by adoring the Supreme Lord, who is master of them all.

The Rudras turn the intellect (Buddhi) towards sensuous objects and thrust the individual in the sea of "Samsara" (worldly life). The Paramatma (Supreme Spirit) is master of all the Rudras. Only the man who has conquered the eleven Rudras can expect to realise the Supreme. Who are the eleven Rudras? They are the five organs of action (Karmindriyas), the five organs of perception (Jnanindriyas) and the mind. Man must seek to control as much as possible these eleven organs. From ancient times, the sages have stressed the supreme importance of sense-control as the means to God-realisation.

### **Siva and Vishnu are one**

No distinction should be made between Siva and Vishnu. The composer Annamacharya declared: "While uttering Linga! Linga! Sivalinga! Do not forget, oh man! Ranga! Both are one." Whether the vehicle of the Lord is a bull or an eagle, the Lord is one and the same. Annamacharya indicated how this Lord is to be worshipped. To perform ablutions for the idol of

the Lord he went in search of pure and sacred water. He could not find it in the Ganga, which was polluted by water coming from the mouths of fish and frogs. He lamented over his inability to get completely pure, unpolluted water from any source. He declared: "The only pure water with which I can wash your linga, Oh Siva, is that coming from my tear-filled eyes, which have been moved by the devotion in my heart filled with the sense of utter dedication to the Lord." Annamacharya felt that only the tears filled with love of the Lord are pure enough for washing the Lord's idol.

### **The Lord and the devotee**

Each devotee has his own conception of the Divine. No single specific form can be ascribed to the Lord. The Lord's grace is conferred on each devotee according to the level of his spiritual consciousness. Annamacharya exclaimed: "Oh Lord! You appear to each devotee according to the nature and measure of his realisation." The ocean is vast -and boundless. But the amount of water you can carry from it is determined by the size of the vessel you take. If the vessel you carry is small, you cannot fill it beyond its capacity. Likewise, if your heart is constricted, Divine grace will be equally limited. Broaden your heart and receive the plenitude of God's grace.

How is one to broaden his heart? It is by getting rid of narrow differences and by curbing desires. By developing insatiable desires, the heart gets shrunk. A broad heart means recognising the truth that the Divine dwells in everybody. Only then you can obtain the Reality that is unchanging and eternal.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with a long poem exhorting devotees to cultivate purity of heart, eschew petty mundane desires, avoid all unrighteous actions, give up hypocritical worship and turn their hearts towards Siva, the Giver of all bliss and prosperity. With the singing of the bhajans, "*Hari Bhajana binaa*", "*Prema muditha*" and "*Sivaaya, Parameshwaraaya*", the discourse came to a close.

—*From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 23-2-1990*

**VIDYARTHI VANI:**

### **The All-Knowing Bhagavan**

Sometimes a moment's insight is a life-experience. Sometimes it happens, an event in the present may seem to reflect and signify an incident in the past. We, the students of Baba, often hear Him saying: "You are my wealth and property. You are the apple of my eye. It is not these mammoth buildings that are important, but it is my children who have to be moulded and modelled to be my true messengers."

When I read these beautiful, caring words over and over to myself, I only feel myself an enormous burden for Baba. According to me, the amount of hopes and efforts for us and the amount of our reciprocation to our Baba seems to be like feeding milk to a snake. To enlighten

this conscience in our hearts, our parents and teachers, the chosen instruments of our Baba, repeatedly remind us and recapitulate it within us.

Once, as our teacher was explaining to us in our prayer hall, Baba spends three-fourths of His time on the students and the other one-fourth on others. Suddenly, some incident sprang in my brain. When I was in my Secondary School at Parthi, it so happened that I had an inner urge and desire to eat a Cadbury Chocolate. I found myself a prey to this thought and desire. Luckily, my elder sister, who is studying in Anantapur, had come to Parthi for Baba's darshan. Making use of this opportunity, during the darshan time, I requested her to get Cadbury Chocolate bars for me and my younger sister studying then in the convent. But during the meeting hours, my sister didn't turn up due to some unknown reason. I kept quiet but inwardly I was restive.

That very night, after dinner, I heard a sound of excitement in the lobby. As I went up there, I learnt that Baba had sent something special for us. Obviously, I became very curious to know what was the Prasadam. Looking at the long queue of children with their beaming faces, I approached near the box. Lo and Behold! Believe it or not! Cadbury Chocolates were being distributed to each student. I happily had my share of Prasadam without probing for any significance. Of course, I did thank Baba in my heart.

Next day, as I sat thinking on the darshan ground, I was interrupted by my sister. She explained that she had actually brought the Cadbury Chocolates. As she was about to come to our hostel, she found that a girl who had fainted in the dormitory had to have Chocolates. My sister experienced a satisfied happiness in her heart when she offered it to her. Then I informed her that Baba had sent Cadbury Chocolates to our school.

... And then we understood the significance! This benevolent loving act of Baba really touched our hearts. We were filled with tears of joy and thanked God, with no words to express our feelings for-All-Knowing *Baba*. We learnt that only when we help and love others, we can expect benedictions from God.

Baba comes down to our level and even goes deep down to solve our petty trivial desires. His main purpose in doing so is to ensure that we, His students, may not stray from the golden path—the way to our goal—*Baba*. He sees to it that we are not disturbed mentally and waste time in ineffectual and futile things. Baba is the divine lighthouse and our beacon. Baba is greater than our greatest need.

—*Sarmishtha Sahoo, I B.Sc., Anantapur Campus*

*Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of commonsense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that fails to inspire: these serve no useful purpose.*

YUGADI SANDESH:

### More potent than portents

*Firm faith in God's name will ward off many of the evil portents indicated by the planetary conjunctions in the New Year Pramoduta, observed Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His discourse on Yugadi day, March 27, at Kalyana Mandap in Brindavan. Bhagavan said there were indications of various kinds of conflicts and dangers from fire disasters during the year, but many joyous events were also likely. He advised the large concourse of devotees to carry on their duties in a spirit of dedication, with firm faith in God.*

In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:

*Embodiments of Love!*

Time is the embodiment of God. Hence one of the names of God is "Samvatsara". Because Time is the essential spirit of God, He is also known as "Kaalaatmaka" (The Time-Spirit.) God is called the protector of the wise. The wise man directs his intelligence and talents towards God, not content with using them for mere living. God is also known as the Lord of Eons because He creates and dissolves eons like Krita Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. God is thus not only the creator of yugas (eons) but also their extinguisher. Hence God is described as "Yugadi-krit".

Because He contains within Himself everything and protects everything, God is also called "Kaalagarbha" (The One who is the womb of Time).

We regard Yugadi as marking the beginning of a new year. In fact, it is one of the forms of God. The entire cosmos is bound by Time. It is permeated by Time. It is a product of Time. It is destroyed by Time. No one can fully comprehend the power of Time.

The Bharatiyas, from ancient times, recognising the sacredness of Time, followed certain observances to propitiate Time. They viewed every object, not in terms of its external appearance, but from its inner spiritual essence and based their life on that principle. Even if something appeared externally beautiful, if spiritually it was valueless, Bharatiyas used to discard it.

### Siva and Parvati

People in the world attach value to all kinds of objects, ideas and personalities. God, however, is not attracted by external appearances but values only the inner spiritual urges. Here is a simple example. Parvati was the most beautiful woman in the world. Conscious of her charms, she wished to wed the Lord Himself. But the Lord does not succumb to external attractions. Disappointed by her failures, Parvati embarked on a very severe penance. Indifferent

to sun and rain, wind and weather, Parvati concentrated her thoughts on the Lord, wearing out her body in her Tapas. Because of the penance she lost all her beauty. All her physical powers were gone. At that moment, the Lord accepted her as one half of his body.

What is the inner meaning of this episode? Prakriti (Nature) is Parvati. This Prakriti is filled with various kinds of prides: the pride of wealth, strength, beauty, knowledge, virtues, power and penance. Man's ego is inflated by these different kinds of pride. It is only when man gets rid of these eight categories of pride will he become acceptable to God. So long as ego prevails, the power of the Spirit will not be cognised. Without realising the power of the Spirit man cannot experience the bliss of the Divine. It is out of a recognition of this truth that Bharatiyas declared that only through renunciation can immortality be attained.

### **Renunciation**

What is it we should renounce? Is it hearth and home, wealth and possessions? If God could be realised by renouncing these things, Self-realisation should be quite easy. But, it is not the external appurtenances that have to be sacrificed. The road to man's liberation is barred by three gates: Kama (lust), Krodha (hatred) and Lobha (greed). The primary things which have to be given up are these three. When a man is filled with these three, he is steeped in folly. When a man is subject to Kama (lustful desire), he loses all sense of right and wrong. Greed destroys man's devotion. Krodha (hatred) undermines Jnana (wisdom). The man filled with anger and hatred becomes utterly thoughtless. He loses his sense of discrimination. These three destroy a man's spiritual practices—Karma, Upasana and Dhyana (rituals, worship and meditation). When there are no spiritual practices, man becomes a creature of whims.

### **Trikarana shuddhi**

Man has a higher wisdom (Vijnana-Prajna) which is obtained only by spiritual sadhana. The purpose of the sadhana is to realise the Self (Atma). What is the Atma? It is the combination of mind, intellect and life (Manas, Buddhi and Prana). This triune combination is called Triputi. Man is the embodiment of this Triputi. It is otherwise known as the mind-speech-body complex (Mano-vaakkaayam). "Vaak", speech, represents life. Man should seek to sanctify these three.

True humanness consists in the harmony of thought, word and deed. When there is no accord between words and deeds, of what value are one's words? It is for the purpose of harmonising thought, word and deed that Karma, Upasana and Dhyana have been prescribed for man. Karma is like a mirror in which a man's good and bad deeds are reflected. A man's Karma reveals the nature of man—whether he is Satwic, Rajasic or Tamasic—even as a thermometer reveals the temperature of the body. Therefore, all actions should be turned towards Satwic purposes. The Bhagavad Gita has described such actions as Nishkama Karma (desireless actions). It is only when actions are performed in this spirit that the body accomplishes its purpose. It is only when the body and the actions are sublimated that the mind gets transformed. Right action results in purity of mind.



Men today are not aware of the sacredness of action. They are caught up in the pursuit of their desires. They are impelled entirely by selfishness and self-centredness. Man is moved by desires and not by ideals.

What we should aim at is a life inspired by ideals. The ideal life is one in which there is complete harmony and purity in thought, word and deed. ("Trikarana Shuddhi"). Man is judged by the nature of his actions. To make the proper use of time, man has to engage himself in right actions.

### **Right use of time**

Embodiments of love! Remember that time is fleeting. Time and tide wait for no one. Time will not submit itself to you. You have to surrender to it. Time is its own master. Hence, you must strive to make proper use of time.

I have often told you how God represents Time in its various aspects. God is described as "Samvatsara". "Vatsara" means one who is engaged in sport. "Govatsara", in referring to Krishna, means one who sports with cows. "Samvatsara" means, "playing with all". This time is available equally to all—whether he is a millionaire or a pauper. Even an emperor is subject to the passage of time. Time is a witness to what everyone is doing. On a stage, there are a number of lights. One light is turned towards an actor in the role of a king. Another light is turned towards a beggar. Yet another light is focused on a man reading the Ramayana. Another light may be focused on a fighting scene. Although the lights illumine a variety of scenes, they remain unaffected by the behaviour of the actors. The lights simply bear witness to the actions but no blame attaches to them for what the actors do. The actors alone are affected by what they do. In the same manner, the Divine, as the Lord of Time, remains only as a witness to the passing show. Your actions may be unholy. But time remains untainted.

Your primary duty is to make right use of time. For this purpose, there is no need for you to wait for the beginning of a new year. Every moment is a manifestation of Time. From seconds to minutes, from minutes to hours, from hours to days and months, and from months to a year—this is the endless procession of Time. The second is the basis for the year. Hence every second should be filled with purposeful action. What is the meaning of a life in which from waking in the morning to sleeping at night one is concerned only about his belly and has no thought of God? What is the result of all this hectic activity? Has it given a single moment of real joy? Purposeful living can come only by contemplation of God. People talk about service. Whom are you serving? When you render service, you are really serving yourself. You have to perform all actions in a spirit of dedication—to please the Divine.

Men today are misusing all their knowledge, wealth, energies and talents for purely material ends and wasting their lives. Leading a worldly life is unavoidable. But in doing so, the spiritual goal should be borne in mind. The goal is spiritual; actions are worldly. It is when actions are dedicated to spiritual ends that they become sanctified. Unfortunately, today even spiritual practices are tainted with mundane motives.

## **The Indian Heritage**

It is because of the intensely spiritual life led by kings, sages, scholars and pious men and women in ancient days that even today the spiritual heritage of Bharat has survived the vicissitudes of centuries. Men should realise their inherent divinity and live up to their true nature. If their real nature is forgotten and their behaviour is far from human, they cease to be human beings. For instance, sweetness is the basic quality of jaggery. If it loses its sweetness it ceases to be jaggery and is just a piece of clod. Likewise for man to be regarded as man, he has to manifest his humanness by practising "Trikarana Shuddhi"—purity in thought, word and deed. Without this purity, man is merely a lump of clay.

Man engages himself in various exercises, pursues all kinds of studies and makes various enquiries. What is the use of all this? He fills his mind with a vast mass of information, but there is no change in his behaviour or living. There is no end to economic changes, political and social reforms. But no mental transformation is taking place. People have been listening to Bhagavan's discourses and reading Swami's books for years. How far have you changed as a consequence? Of what use are studies if they are not put into practice even to a small extent?

## **Portents and warnings**

Today it is the beginning of the New Year "Pramoda". Pramoda means that which is filled with excessive joy. It includes such expressions as Nityananda, Sat-Chit-Ananda, Advaita-ananda and Brahmananda—the supreme forms of bliss. The name of the year should fill us with infinite joy. But when you consider the conjunction of planets at the beginning of the year, it forebodes a period of conflicts. There are likely to be many conflicts with no apparent reason. Even good men are likely to fall out. Apart from conflicts, there are likely to be dangers from fire disasters. Along with these evil portents, there are likely to be joyous events also. This year is a mixture of good and bad events. Life is like that.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! This is a year in which everyone will have to be on his guard. One should keep a watch on every word he uses. Even a small slip of the tongue may have serious consequences. Every action has to be done after due deliberation. Differences are likely to arise among kith and kin and members of the family circle. Conflicts may arise all over. In such a dire situation, contemplation of God is like a shower of grace. Placing your firm faith in God, if you carry on your duties, none of your actions will have untoward results. Remember the name of God at all times. In the Kali age, God's name is the only refuge. Without firm faith in the Lord's name, all other studies and worship are of no avail. Yearn for the love of God. From the beginning of this year, with its dire portents, engage yourself in good thoughts and good deeds and overcome the forces of evil by full faith in God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi.*"

**THE GRACE OF BHAGAVAN:**

## **Experiencing His Omnipresence**

Being in the presence of Bhagavan Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam in January, 1990, ten years after my last visit, I am filled with immense gratitude for the mysterious manner in which He came to my help in the most memorable and trying adventure of my life. Though it happened a decade ago I am impelled to relate the story to testify to the Omnipresence of Bhagavan and the agencies through which He comes to the rescue of devotees.

The current of events that led to and surrounded the ordeal and the adventure related here are too lengthy for this journal. The purpose of this brief description is to show how Swami's omnipresence guides us, using all aspects of Nature even in the most remote places.

I was part of a gold-mining expedition that was along the Inambari River in the dense jungles of Peru, South America. A group of eleven men, ranging from 20 to 80 years of age, had been taken by helicopter along with river dredging equipment and left in the jungle for the purpose of gold exploration. We were to radio for the helicopter when we wished to be retrieved.

From the first day the expedition met with disaster in the form of floods that carried off the most essential equipment. After more than two months of struggle with makeshift equipment, another flood surprised us by night carrying away the only boat and radio. Now the only way out was a sixty-mile walk over the Andes Mountains to the small town of Coasa. From there we could ride supply trucks one day to Ayaviri where a train could take us to Cusco and then a plane could be got to fly to Lima, the Capital of Peru.

Only one of the men in our group had ever walked this trail and that was many years ago, with a native guide. He said it was too difficult for us and he could never remember the winding way through the mountain passes to the other side. We were at an elevation of 2000 feet and would have to climb over 15,000 feet passes to reach Coasa. Several of the members of the group (including myself) had been to see Sai Baba. We knew and loved Him as God and friend. One of the men was an Indian businessman from New Delhi. He had seen Swami and spoken to Him briefly about the trip before leaving for Peru. Swami had asked him why he wanted gold!

### **Prayers to Baba**

The man from Lima, the man from New Delhi and myself prayed for Swami's guidance. Then it was decided that the man from Lima and I would walk out, get to Lima, sell a boat and motor which had been left behind and arrange a rescue for the others, including the Indian businessman.

The first day of the walk brought me to my knees in exhaustion on the first hill up from the river. Up, up, up; I removed an expensive tent from my pack and gave it to the jungle knowing that my load was too much. We could carry only a little food and water and the latter soon ran out. For many hours we walked up steep slopes, sweating, legs throbbing, lungs burning and no water to drink. Such thirst I had not known in my entire life. At times we would collapse and help each other back to our feet. I prayed for something to drink but there were no sources of

water to be seen. It was foggy and some moisture had collected on the leaves of bushes. I tried sucking some of it from the leaves but I could taste no wetness. I found a small footprint in the path which had saved a small amount of muddy water from a previous rain and I drank it. By now I was walking behind my companion and out of his view on the twisting path. Overcome by fatigue and thirst I fell to the ground and told Swami: "You must make my feet move, I cannot walk another step." Then, as loud as I could, I yelled to the clouds, "God, have you forgotten me out here?" Then I passed out for sometime with the wish I could leave my body. When I finally opened my eyes I was looking directly at some moss growing on a rock. I heard a voice within me urge me to eat the moss. As I chewed the bitter tasting 'Prasad' I was aware of moisture in it that made my body quiver as I swallowed it. Soon He had my feet moving again.

As night approached it grew cold. There was no wood to burn, nowhere to sleep, no way to prepare food to eat and still no water. Once again I yelled: "Swami, we need water to drink, wood to burn, food and a place to sleep." After only 300 feet more and for the first time on the journey, we came to a small grass lean-to on the steep slope of the ridge we were climbing. A deep hole had been dug down into the earth and orange coloured water came to the surface. There was a small stack of wood for burning and even a few stalks of corn were growing there. *We thanked Swami.*

### **A deer shows the way**

The next day the trail became very difficult to follow on the rocky surface. Lost among the peaks I prayed to Swami to help us. Just then I saw a swift deer with a large white tail racing across a distant ridge top. Following the deer we found the trail. Later we again prayed for direction and a lone hawk swooped down from a peak, hovered over us and led us to the trail on the other side of the nearby peak. Late that evening we had lost our way again. As dusk began to settle around us we heard a distant noise and could barely see a person on horseback going away from us. My companion ran off into the dim-lit canyon paths in the hope of catching the horseback silhouette and asking for the direction to Coasa. Soon darkness descended heavy on the rugged and dangerous canyons and there was no sign of his return. I went searching with a flashlight fearing he had fallen and been hurt or killed. But soon dense fog made it difficult to see even three feet ahead and I barely found my way back to our packs. He was nowhere for me to see.

### **Bhajans in the jungle**

With candle lit I sang some bhajans and prayed for his safety. Again that gentle voice within soothed my burning mind. "He is fine," it said, "he is having potatoes." Early the next morning my companion returned with a young boy who would lead us to Coasa. He said it had become too dark to return the previous night, so he slept at the boy's hut. He also told me that the boy's mother had made him potatoes for dinner.

### **River of gold in the heart**

The rest of the journey was not difficult; even the sale of the boat was quick. It took three weeks in all before the others were safe in Lima.

Swami had taken me beyond limitations that I had placed on myself. He had given me perseverance I had not known in myself. He was there at every turn showing me that faith is comfort, and patience is strength.

I discovered a vast wealth of gold that year. But this gold was not in the Inambari but in the River of my Heart!

—*Seral Rehm, (U.S.A.)*

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

## **Human Values in Business Management**

The many ways in which the basic human values—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Ahimsa—can be practised in the day-to-day conduct of business was explained by Bhagavan Baba, in His valedictory address to a seminar for students of the Faculty of Business Management, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, held at Madras in February.

The seminar, which synchronised with Bhagavan's stay in Madras, had been organised, with the blessings of Bhagavan, to give the MBA students (54 in all) an insight into the actual working of some of the leading enterprises in Madras city and an opportunity to listen to the exposition of the principles and methods of efficient management by experienced leaders from the business world.

The five-day seminar (from February 6 to 10) was divided into two programmes -visits to industrial establishments in the morning and lectures and discussions in the afternoon. Among the establishments visited by the students were Audco India, L & T (EFC), Ashok Leyland, India Pistons, T A F E and the Madras Port Trust. The lecturers included top management executives, chartered accountants and business consultants. Arrangements had been made for accommodating the students and holding the seminar in the guesthouse of a business firm.

On the concluding day, two of the students spoke on how they had benefited from the seminar through practical knowledge of the functioning of big enterprises and exposure to the experiences of leading industrial managers.

Mr. V. Srinivasan expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for giving them such an opportunity to serve Bhagavan and looked forward to organising more such seminars in the future.

Bhagavan Baba, complying with an insistent appeal for a valedictory discourse, referred to different aspects of management such as marketing, finance, industrial relations, etc., and observed that the most important aspect was "man-management". In this connection, Swami pointed out that each country had its own historical and cultural background and Indian

managers should not mechanically copy practices imported from abroad but should keep in mind the Indian milieu and our national ethos.

Emphasising the specific need for MBA students of the Sathya Sai Institute to infuse management practices in India with the cardinal values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa, Bhagavan illustrated how each of these values should be adhered to in the conduct of business and industry.

### **Interrelated values**

Bhagavan explained that all the values were interrelated. Citing the example of a burning electric lamp, Bhagavan compared it to love (Prema). For the lamp of love to burn, there should be a bulb. That bulb is *Santhi*. The bulb had to be connected to an electric wire. That wire is *Dharma*. And then the current has to flow in the wire. The current is *Sathya*. With the current of *Sathya* (Truth) flowing in the wire of *Dharma* (Righteous conduct), connected to the bulb of *Santhi* (Peace), the lamp of *Prema* (love) burns and sheds its light. Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema constitute a single whole and not separate values. All the four values have to be adhered to equally.

With regard to Truth, it is often said that to be truthful in business will result in loss. Bhagavan said that this is not so. Though initially there may be some difficulty, in course of time integrity and honesty will bring their own reward. The MBA students must convince their chiefs in their respective firms how truth in accounts and audit helps to raise the image of the firm. They should be content with reasonable profit margins. Even if this policy does not pay in the beginning, in the long run it will be most rewarding. This is the way to inspire confidence. Running a business honestly must be regarded as a form of social service and spiritual sadhana.

In the practice of Dharma, Bhagavan said that marketing practices should be fair to the consumers and there should be justice in the dealings with the workers.

In the observance of Peace, the MBA students should realise that they should not get ruffled by any kind of difficult situation. They have to maintain their calmness and try to pour oil on troubled waters. They should use the weapon of love in such situations.

### **Fraternal relations**

"Prema" must express itself in the business world by the executives developing the feeling that all engaged in the business—managers, workers and others—are members of one family. They must develop fraternal feelings towards all. With mutual love and regard, industrial harmony can be achieved.

As regards "Ahimsa", in the context of industrial management, it has a wider social meaning than merely avoiding causing harm to others. The avoidance of pollution of the atmosphere or of natural resources like rivers is one of the ways in which an enterprise practises "Ahimsa".

In these different ways, a great deal of good can be done to our people and nation by business managers who adhere to basic human values and who adopt a spiritual approach to the tasks of the business world.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the exhortation to the students to develop firm faith in God and carry out their duties in the businesses in which they may be employed with a sense of dedication to the business and a spirit of service to the community.

## **Unity in Diversity**

While moving forward slowly in the queue for lunch outside the canteen at Brindavan I fell into conversation with a very friendly and peaceful looking foreigner. He spoke excellent English. From his handsome features I guessed that he was an Italian. "No, I am an Iranian," said Dr. Mehdi N Bahadori, PhD. He is an engineer who after spending many years in the U.S.A. is now teaching in Teheran. The previous week I had seen many Iranians at Puttaparthi also and must confess that I was a bit surprised. Talking to Bahadori was perhaps an opportunity Sathya Sai Baba gave me to find out how, from a strong fundamentalist Islamic country, he was at Brindavan. Dr Bahadori was on his second visit the first one was in 1988.

"How did you come in contact with Swami?" I enquired. "Through my Iranian teacher Haji Kamal." And how Haji Kamal of Sheraz came to Swami, shows how He is working for the unity of the mankind. I was spellbound listening to the story.

Haji Kamal is a deeply spiritual person, a scholar and a poet. He had a dream in which he saw a man in a red robe with a halo of black hair, squatting on the ground facing him. He asked Haji Kamal to cane closer till their knees were almost touching and then invited Kamal to visit him. Kamal did not know who the man in the red robe was but guessed that, in all probability, he was an Indian. After a few days he came across a book in which there was a photograph of Swami. And so one thing led to another and he with his wife and a small group of Iranians reached Puttaparthi.

On arrival they were told that Swami had gone away to Mysore and would not be back for 15 days. Kamal had only ten days' time and was indeed in a fix. It so happens that Kamal has the ability to put a suitable person in trance and use her as a medium. He selected an Iranian lady in the group, put her in trance and directed her to convey their problem to the Swami. He said that he had come to Puttaparthi on Swami's invitation only to find that the host was away. The lady soon gave Swami's reply to Kamal "I am coming back at 3 P M. tomorrow and shall give an interview to the Iranian group first of all the next morning." No one would believe Haji Kamal when he told people at Puttaparthi that the Swami was returning the next day.

But to and behold! Swami did return at 3 P.M. the next day and the Iranian group were the first to be given interview the next morning.

Encouraged by Haji Kamal, Dr. Bahadori who is interested in spirituality came to Puttaparthi during Dasara of '88. He was keen to present to Swami a copy of his book "The University of Life" which was published in the U.S.A., in 1987.

Dr. Bahadori sat in the Poornachandra Hall and carried his book and a few flowers in his two hands. When Baba came in front of him he stopped and said "Iran". He then touched the book and even without opening it said "Unity in Diversity". On hearing this Dr. Bahadori burst into tears and Swami stood there for a while patting his head till the tears stopped.

### **The university of life**

Dr. Bahadori gave me his book to read. It indeed contains all the spiritual truths which Baba is teaching to humanity. Dr. Bahadori compares the planet Earth to a university and calls it the "University of Life." Every human being is a student. The purpose of this university education is to "experience oneness of all beings and things as a manifestation of God." The textbooks for learning are "Experiences of Life." The university master (the head) is God. He has an open door policy towards his students. But to guide them he needs "complete surrender and trust in him." We surrender fully only if we perceive that "we are Him." When one reaches that level of God awareness one is ready for graduation which entitles one never to come back to the university again. However if one does not acquire that degree of God awareness one fails to graduate and takes birth again on this planet to have yet another chance to work for graduation. In this university no one can "flunk out". There does not appear to be any place for the University Master (God) to send the naughty students who fail (there is no hell). He keeps sending them back (rebirth) to the university until they can finally graduate—it is a process of evolution. Each birth is like one academic year in an ordinary university. Speed of graduation depends on the efforts of the students. It may take many thousands of academic years (births) to finally graduate.

Dr. Bahadori had read a bit of GITA but his main spiritual inspiration has come from the Iranian spiritual teachers like Rumi, Hafez and Saadi who have written extensively on the experience of "Erfan"—God realisation. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's mission is to make the adherents of all religions realise that the spiritual path in all religions leads to exactly the same destination—Unity and Oneness of the entire universe as a projection of God. That is why his remark to Dr. Bahadori on seeing his book—"Unity in Diversity". Swami is using the spiritual thread to bind the diverse and savagely fighting humanity together. They are already moving towards an era of brotherhood of man. Puttaparthi is becoming the real headquarters of a spiritual United Nations to which Baba's devotees are flocking in ever increasing numbers.

*—Lt. Gen. Dr. M. L. Chibber*



## **The Jubilant Jhoola**

Sai Ram, my friends!  
There is something I shall tell you.  
So listen well, and take heed  
To the account I will relate to you.

My beginning was truly humble,  
Part of a teak tree in a vast wood.  
Never did I know what was to become of me,  
Whether it was forlorn or whether it was good.

I would think every day and night,  
"How resplendent it would be,  
if I could be made into a Jhoola,  
For everyone to see!"

Then suddenly I found myself  
Being shaped, adorned and varnished,  
And at the end of my transformation  
I felt fine, handsome and accomplished.

I knew it was going to happen,  
That I was going to be used as a Jhoola,  
I was so excited, so exultant,  
"Thank you, Baba!"

At last, the Big Day came,  
I was hung with gold chains from four        tall poles.  
The Avatar glided across the floor,  
And stole everyone's heart and soul.

He lay in my lap,  
As peaceful as peace could be.  
Then, I started to rock Him,  
And He played the beat with me.

I couldn't believe my good fortune,  
"Is this really happening?" I wondered,  
But before I could think, Sai Krishna rose,  
Leaving me bewildered.

How short that encounter was,  
It seemed to pass so very quickly.

I cannot wait 'til next year comes,  
So I can cradle the Almighty.

Finally my dream has come true,  
I have fulfilled my only desire.  
The Lord has accepted me as His throne,  
Forever and ever.

—Vernu (13 years)  
(From "Sai Children-1990")

## **Spiritual Basis of Yoga**

It is not generally recognized that Hatha Yoga is only one of eight aspects of yoga as it was put forth by the great sage Patanjali. It is not generally understood that all forms of yoga are spiritual practices and that their purpose is to achieve union with God.

Yoga means union with God. It is essential to understand the significance and application of Hatha Yoga to our own spiritual aspirants within the context of Sai Teachings and the teachings of all religions. It is also very important that we recognize that all people are at different levels of spiritual evolution and are bound by different actions of the past. Therefore, what may be spiritually beneficial for one man could be contraindicated for another man. Nevertheless, in order to derive maximum benefit from Hatha Yoga one must have a genuine spiritual orientation and proper instruction. That is very important! *Spiritual orientation and proper instruction.*

The Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the thesis of all religions, the experience of the saints and wise men throughout the ages all provide us with the same spiritual orientation. This eternal Truth is God is One. The purpose of human life is to achieve union with the Lord God. We are the children of God and therefore members of one family. We must seek the Divinity within ourselves, and recognize the Divinity within our brothers and sisters.

### **Conscience as guru**

Every man and every woman is capable of achieving union with God. Intelligence, education, wealth, and social status are not prerequisites. If one looks deeply within oneself with faith in God and an intense yearning to know Him, one can find enlightenment. This enlightenment, this wisdom, comes from our spiritual core, our soul, the Atma, the manifestation of God in man. Our conscience is a reflection of the Divinity within us. If we have faith and self-confidence, we will be able to hear and to follow our conscience. In order to understand the spiritual meaning of self-confidence, it is helpful to consider the distinction between pride and honour. Pride is a form of egoism in which one seeks to establish and maintain prestige for one's

identity. Honour is the courage and determination to live by the dictates of our conscience. The self-confidence is synonymous with this definition of honour.

Everyone has his own indwelling spiritual preceptor, His own Guru. Our conscience is our Guru. We must learn to control our minds and bodies in order to hear and obey our conscience. Our conscience is the inner voice of God that resides in the spiritual heart of every man and woman. God is always ready to speak to us. Unfortunately, we are not always ready to hear Him.

At the present time, mankind has directed its attention outward toward the material world, instead of inward toward God. As a result of this focus on the outer material world to the neglect and even denial of the inner Divine Spirit, most people base their lives on the superficial purposes *in life*, but few are aware of the Divine *Purpose of Life*. Many of us spend most or all of our time engrossed in superficial pursuits. We strive to find and maintain pleasure and to avoid pain. We strive to achieve wealth and prestige, and to avoid poverty and ignominy. We waste our lives living like animals, loading and unloading, or like machines, acting and reacting.

The world is a kaleidoscope of changing events, unpredictable and capricious. The institutions of our societies change as a function of political and economic pressures. We can affect the outer world, but we cannot control it. The people with whom we interact have their own thoughts, feelings, and desires. We can affect these people but we cannot control them. Even our own minds and bodies give us unwanted thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

This leads us to a very important lesson in life that many of us never learn, and even those of us who learn are often unable to apply. The lesson is very simple: the outer world, the people who play a part in our lives, and even our minds and senses cannot bring us lasting peace, joy, and fulfillment. Only the Grace of God can confer lasting peace, joy, and fulfillment. Life is a brief time span of consciousness given to us by God. If we spend our time being enticed by the glitter of the outer world and fail to recognize the Glory of God within ourselves, then we have squandered a priceless treasure.

We can achieve union with God. We can transcend the impact of the world and the distractions of our minds and bodies through spiritual practices. All religions teach similar methods for accomplishing this:

#### Prayer and meditation

Devotional exercises and rituals such as repetition of the Names of the Lord and singing devotional songs.

Studying the writings of Bhagavan Baba, the scriptures, and the lives of the saints and wise men, applying what we learn to our own lives.

Rendering service to our fellow men in need without desire for recognition or reward.

The Sri Sathya Sai Organizations include all of these practices and we regard all of the world's religions as different perspectives on the one and only God. When we participate in these practices, we progress spiritually. We increase our access to the infinite intelligence and benevolence that lies dormant within us all. This is our spiritual orientation as Sai Devotees.

—*Dr. Michael Goldstein*  
*From a talk given on 4-2-1990 at a Sai Centre in California*

## **Serve and Grow Young**

It is no fun growing old in a society obsessed with youth. So I have decided to follow Baba's example and not pay any attention to my age. After all, only my temporary body is growing old; the real Me is as young as ever.

A friend, seeing a picture of Baba for the first time, remarked that He certainly didn't look His age. I agreed, stating that He was beyond time as we reckon it and that any of us who follow His example could probably weather the years equally well. It all depends on discriminating between useful activity and mere restlessness, and emphasizing the proper aspect of our being.

In one of His many discourses on Santhi Baba says, quite logically, that unchanging peace cannot be found in an ever-changing world. His advice is to "engage in never changing tasks and enjoy the Bliss of the Atma. This must be the chief effort of the Jivi, its perpetual aim, *the greatest adventure in this world*. All other tasks are humdrum and silly; they glitter for a moment and vanish."

### **Waste of time and energy**

There is no doubt that, especially in the highly developed West, we waste a great deal of time, energy and resources on fashion, fads and foolishness that contribute very little, if anything, to what should be our goal in life. From hula-hoops to encounter groups, we get caught up in an endless succession of activities and expenditures as we seek to fill our leisure hours. "Man is a bundle of impulses and intentions," says Baba. "The impulses are the fuel, the intentions are the fire. The fire can be put out only by laying aside the fuel of impulses. The dying down of the fire is the attainment of peace."

Laying aside our impulses does not imply stagnation resulting from inactivity. Instead, we are admonished to "arise and work [for] Work is the mission of man." The key is to establish a worthwhile goal and the proper environment for achieving it. In Baba's words, "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."

### **Give up and serve**

My older friends who appear most youthful and contented with their "golden years" are also the busiest seniors. Further, they are busy much of the time as community volunteers performing service to others. For myself, heeding Baba's advice to "Give up everything that is outside the Service of the Lord" has resulted in what I can only describe as a heady, joyous feeling that is growing in intensity as I find new outlets for seva.

Forgive me if I cite my own experience, but it is the example I know best. I gave up my TV several years ago. I found myself tending to vegetate in front of the screen despite my continued growling about the shallow subject matter it offered. The time thus freed is now spent at my computer writing letters and essays detailing my discoveries about Baba. The time I formerly spent reading newspapers and novels, I now spend reading Baba's words and those of His devotees. This, in turn, inspires further writings on my part.

### **Toys for children**

My retirement left a large block of time available that is now spent in my woodworking shop making toys for donation to various childcare agencies. Casual mention of this activity while shopping for tools and materials has resulted in offers of discounts, wholesale prices and outright gifts from merchants anxious to be a part of my project. The key to all these donations is that the toys are given free to needy children.

During the growing season I make a pest of myself offering friends organically grown vegetables from my garden. As I discard non-productive activities and absorb myself more and more in service to others I experience a growing awareness of an entity within my body that is separate from it. I can best describe it as a "viewpoint". It is a separate intelligence which monitors my perceptions and responses. It daily grows stronger and more assertive. I begin to recognize it and remember its occasional appearance in younger days. Most interesting of all is the feeling of agelessness exhibited by this viewpoint, and of a sense of well-being and satisfaction that has begun to pervade my consciousness. My body has reached senior citizen status and has its fair share of minor tics and major infirmities. I have been my own companion for most of the past 10 years, but I am rich in friends. And, true to His promise, Baba is ever with me patiently guiding, alternately chastising and rewarding my efforts to achieve human status. He assures us this is preliminary to reassuming our divine status.

### **Ever-youthful self**

What intrigues me most about this whole process is how the continued strengthening of my sense of Self increases my awareness that this Soul/Viewpoint/Atma is as young today as it was when I first experienced it. I am beginning to see with ageless eyes, hear with ageless ears the similarly ageless truths of shared divinity. I am convinced by the joy I feel now in my daily routine that the more I concentrate on serving the Lord, the more ageless aspect of me becomes physically and psychically apparent. No wonder Baba looks so young for His years! His is the ultimate example of existing only to serve others.

Dedication to never-changing tasks results in never-changing visage and avoidance of the negative aspects of growing old. With Baba as my role model and my new prime time schedule firmed up, I consider my age "39 and holding" despite the fact that I was born just a few weeks after Him.

—Jay Jarrett, California

## **Love: Illusion and Reality**

What is the most common desire of man? Is it to have great amounts of wealth? Is it to have unflinching physical health? Is it to achieve something great within the world? Is it the acquirement of fame? Is it to attain great mastery in worldly knowledge? No, it is none of these things. Dive deep, to the very essence of one's soul. What's sure to be there is a longing for the experience of Love.

Swami has said that above all other types of love, we should have the Love for God as our first priority. We understand how to love our children, our spouse, our friends or our parents. As a matter of fact, we seem to have a specific love for all of them. Yet, do we know how to Love God?

There is a great tendency to think of Love as an "attainable object". It is something we "work" at. And, we even think of it as something which we produce or generate: "I love my wife." "I love my children." In our sense of "accomplishment" concerning love, we feel safe. In our minds, we are surrounded by people we are loving, who are giving love to us in return.

But what happens when our children leave home? What happens if our spouse dies? What happens if our friends are no longer friendly? Our whole sense of security surrounding love is shattered. We become angry. We are struck with grief. And we swear not to "love" so much, because of the harsh penalties which "love" appears to carry. At best, we decide to accept this as the "pain of love", as a necessary aspect of love which must be experienced. At worst, we shut down and feel betrayed. Yet, is this love? No. It is only an illusion of love. And it is this that we must transcend, if we are to know the Love of God.

### **The Love of God**

This Love of God, the absolute greatest experience of a human being, the most incredible thing in existence, is beyond any concept we hold about love. For this Love simply exists. We can't produce it, we can't define it. We can simply become aware of it. It is beyond our making, but not beyond our experience. And when we experience it, there is a familiarity which is deeper than that of our own name. And we know that we are home. This love we can't speak of. It is God's and it belongs to Him.

In order to know this love, we must come empty handed. We must forget everything we ever thought love to be. With absolute honest, total willingness to learn, we must ask God to teach us about His Love. Such is the Grace of Swami, without Whom, such a learning accomplishment would be very difficult, if not impossible. For, the only One Who knows what Love really is, has come to remind us.

### **Illusory Love**

Yet, the illusion of love stands in our way of knowing love's reality. And as long as we find ourselves in "reasons or seasons" for love, we will miss the experience of God Love. The ego would have us believe that the illusion of love is love, simply because God's love denies its very existence.

There are many subtleties to the illusion of love which can go unrecognized. Many of us have had the experience of feeling "closer" to Swami while we're away from Him than when we're actually next to Him. When we sit at our Puja table looking at Swami's picture, we feel "love". However, when we sit next to Swami at Darshan looking at Swami, we sometimes feel disappointed, frustrated, rejected, and a variety of other unexpected things. We might "love" Swami if He looks at us or takes our letter, but perhaps we won't feel the same way if He doesn't.

Isn't this the way we love just about everyone in the world? Isn't this the illusion of love: based on options, maintained by conditions, and always containing an escape clause in case we need to change our mind?

A picture on a Puja table is safe. It can't disappoint us. It will be what we desire it to be. It's easy to "love". Likewise, it's very easy to "love" and worship any God or Guru who has already lived, or who is yet to come. They too are non-threatening. But a living God, right in front of our eyes, can we Love Him?

### **Love here and now**

Perhaps this is the greatest miracle of Swami. This form of God has come to teach us that there is no place we can experience that Love of God, except HERE AND NOW. At each darshan when Swami is in front of us, we must drop every past experience with Him from our mind, and Love Him Now, just because-this is the only way. If we are loving Swami for the interview He gave us yesterday, then it is an illusion of love, for we can decide not to love Him for the interview He may not give us tomorrow. Can love really be given based on the actions of a body judged by the mind? And if it can, what kind of love is it anyway?

"Love My uncertainty," Swami says. Of course! How else could we love Him? How else could He teach us to love Him? Each moment is new, free from the past, and free from reasons to love, and reasons not to love. And we learn to Love that Love is an is-ness, and that we can but be aware of it or not.

This Love of God is the only real love. All other love, directed towards bodies or objects, is no more than fancied attachment. Yet, experiencing the Love of God takes immense courage,

faith, trust and total surrender. We must let go of every concept we hold dear about love. We must let go of every idea we have about love. We must forgive and forget the past. And finally, we must come open minded and open hearted, allowing Love to take us into Itself, consuming us and reminding us Who we really are.

### **Love as oneness**

Why do we so often have such a resistance to the Love of God? Surely, all of our problems stem from a resistance to this Love. Yet, although God's Love seeks no return, there is one prerequisite to Its experience: We must be willing to experience our reality as something other than the body. We must be willing to transcend duality, where there is a "loved" and a "lover", and become immersed in Love as an Oneness. There is no lover, there is no beloved, there are no differences nor separations. There is Love and only Love. Love belongs to Itself, and we are That.

What do we have to do to experience this kind of love? Absolutely NOTHING. This Love is already existent HERE AND NOW. It is what we must UNDO which should be focused upon, and that is, all of our concepts and judgements of what love is. It is these which produce an illusion of love, literally masking Love's reality and obscuring Its Presence from our awareness. When we surrender these illusions of love, the veil falls away and the Love of God automatically returns into our awareness reminding us of what we've long forgotten; reminding us of our Self.

Do we have to give up loving others in order to experience the Love of God? Of course not. However, we must give up loving others in the way we desire to love them, and desire to have them love us. We must love them as God would have us love them. Opening ourselves up, we ask Swami to teach us how to love, or better yet, experience Love with this person.

"Embodiments of Divine Love," Swami so frequently declares. This is how Swami sees us, but usually we see ourselves and each other as *embodiments* only. We must transcend our perceptions of each other as bodies, and experience the Divine Love in all. "Seeing God in everything is the most excellent of all Devotion," declares Lord Krishna in the *Uddhava Gita*

It takes faith, trust, forgiveness, and a very open mind to learn how to experience others with the Love of God. But most of all, it calls for willingness: the most crucial key to any spiritual effort. If we are attached to a specific person giving us a specific type of love, it will be impossible to see that person as God, based upon our own desires for the one to be something else. We can't fool ourselves on this point. We can have the illusion of love, which consists of specific people, situations and actions based upon mental concepts and expectations, or we can have the Love of God, which simply IS. There is no compromise. It's one or the other, and if we choose the Love of God, we choose it with every single person in our lives. Oneness has no exceptions.

Does our seeming resistance to the Love of God stem from fear of the unknown or is it rather the fear of the known? For in the innermost depth of our being, don't we know that the



experience of this Love would instantly deny the reality of our egos. It would wake us up, unto our Self, and make us remember Who we really are.

—*Michael J. Oliver*

## **Human Values and Service**

Bhagavan Baba's clarion call to humanity is to render selfless service, become educated in human values and pursue the path of spirituality. Although He has set up three wings of Sai experiences, I sense them as an integrated "holiness". For each of us on our journey to God has to become one with human values and in so doing begin to serve ourselves and others.

Sometime ago I read an article on Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It has lingered on my mind, particularly as our centre visits a nursing home. Is this not Swami talking? She says, "Poor people don't need money or anything. They need LOVE. Make them feel wanted. Give them a smile. Take them a flower. Get involved. Help people make the connection." In my school district, establishing an Intergenerational Programme has brought a connection between the elder and the primary age children. As I work with them, I see the warm flow of love permeating each one, dispelling stereotypes and seeing the unity that exists. Here we have human values, service, spirituality—all in one.

Those of us who have been graced with the teaching profession have the opportunity to awaken human values in our students. In the primary grades we can expose them to EHV lessons, but don't let it rest there. Establish a classroom library of values books. There are so many in good literature, books that present role models and stories that give examples to follow. Incorporate values into all subjects areas, not in a contrived way but flowing naturally. Let me share two examples that I've used this year. In an effort to further expand EHV in my district I established an additional follow-up called VALL+U=Values *and Learning Leads to Understanding*. After a teacher has conducted an EHV lesson, this project gives time for the children to listen to a tape of the lesson's story as they read the words to themselves. This reinforces the values and aids in their reading ability. Combining Swami's message of service, we have the older children produce the audiotapes for the younger ones. They have been so happy doing this. They are becoming collaborative learners and serving the school community at the same time.

### **Swami as the example**

Another project I worked on during the year was to incorporate EHV with combating the problem of substance abuse. We know that succumbing to drugs is due to a basic lack of human values and so in building self-esteem and self-confidence through EHV lessons, we are also creating a greater awareness of the perils of substance abuse. Giving children an opportunity to discuss values and the problems they confront coincides with recent research that states "students

do not have enough opportunities to speak in the classroom." I might add that very often the home climate does not provide this skill either. Baba once again portrays the guru's responsibility, as evidenced by the discourses now being given by the Sai students. If I were ever to become a "master" teacher, it would be by using Swami as the example.

There are, as I mentioned, many innovative methods to combine EHV with service in the schools. Let the teachers use their own ingenuity. In doing so, perhaps our future generation will not be the sons and daughters whom Mother Teresa spoke of on visiting a home where the old parents had just been institutionalised and forgotten about. "... And I went there, and I saw in that home they had everything, beautiful things, but everybody was looking towards the door. And I did not see a single one with a smile on their face..."

May Swami bless us and the future generation. May we feel love and give love so that young and old do not look toward an empty door. May we all learn to smile and be happy!

*—Bea Flaig, New York*

## **Grace, Sadhana and Realisation**

Grace is the most misunderstood concept in spirituality. Commonly, it is taken to refer to material welfare expected to result from religious pursuits aimed at pleasing a deity, demi-god or gods. Thus, a businesslike relationship is wrongly considered to exist between so-called religious practices and the grace of the deity to whom such practices are directed.

Actually, grace has a reference to Sadhana (Spiritual Practice) which has three stages. In the first stage, characterised by dualism, grace is said to be the result of effort. As Karma (action) is the means of Sadhana in this stage, effort becomes a necessary condition for obtaining the grace of the Lord. Viewed in this light grace is said to be proportionate to the effort put in. Effort is taken to mean spiritual practices undertaken to please the Lord to obtain gifts. Hence, in the first stage, gifts motivate the Sadhaka to move towards Divinity. Obviously, it means that at this stage the Sadhaka is not aware that God is greater than His gifts. Gifts partake of the nature of creation and are in the realm of Maya and therefore keep the Sadhaka bound to Avidya.

But, gradually, when it is known that wealth comes and goes and is, therefore, the cause of not only joy but also sorrow, a keen desire is born in the Sadhaka to cross the realm of duality, of joy and sorrow, birth and death, etc. This awakens discrimination which enables the Sadhaka to take the first step towards the Divine. Gifts thus lead to Grace. There should be no two opinions that the grace must take a person on whom it is conferred away from the world of shadows to Reality. Strangely, in the world of duality at the material level, this function is performed by first giving and then taking away the gifts. This function is performed by the Divine Mother by involving the Sadhaka, who prays to Her for Grace, in a strange play in which whatever gifts are

asked are given and the Sadhaka feels, because of a strange delusion, that life in the world henceforth would become a constant source of enjoyment and nothing more need be done.

### **The law of karma**

But soon, when the worldly things start leaving him, he is made to realise by the Mother the evanescent nature of the world and its allurements and that how much and how long he can own and enjoy the things of the world, foolishly thought to confer joy, depend upon his Prarabdha (destiny) i.e., on what he has sown. Thus he comes to know that the law of Action-Reaction (Karma) reigns supreme in the world. Since God Himself is the author of this law, He does not interfere with the working of the law at all but appears to the Sadhaka to do so because of his ignorance of the highly complicated working of the Law. But gradually, because of the Mother's Grace, he realises that God will cease to be impartial if He were to interfere in the working of the Law of Karma. This is the significance of the oft-quoted saying of Baba: "Swami is not a Police Commissioner who asks others to walk on the left side of the road but himself walks in the middle." Baba says, "Miracles and gifts are merely baits to catch fish." (half-baked Sadhakas). In the words of Baba, "You come to get from Me tinsels and trash, the petty little cures and promotions, worldly joy and comforts. Very few of you desire to get from Me the thing I have come to give you, namely, Liberation."

### **Awakening of understanding**

Thus assigning any meaning other than 'awakening of understanding' to Grace is not correct. In the second stage of Sadhana, where 'knowledge' is the means (of realisation), 'Pain' is the sign of Grace. With knowledge comes power, strength, a spirit of renunciation and a keen desire to be near the Lord. As only a pure heart can realise Divinity, the dross around the heart has to be cleansed by pain which acts like burning fire. On the special request of the Sadhaka the pain which he was to experience over a number of years is concentrated and the Sadhaka is allowed to pay off his 'Karmic debt' in a very short period so as to enable him to resort to spiritual realisation without any hindrance from the realm of Karma in operation. That is why saints have sung the glories of pain. Kabir said, "Let the face of pleasure be struck by a stone, as it has made one forget the Lord and let pain be praised as it has enabled me to see Gopal, the Lord." Christ meant the same thing when he said, "As it is not possible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, so is it for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Rich man here means a man who is still hankering after pleasures of the world. But when pain is conferred as Grace, the power to bear it is also conferred along with it. The power is the understanding that the subtle is the basis of the gross and that the powers (Siddhis) that pertain to the subtle realm are far more superior and wisdom, therefore, lies in giving up the gross for the subtle.

It is also understood that travellers in the subtle world have to 'travel light' and carrying a bundle load of desires is an unnecessary burden. But after a time, when knowledge blossoms into wisdom even powers of the subtle world are considered to be obstacles which they really are. With this arises in the heart of the Sadhaka a 'Strange Pain' which is of the nature of 'a longing to meet the Beloved'. The Sadhaka sees his Beloved through a veil (Aavarana) a very thick veil indeed. His desire to see the Beloved 'face to face' becomes intense and he prays in great despair and prays for Grace. As Mira sings, "Love has made Me mad, nobody can understand my pain."

This is true indeed as no external help is of any avail. A total surrender of everything (last trace of ego) is called for. And none can make this last sacrifice at the altar of Love unless there is Grace. Mira said, "Love's street is too narrow, only one can pass." `Grace' actually is required at this stage only as the "last thin veil can be lifted by the Divine Mother only. No amount of effort or method can earn Grace." It is just given at a certain stage of indescribable beauty in the Play of Divine Love and after this it becomes difficult to know who is the Lover and who the Beloved.

—J. N. Sharma, Ropar

## Let God Do It

Many times in life when I've been ravaged by doubts and disappointments I've heard Baba's loving whisper: "Place your life in My hands and I shall lead you to your goal. I shall protect you as the eyelids protect the eyes." This loving assurance of the Lord has always boosted my morale and raised my drooping spirits.

In spite of this loving promise I invariably end up feeling lost and insecure at some point of time, thus caught in a vicious circle. I silently pleaded to Baba to free me from the vicious circle. With this thought weighing heavily on my mind I opened a book to be confronted by these words of Baba: "How much have you surrendered to Me?" The question posed by Baba made me realise with a jolt that my surrender was superficial and not total.

A person who has surrendered totally should be prepared to accept everything as the ultimate will of the Supreme. He should be unaffected by the ups and downs of life. There should be no desires or aspirations except the longing to execute every command of His promptly. Believing that we have surrendered to Him we still cling tightly to our whims and fancies. Our ego raises its ugly head in the wild pursuit of tinsel and trash. Doubts and worries pester us in the wake of unfulfilled desires. This gives rise to a feeling of insecurity. We indulge in self-pity that the Lord has forsaken us, when in fact we have ourselves to blame.

The most merciful Sai thus showed me a way out of the vicious circle in which I had entrapped myself. He seemed to say: "Let God do it," as the lines of this poem reverberated warmly in my heart

*"As children bring their broken toys,  
With tears for us to mend.  
I brought my broken dreams to God,  
Because He is my friend.  
But then,  
Instead of leaving Him,*

*In Peace to work alone,  
I hung around and tried to help,  
With ways that were my own.  
At last I snatched them back and cried,  
"How can you be so slow?"  
"My child," He said, "What could I do?  
You never did let go I"  
"Let Go  
Let God."*

**—Miss Rama Sampath, Bal Vikas Guru, Bombay**

After flying thousands of kilometers to Prasanthi Nilayam, you try to learn something from everything you see there, especially in the courtyard of the temple. One morning during bhajan a crow continued to crouch on the concrete in front of us, long after the rest of his flock had come and gone. He sat and sat, while we sang and sang. You could tell he wanted to take off, but could not pick up the necessary wing-power.

After sometime he gave a loud "Caw!" which set the other crows in motion. They deserted their posts on temple roof, palms and neem tree, and came whirling down and away again, as if to scoop up their mate. It looked very much as if he had been given the classic crow summons, "Come, fly!"

When he did not take to the air himself, some of the flock swooped down again and circled in a puzzled way. Then, one by one, they returned to their perches high above the courtyard, where they hopped uneasily to and fro, apparently unsure what was expected of them. Meanwhile, as if glued to the concrete, the old crow roosted helplessly, his beak opening and closing without a sound.

Many suspenseful moments later, he called again, very feebly. This time, only one crow responded, and to some purpose. He took up a challenging stance facing the groundling and set about dealing with the problem. His method was drastic and, eventually, effective.

Gentleness would not have worked. The newcomer began a mock-attack, peeking at the old one, who tried to defend himself. It looked like a cruel kind of rescue, but no one watching could doubt that a rescue it was.

The "rescuer" had to intensify his offensive before the grounded crow was driven to take wing. Hurling himself desperately aloft, he dived under the nearest sunshade canopy, passing over the heads of the ladies as he tried to clear the outside wall, and failed. Instead, he blundered heavily into the top of the wall and flopped back into someone's lap. After a short but furious flurry of feather and saris, he found himself back in the courtyard, where his rescuer was still waiting and watching.

Once again the mock-attack was renewed, with such vigour that the old crow rose into the air almost immediately, and soared elegantly under the roof and over the wall.

Mission accomplished, the rescuer flew away in turn, leaving us humans to interpret at our leisure what had happened. This example of crow-seva—in which some of us had briefly taken an active part—showed one of those predicaments where waiting passively for a "miracle" is not enough. So you cry for help. Having done so, you may have to wait until the right kind of helper appears, one who understands what you need, perhaps better than you do yourself. A true helper will stay and persist until a solution is found; both of you have a part to play in it.

good is not always the pleasant. We know He is happiest when we are full of bliss, but also that sometimes life has to peck at us with apparent cruelty before we are impelled to summon up strength that we did not know we had in us. Then we soar over what seemed like insurmountable obstacles. Out of helplessness comes new power, and out of pain new freedom

—*H. H.*

## **The Transformation**

It was four years ago that I first heard of Sai Baba when I came across a book, "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles" by Howard Murphet. This book made an immediate and deep impression on me—that on the earth today is a Christ-like being who can transcend the laws of time and space, cure the sick, materialise objects out of thin air and, above all, that He radiates Divine Love which touches the very core of our being.

My brother gave me a picture of Sai Baba which was cut out from an article he had found in a magazine. I was overjoyed and placed the picture above the fire-place. From the books which I had read I knew that there were Sai Centres in England, but where? I prayed for help. The picture of Sai Baba was noticed by a parent of a pupil who comes to me for piano lessons, and he later gave me a Sai Baba magazine published in the U. K. This made me so happy as my prayers had been answered and I was then able to attend Sai Centres.

Since my first visit to a Sai Centre my life has certainly changed. My old selfish pursuits no longer held any attraction for me I try to think less about satisfying my needs and more of helping others thereby trying to put into practice the teachings of Baba. I particularly like Baba's teachings that work is worship and man's duty is to serve mankind. I find that by each nightfall, my conscience calls me to account for any lapses during the day as if to ensure that with each dawn my resolve to serve and spread warmth and love grows stronger and stronger.

Fear has been a major obstacle in my life. But with Baba's reassurance, that He is with us all the time, guiding us, watching over us the fear is gradually receding away. Recently I was asked to give a talk on my experience with Baba. As I have always had a fear of public speaking my immediate response was "No, thank you." However, I suddenly felt that this was a God-given opportunity to face the situation and overcome this fear. I therefore agreed to speak. I prayed to Baba for help and began to prepare the talk. My writing ability had never been good but I knew that with Baba's help it would be all right. On the day of the talk, I was very nervous. More so, because I had no idea when I would be called on to talk. Eventually when my turn came, to my surprise I did not feel nervous and the talk was well received.

Baba is always with us, so what is there to fear? The fear is only because of the ego which we should continuously try to eliminate.

## The Spiritual Importance of Three

*"In the beginning was the WORD, the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD."*

God is identified with Shabda. He is Nada Brahman. Shabda (sound) as three aspects. These three blend into one whole. These three aspects are Srishti, Stithi, and Laya, that is to say, Creation, Sustenance and Destruction or Dissolution, which are the functions of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva Maheshwara. These three aspects also thus represent the trinity of Godhead—Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara respectively. Furthermore, these three aspects are embedded in the letters (sounds of the letters) of A, U, and M—Akaara, Ukaara, and Makaara. The combination of these three sounds results in Omkara.

What is Omkara? It is the Primordial Sound. Every action is followed by or gives rise to the vibration which produces sound.

The word 'Santhi' is repeated three times at the end of every prayer, ritual prayer or offering. What is the meaning behind this?

The first Santhi means: "May we enjoy peace for the body." It means that the body should not get heated by feelings of jealousy, hatred, attachments and the like. Whatever news you receive about any event, you should receive it with calmness and serenity.

The second Santhi pertains to the mind. You should not get worked up when someone says something about you which is not true. You must simply dismiss it as something that does not concern you. If you get angry or irritated, you are losing your peace of mind. You should say to yourself, "Why should I lose my peace of mind just because someone says something about me which is not true?" You resolve to stick to your truth and be true to your own nature.

The third Santhi refers to peace of the soul. This peace has to be realised through love. This world has to be brought back onto the rails and it is love and peace that can achieve this. Fill your thoughts, actions, emotions with love, truth and peace.

It is said the mind is the mirror of one's inner being. There are three entities: 1. Soul; 2. Intelligence; 3. The mind and the sense organs. For the sense organs, the mind is the master. For the mind, the Intelligence is the master. For the Intelligence, the Atma is the master.

First you must know your own full address:

1) Who are you? The Atman.



3) Where are you going? To the Atman.

- 1) Where are you now? In the unreal, the ever-changing.
- 2) In what form? As Anatma.
- 3) What are you engaged in? In unreal tasks.

Therefore, what should you do to enter the Eternal: to engage in never changing tasks, and to enjoy the bliss of the Atman. This must be the chief effort of life, it's the greatest adventure in this world. All other tasks are humdrum and silly. They glitter for a moment and vanish. You will realise this truth if only you turn your back on them and watch wisely, as said by Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba.

The three supreme S's are: 1) Self-Reverence. 2) Self-Knowledge. 3) Self Control. (These three alone lead man to sovereign power).

The foundation of real peace is, according to the Vedas, the quality of "my three".

“Mythree” means (1) Friendliness, (2) Compassion, and (3) Kindness. It can also be taken to mean my word, thought, and deed shall be in accordance with Thy word, thought, and deed. Or in other words we shall speak, think, and act together without friction or faction, in the atmosphere of love and understanding. That is what is wanted in the world today, "MY THREE".

Baba tells us:

Start the day with LOVE,  
Fill the day with LOVE,  
And end the day with LOVE.

Bhagavan has laid stress on three D's: Discipline, Duty and Devotion. Scientists say that half the world's sickness would not be there if only we were to have close co-ordination of thought, word, and deed. Duty, devotion and discipline may be called `TAPAS ', (austerity) of the body, heart and mind.

Each one can draw up under different heads the three things that need to be done or the three things that should be avoided. For example, under the term "Control", one can include Speech, anger and hatred. Under the term reverence, the following three could be listed mother, father and preceptor.

—“A Devotee”

**Sai Seva in the Antipodes**

many fields in the caring professions with organisations which were at first nervous about a Sai 'belief system' being propagated. They were truly surprised to find that Sai sevaks do not talk about their beliefs but only want to serve.

All Sai centres are actively involved in collecting non-perishable food for distribution through welfare and mission outlets. In 1989 this service has expanded to preparing meals and feeding hundreds in Victoria, on a fortnightly basis. In all state, members are helping with 'Meals on Wheels', taking food to the elderly and sick who live at home.

Visits to nursing homes for the aged are fast becoming a major avenue of service in all states. Members take food and fruit, have picnics and lead informal sing-alongs in which everyone can take part. They also take patients on outings, and write letters and make phone calls for them. For the elderly who live at home, there are so many ways in which service is being done—Spring-cleaning homes, small painting jobs, gardening, and driving them to shops or to senior citizens' meetings.

Sai sevaks are putting a lot of love into their work among the disabled. Counselling, teaching cooking and yoga, communicating with the deaf, taking people on outings, monthly visits to mentally disabled children, visiting an institution for the severely disabled and cheering it up with wall murals and sing-along sessions, plus bringing home-made goodies, and assisting in feeding, showering and cleaning up afterwards. Lots of Love flowing from heart to heart!

Hundreds of hospital patients are being visited throughout Australia. Hospice service with terminally ill people can be heart-wrenching, but the more one does the more one learns about the healing power of being God-centred.

—*From "Sai News, Australia"*

**SAI SEVA:**

### **A Thought for the Children**

*The opportunities for community service are limitless for Sai devotees if only they are on the lookout for new avenues in a world wherein millions are in desperate need of some help or comfort. Here is a report from the journal "Sathya Sal Service Opportunities", published by the Sathya Sai Baba Council of the U. S. A.*

In six New York City hospitals, children play with lovable little red and white bunnies. Although the bunnies look as if they were professionally made, they were not mass-produced in factories. These "special friends" began their lives at a service activity of the Flushing, NY, Sai Center.

members wanted hospitalized children to have something soft and cuddly to play with. "It gives them," he says "something to hold onto, to comfort them through a time of stress when they're in the hospital."

About a year ago, the bunnies were just a glint in the eye of a devotee who found a pattern in a magazine. The following March, Sai volunteers worked on the 60 stuffed animals during two group sessions held at the Center. In an act of love, 15 volunteers joined together to cut, sew, and stuff the toys. Working assembly line fashion, the devotees often sang devotional songs as they used gingham checked fabric and fiberfill stuffing to produce their precious gifts. Later a Center artist, working at home, applied nontoxic paints to give each bunny a nose, a mouth, and eyes.

When the toys were finished, they were put near the altar before being distributed. As one member says, "We felt we left them there and Baba blessed theta, and they were a gift from God."

The project coordinator placed the bunnies in city hospitals because, he says, many poor children go there. He found hospital volunteer directors willing to accept the toys and then mailed them to their new homes.

Thank-you letters sent by hospital administrators indicate that the Sai bunnies were very well received by the institutions. "They are just exactly what we need for the little ones," wrote the Child Life Coordinator at Bellevue Hospital, "nothing to get hurt with, soft, cuddly and non-threatening." And the Community Relations Director of Coney Island Hospital tells about the reaction of the children when the bunnies were given out on the pediatric ward. "You would have enjoyed their faces when they received them," he wrote.

Feeling good about making someone happy wasn't all the devotees gained from the experience. "There's more of a feeling of unity than there was before," says the project coordinator.

## **Ode to Sai**

*Because of your light.  
I now have sight  
to get rid of my hate  
and spite.*

*Because of your grace  
I now run at a pace  
and no matter what happens  
I will always win the race.*

*I've now wisdom found  
that You and I are  
eternally bound.*

*And this ode to You SAI  
from Your blessed child  
is a song from his heart and  
an offering at Your Lotus feet.*

*— Pichai, Pennsylvania.*

### **A Prayer to the Lord**

May I be worthy of this land of mine  
And lay down my life for its prosperity and gain  
May its honour be held so high  
That in eternal grandeur its flag shall fly.

Strengthen me, oh, Lord! in my resolve to lead  
A truthful life in thought, word and deed,  
And a purposeful life of sacrifice and service  
To the poor and needy in their hours of crisis.

May I be content with the things you grant  
And live in peace and happiness without want,  
With humble habits and honest ways  
Intent on your grace to the end of my days.

May I be helpful in rebuilding the Nation,  
Into an upright and hard working Civilisation;  
Wasting no time in idle pleasures or ostentation  
Till every Indian is free from fear of starvation.

May I truly feel my oneness with all human beings  
And never cause harm to their lives by my words or doings  
May I strive to promote the spirit of goodwill and tolerance  
Which is the human way to individual and world peace.

*—Muchimilli Ramakrishna Rao*

## My uncle and Baba

It was the year 1979 in London, when my uncle became ill, and he was taken to the doctor. He was later admitted to the hospital. His condition became very poor. His body-below his waist was numb and my uncle was very much upset. He had always been a great sportsman, playing cricket and rugby. He could not imagine himself lying in the hospital paralysed, without being able to play his favourite sport—cricket.

The consultant and doctors really tried hard to cure him. My uncle was only 19 years old at the time and they all felt so sad to see my uncle suffer at such a young age. After a few weeks, the consultant gave the bad news that he would most definitely have to use a wheelchair for the rest of his life. By now, my grandma had pictures of Baba around the hospital bed and was staying with him everyday, praying and praying to Swami.

My uncle had been using the wheelchair to go to the hospital gymnasium for physiotherapy treatment. But on Friday the 23rd November (Baba's birthday), the wheelchair he was using broke! The doctors said they would get a new one by Monday, and gave him a pair of crutches temporarily. Miraculously he developed some slight movement in his toes. So he did not have to use a wheelchair after that, and started using the crutches.

It gave the doctors new hope. They realized that there might be a very remote chance of his getting cured. Since it was going to take a very long time for further treatment, he decided to leave London on his crutches. Everyone was praying for his recovery.

He went back home and had to take some medicine for one year. Gradually, full movement of his legs came back to him. After one year he went to Puttaparthi, to give his love and thanks to Baba. Then he had an interview with Baba and Swami said: "Do not worry. You will be perfectly all right now." He went back to Sri Lanka and he was soon able to play cricket and rugby again.

—**Murali (12 years)**  
(From "Sai Children 1990", U.K.)

*Some love God as the Mother, some others as the Father, and some love God as 'dearest and closest Friend'. There are others who regard God as the Beloved, the Only desired Goal. They all endeavour to merge their Love with the Ocean of Love that God Is. Wherever Love is evident, take it that it is God's own Love. God is the greatest Lover of mankind. Therefore, when any one decides to serve man whom He loves, God showers Grace in plenty. When the human heart melts at the suffering of others and expands as a result of that sympathy, believe that God is present there. That is the sign of the validity of the path of devotion, the Bhakti Yoga.*

## Mother and the Avatar

*How can the mother of the Avatar get over her maternal attachments and inherited prejudices and adjust herself to the ways and views of the Avatar? This was a serious problem for Bhagavan Baba's mother, Easwaramma. Prof. Kasturi, in relating how this process of transformation became a spiritual sadhana for Easwaramma, writes:*

It took years for Mother to agree, even ostensibly, that 'There is only one caste, the caste of humanity'. The new label 'Harijan' that was pasted over the old names 'Madiga', 'Holeya' and the like failed to remove age-long prejudices from the minds of people. It could not erase the 'tattoo mark of sin!' Swami had told her that Harijan meant 'God's children'. "So, you are also a Harijan", He said, "There is only one caste, God's children, everywhere". But village life still plodded on in the shadow of the pyramid of castes, the lowest engaged in the dirtiest of professions and the highest in the cleanest.

Mother sympathised with the helplessness and haplessness of the 'untouchables' of the village and her face beamed with joy on occasions when Swami deputed her to distribute saris to hundreds of poor women from the villages around. "Never would they have dreamed they would own such costly saris", she would tell her companions, "and they will use these only on festival occasions and the marriages of their children". Giving them gifts in this manner was one thing. But going into their hovels, inviting them into the home, touching them, eating with them, this was quite another proposition. They remained unthinkable liberties for even the most radical among the villagers. She would be ostracised and blamed for circumventing a deep-rooted taboo, and ushering in a disastrous social revolution.

Mother never questioned the pilgrims to Puttaparthi about their caste. To her they were all, all of them 'touchables'. Hari's (God's) genuine jans (children); prying into their caste to calculate the degree of approachability and respectability was sacrilege, she felt. But where she and everybody else knew the caste of a person, how could that fact be by-passed, ignored or circumvented? In the village, she had perforce to trim her sails in accordance with the winds that blew for or against a particular community, caste or group.

Mother found it increasingly irksome to live in her village home. She could not survive in that atmosphere of caste-bred conflict. As the years piled one over the other, she sensed more and more pollution in the village sky. Scandal, slander, sly eavesdropping, trickery and teasing were the hobbies of the depressed and the disillusioned. The Rama Mandir was seldom used for quiet meditation or instruction on the Ramayana. It was the centre most often for gossip and, God forbid, ungodly confabulations. Mother found the atmosphere suffocating.

conscious, meaningful adherence and joyful participation. Sivaratri, which had been an exercise in asceticism became, as a result of Swami's emphasis, a whole day spent in the sublime thought of God. Sankranti was welcomed less demonstratively and with much less expense of time and money but with a greater flow of love and fellow feeling. Every festival was extricated from the cocoon of correctitude and sublimated into an occasion to celebrate the blossoming of Love that is the core of the individual and the family. Holidays, redolent with reckless rumpus, were no longer extremely exhausting experiences for her. They became holy days, fragrant with the incense of prayer. Merry Dasara lost its adjective and changed into the worship of the Mother who guards, gives and guides.

Thus did prejudices and preferences deep-rooted in society perish as they underwent ridicule by Swami. He had come, as He declared, to clear the ancient and authentic road to God, to free it from the weeds that thrive thereon and the roadblocks that pundits have placed across. Mother learnt to accept and appreciate the simplification of age-old rites in ceremonies such as the Upanayanam and weddings. The scholars who conducted the ceremonies at Puttaparthi told her that Swami had preserved the core rites of these ceremonies, the rites which would consecrate the purpose of initiation in the case of the Upanayanam and Integration in the case of marriage. What He had removed were only the elaborate accretions that served to feed the lust for conspicuous consumption.

Mother was happy beyond words that Swami accorded woman the honoured status of motherhood. During the Nine Days of Dasara women gathered in the Prayer Hall every morning and evening to worship the Cosmic Feminine as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Swami welcomed widows too, though such women, felled by misfortune, were not allowed by the orthodox to join the congregation of authorised women. Masculine despotism had made women believe that they had to seek only one credential in order to earn spiritual boons: selfless service rendered to the lawfully wedded master. When that service by the woman had been put to an end by the inexorable decree of her karma, she had no right to offer worship all by herself. That was the sentence from which Swami saved the widows.

Mother was very happy too that women were permitted, nay, persuaded, to recite the mystic syllable OM. In truth, the taboo was so respected by womenfolk that they had never dared challenge it. The highly educated wife of a District Magistrate left the Nilayam in a huff when she heard OM loudly and enthusiastically emanating from women in the pre-dawn hours of the day! Mother felt that women should certainly not be denied access to the Presence of God. If OM is the purest and fullest verbal symbol of the Impersonal, women too had a right to invoke 'IT' through OM. She told Swami how happy she was at this, His singular Blessing to women of all castes and races.

During a discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam He had made the revealing announcement that He could not be classified on the basis of any known criteria. If He needs to be categorised, people could know Him as Sathya Bodhaka, a Teacher of Truth. Recitals of the Bhagavata Text that she had heard dilated on Sage Kapila, honoured as an Incarnation of Vishnu, and His teaching the Truth

beatitude from the 'son' in a similar manner. As a result, social prejudices, food preferences, spiritual goals, familial affinities had all quietly loosened their grip. She was surprised at her own transformation as she watched the devotees and listened to their stories of the impact of Swami on their attitudes and beliefs, and as she absorbed the lessons Swami conveyed to her and her daughters all the time through His words and deeds.

She found that she had transcended the pettiness and profanity of village life and she longed to spend her life, what was left of it, in Prasanthi Nilayam, away from the frothy frenzy of the village. And Swami agreed. She was allotted a single living room with a narrow kitchen and a narrower bathroom attached—one amidst the many such apartments in which ardent devotees were housed around the Prayer Hall above which Swami resided. She no longer had any complaints. She was grateful for even the slightest gift of Grace, even if it was but a jocular barb releases from His tongue on her language or behaviour.

—*From “Easwaramma—The Chosen Mother” by N. Kasturi*

### **Let the Light Pour**

Let there be many windows in your soul,  
That all the glory of the universe  
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane  
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays  
That shine from countless sources. Tear away  
The blinds of superstition; let the light  
Pour through fair windows, broad as truth itself  
And high as heaven... Tune your ear  
To all the wordless music of the stars

And to the voice of nature, and your heart  
Shall turn to truth and goodness as the plant  
Turns to the sun. A thousand unseen hands  
Reach down to help you to their peace crowned heights,  
And all the forces of the firmament  
Shall fortify your strength. Be not afraid  
To thrust aside half-truths and grasp the whole.

—**R. W. Trine**

### **Creation**



God made the stars that shine;  
The burning suns that twinkle in the night,  
Or primroses that gleam with radiant light;  
See! See! It was He  
Who first conceived a tree!  
Clothed it with rippling leaves, and threaded gems  
Of pure translucent dew among the stems;  
Who, where our footprints pass,  
Set meadows still with grass.

God made such beauteous things  
That, through the passing years,  
Their haunting magic clings  
And moves the heart to tears.  
Voices He made and words;  
Space He devised; gave birds  
Their liquid notes, their poetry of wings.  
Hark! 'Tis His voice that rings  
From silhouetted branch as darkness falls!

Aye! 'Tis His light that gleams  
Through all our fleeting dreams  
Of human brotherhood and lasting joy.  
Each splendour that we name  
Glowes at its source like flame,  
Dances with life that, to our own life, calls.  
For every lovely thing  
Exists that it might bring  
Us nearer, nearer to the meaning of His love.

—Derek Neville

### **Learning Gita at the Lord's Feet**

The scene of serene tranquility and subdued beauty that fills me with joy as I sit at my table is of a luscious stretch of green meadow with clusters of majestic trees spreading their generous branches inviting the tired and weary to rest and refresh themselves; a small pool, cool and comforting in its mellow radiance as the early rising Sun scatters his beams, touching it with the warmth of his brilliance; a tall tree standing apart upright with shimmering leaves aglow with the golden clusters, casting its shady shadow on the narrow winding path, illumined and clear; and this beautiful picture eloquently proclaims, "Those who walk with God will always reach their

read, fills me with ecstatic thrill. The words ring true and the realisation as it dawns on me fills me with a strange sadness for even though I have seen God, am I prepared to walk with Him? I pondered, and in the dark anguish of my soul, came in blinding flashes the illumined lives of Great Ones who had trodden the God-ward Path.

Yes, I have seen God—Sri Sathya Sai Baba—face to face, kissed the dust under His feet and talked with Him. Blessed indeed am I but something within me queried, "Are you prepared to walk with Him?" I feel unharnessed for the task. I ruminated for long and from within murmured a voice—that "Surrender" was the "Open Sesame" that would throw open the portals of eternal joy and peace. Today as I look back, I am overwhelmed with gratitude to the Lord, who taught me valuable lessons, and has led me step by step. I have learnt the Holy Scriptures at His Lotus Feet which He has taught me so graciously and reminiscing over thirty two years, some significant incidents come to my mind.

It was way back in 1949, when we were only a handful of devotees living in the holy old Mandir in God's immediate presence, intoxicated and enchanted, that the profound message of the Gita was conveyed to me with a tremendous impact. A couple on whom Fortune had smiled bounteously were childless. They had been devotees of Swami for many years. Their ardent prayers were heard and they were blessed with a daughter. The couple brought their three months old daughter to Parthi and wanted to pay their grateful homage to the Lord, who had blessed them with this gift. It was customary in those days to do Padapooja to Swami in an elaborate way and adore His lovely feet. This couple made ready for the Padapooja. The place was decorated with colourful rangoli and flowers. Fruits, candy, cashew, currants and rich offerings were placed in silver, plates. The whole atmosphere looked festive. The couple were dressed in gorgeous silks and the lady had bedecked herself with costly ornaments and the tiny child was also weighed down with gold. It was a grand and glittering sight, for one must be in one's best, while worshipping God.

### **Purandaradasa's song**

Swami came gracefully and sat on the velvet chair, lovingly giving this rare opportunity to the couple to worship His Lotus Feet. All of us had gathered around to witness the puja. All of a sudden, Swami beckoned me and asked me to sing a particular song of the saint Purandaradasa. The words of the song were "Manuja Sharira Viddanu sukha". The song exhorts man—"Oh man, what is the use of this body. It is a bundle of flesh and bones. It is a life as transitory as the water bubble. It is afflicted by disease and so, man, do not waste a single moment, but concentrate on God and the righteous path." The profound depth of meaning of this simple philosophic song, went deep into us and we wondered why on this happy occasion, Swami had commanded that this song should be sung. God's ways are mysterious and meaningful. The words of the Gita came reverberating into my mind.

*Vaasaamsi Jirnaani Yathaa Vihaaya Navaani grhinnaati Naroparaani  
Tathaa Shariraani Vihaaya Jirnaani Anyaani Samyaathi navaani Dehi.*

material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones."

In a moment Swami had demonstrated to me the message of the Gita. The eternal cycle of birth and death was an unending vicious circle and man, clouded by attachments, rejoices at birth and weeps at death. How quickly the scripture was made intelligible to my gross human understanding.

### **Miracles galore**

Many were the days when Swami would take His devotees to the banks of the Chitravati, when twilight would spread her iridescent mantle. Walking along with Him on the crystal clear sand with the waning sunlight playing hide and seek, in and out of the tall trees, was a rare joy. Each beam played about the little Divine Feet and lost itself in its radiance. The slow measured walking as we neared the cool clear banks harmonised with the rhythm of our expectancy, for we knew Swami would choose a wide expanse of a smooth sandy place where we would all sit around Him. He would collect the sand into small heaps and like the magic of Alladin's lamp, produce anything and everything that one could ever imagine, by putting His Divine Hands into the heap and pulling it out. Hot, hot Mysorepak—smelling of heavenly ghee, khova fresh and delicious, slabs of sugar candy and some rare fruits. He would ask us all to sing bhajans and pull out like an exultant child, the deities whose glory was sung. It could be the three-headed Shiva—with all His divine accessories; the Ganga spilling out of His matted locks; Dattatreya the serene and calm one; Durga in her wild ecstasy of killing the evil demon; lovable Ganesha or a form of His previous or present incarnation. The idols were wrought in various metals, exquisitely etched in the moment of His Sankalpa. It was during one such visit to the holy banks that Swami had asked one of the devotees to bring an empty container along with him. All of us had forgotten about it, when after we reached the Mandir, Swami beckoned to that person and asked him to bring that container. Lo! and behold!—as the lid was opened a celestial fragrance pervaded the whole place and in it was brimming to the full Panchamritam—the divine Prasad, presumably made in Heaven! Swami distributed the Prasad to each one of us with His own Divine Hands. Once again I stood in awe and reverence in the presence of this Great One—and the message of the Gita pealed in my ears:

*Beejam Maam Sarvabhuthaanaam Vidhi Paartha Sanaathanam.  
Buddhirbudhimathaamasmi Tejastejasvinaamaham.*

"O Paartha, know that I am the original seed of all existence, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men." There was nothing impossible for the Creator and we were blessed indeed to witness His glory.

### **The Compassionate Lord**

In 1950, the new Mandir was built, and in the early fifties, the devotees coming to Parthi would take shelter under the trees or get some 'thattis' and build temporary small sheds, for their stay. There was an elderly Brahmin lady who was very orthodox and would keep to herself all the time of the day till late evening. Only then would she come to the Mandir hall for bhajan. She used to put herself to all hardship and even if Swami stood in front of her during the time when

wonder at her meaningless rigidity and some even ridiculed her. Very often Swami sought her and cracked jokes with her. There was much carping criticism also that the lady was carrying things to an extreme, when God Himself was in her immediate presence. One day it happened to be Ekadasi—the day of fasting. As usual, this lady went to the holy Chitravati, had her bath, did her pooja, cooked food for her husband and daughter and sat outside her little thatched shed—eagerly trying to take in whatever she could of Swami and His divine darshan. She was observing a strict fast abstaining even from taking a drop of water. It was time for evening Bhajan when Swami came down, went straight to her and asked her what she would have done on an Ekadasi day if she had been at home. Her simple reply was that she would go to the temple in the evening and listen to the Puranas. The Compassionate One ordered that there would be no bhajan that day but that in honour of this simple sincere devotee, He would give a divine discourse in the Mandir hall. In those days this was a rare occurrence.

All of us assembled and He asked this lady to sit near His throne on the ladies side. His divine discourse centered round the idea that perseverance, sincerity, and true dedication towards a cause without hypocrisy would earn for one God's Grace in plenty.

The Great Lord, to whom there is only one caste of humanity, had singled out this lady and satisfied her yearning, though to all of us she appeared bigoted and foolish. It taught me the lesson that God understands the sincere one, whatever may be the mode or manner of worship. Once again the words of Sri Krishna came to my mind—

*"Api cheth suduraacharo bhajathe Maamananyabhaak  
Saadhureva sa mantavyaha Samyagvyavasthithohi saha."*

Thus says the Gita, "One who is engaged in devotional service, even if he has committed the most abominable actions is to be considered saintly because he is rightly situated."

Revelations over revelations have come to me, and I have learnt the sacred scriptures at His Lotus Feet. There are many more incidents wherein the profound message of the holy texts has been translated in front of my eyes. I am for ever grateful and offer my prayerful homage at the Lotus Feet. Every gesture, every word, every moment of Swami is so significant, that volumes can be written, which may surpass the Vedas, the Smritis, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata or the Ramayana. It is a stupendous experience to be in His immediate Divine Presence and I have been awed into mute adoration and surrender. Yet I ponder again and again whether God will wait for me, to take me by the hand along the enlightened path or whether I shall have to remain satisfied gazing longingly at the picture that hangs opposite my table which whispers aloud: "Those who walk with God always reach their destination." An inner Voice whispers within—"Just walk on, He leading and you following."—"That is Paradise now."

**Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopiraath,**  
Anantapur Campus.  
From "Smruti"

## Language of Head and Heart

We can distinguish two approaches to language, two dissimilar 'language cultures', that can arise whatever the ethnic tongue used. On the one hand we have the descriptive and precise type of prose such as is used in science, technology, philosophy, serious journalism and general literature. This is the language of the head. On the other hand we have the language of the heart which relies more on poetic imagery and the sympathy of human feeling.

Societies differ from one another in the relative importance given in their cultures to the head and the heart. The one tends more to emphasize the prosaic and the external, the other more the poetic and the inner life. Such differences are reflected in the way people use words or employ language generally.

The most tangible and concrete words and sentences refer to the things of the sensory world. The more subtle and abstract the ideas to be expressed, the more symbolic and 'supra-sensory' images are needed. Allegorical folk tales or dramatic poetry can convey sublime meanings through the subtleties of metaphor. Less literal and more figurative writings like those of metaphysical philosophy can touch a wider scope of meanings than correct prose can approach. Yet the more general the scope, the vaguer the concepts tend to be, opening for many interpretations—often at variance with one another.

### Language of the heart

*"There is only one Language—the language of the Heart":* The language of the heart communicates by virtue of spiritual qualities like friendliness, sympathy, understanding of others, good humour, chivalry, emotional honesty, shared wit... summarised in short: the eloquence of a love of fellowmen.

This language, however, is not necessarily conceptually accurate, for its intention is to move, to help and to provide a spiritual balm rather than to explain, prove or convince.

Words from the heart may often appear to be illogical when their conceptual meaning is dissected. For example, even the sentence 'there is only one language' conflicts in a formal sense with the obvious fact that many different languages exist. Even heartfelt words, being part of no mental system, may thus at times seem *outwardly* self-contradictory. The language of the heart speaks rather with *inner* meaning. What matters is the intention, the intensity of the vision in words or the confidence they arouse in the listener. The purely intellectual or 'cognitive' content is then secondary.

Formal contradictions in terms are of no account compared to a negative contradiction of words with actions. Practice and personal experience lend conviction to words which then

understand the meaning of there being only one language. It is either irrelevant or entirely secondary to analyse the information content of what moves us and quickens the spirit. The impromptu poetry that Baba sometimes sings is 'understood' by the heart without knowing Telugu.

### **The message of silence**

*"Silence is the Language of the Realised"*: Silence can be yet more golden than words. The language of the heart can speak entirely without words. The German philosopher Heidegger, in trying to discover the essence of human existence, reflected that we are at our most 'authentic', most truly ourselves, when we commune in silence.

In her biography of the great Saint Teresa of Avila, Sackville-West noted how the mystical experience which is completely unfamiliar to most of us is so poorly conveyed by words, saying: "The bank note suggests little of the bars of gold buried in the cellars, or of the immense complication of weaving wealth in commerce and industry."

So with the coinages of language too... words cannot be invented that are adequate to express consistently the unity of a multiplicity which is itself at once neither and yet both of these. The idea the word 'white' expresses excludes the idea of 'black', as well as a host of other colours. The ideas expressible in language always somehow analyse the real and thus 'divide to rule'. Similarly with the word Atma, God, Sat-Chit-Ananda, and soon. How could a word, a physical symbol, embrace and define what moves beyond any sort of sensory, mental or intellectual experience?

Only at best might the language of the heart overcome opposites so as to reflect the Truth. Yet to do that fully it must surely require that its speaker is fully realised, as we may intuit from Swami's words when He speaks to us. Or not least when He remains silent! 'Silence can speak louder than words' (but used to manipulating words by the bucketful. I can be deaf-wittedly slow at grasping this silent language).

### **Language in education and culture**

Though of secondary spiritual importance, the cognitive language 'of the head' is still (like it or not) also vital in the modern world, which is evident in the way that the level of language abilities—especially in written language—is related to social achievement in free societies. Vocations in any culture depend on language as an unavoidable necessity, as does democratic government. Much confusion and waste arise through vague, verbose or devious language, especially in the media, law, administration, government and politics.

Precision, conciseness, grammatical and terminological accuracy and consistency etc., are all essential to correct communication through the written word, for these are also a lifeline to all the insights expressed by great thinkers and spiritual teachers of the past. Language being the chief medium by which human culture is conveyed to future generations, it has much significance in education, both scientific and spiritual.

In the theoretical or professional spheres it is required that one express clear meanings very accurately and tailor them effectively to circumstance. System and reason, nicety of phrase and distinctly narrowed-down meaning are standards for the useful 'languages of the head'.

From the mental approach it is true that what one cannot say clearly one cannot think clearly either because, as Sai Baba says: "*We cannot think without words: words are the essential material for thought*". (S. S. Vahini p 49) Mental pictures have no meaning of their own, so T.V. cannot replace books any more than it can itself manage without words. Incisive language training is therefore essential to the mind.

### **Flight from values**

The ideas of scientific 'positivism' have permeated Western intellectualism. This movement, which saw the future utopia as one run by scientists and technologists, has left its clear mark on the West. Many positivists seriously aimed to eliminate from modern society all nonfactual, non-scientific language as 'meaningless'. The misnamed 'positivist philosophy' largely supported the 'freedom from values' it saw as scientific neutrality, which has not helped us against the anti-values that characterise our era. All non-materialistic human values were seen as 'intangible' and superfluous remnants of an old-fashioned 'pre-scientific' moralism based on all metaphysics (which was deplored) or worse still, on religion.

Positivism introduced language analysis for the elimination of any expressions that smacked of the 'subjective', of emotion or of the heart, as mere romantic vagueness and the supposed cause of individual confusion and political illusions. Positivism's sense-materialism has negatively affected the serious expression of values, of ethical ideals and of spiritual vision in the fields of science and higher education.

### **The turning point**

While positivism is now less influential, Western philosophy and education have in its aftermath put increasingly more weight on the 'descriptive' and 'scientific' aspect of language. This has been taken to the extent that much classic imaginative literature, drama and poetry have almost disappeared from modern curricula, along with the formative classical languages. All this reflects the one-sided requirement among many educators and most governments that subjects studied must be shown somehow to stimulate economic productivity and profit.

Visionaries and reformist writers are displaced in higher education by more and yet more prosaic works of literature and philosophy, of history, sociology and psychology, in short, by anything that merely describes and reflects (however accurately), existing realities.

Public debate on education in some Western countries has recently begun to show recognition that the tide of anti-values must be stemmed, that an essential to the education of youth is training in 'human values' (a term sometimes used in Western media now).

spiritual-cum-secular educational institutions of Bhagavan Baba, the language of both head and heart have their proper places.

Our inherent understanding of the language of the heart and consequently our faith in that of which it speaks, is renewed through Baba's teaching and its application in public education. If the two approaches of head and heart may tend to clash, both have relevant spheres of use and they need not always exclude each other. Both can merge in the one 'language' when there is communication between unified heads and hearts.

—*Robert Priddy, Oslo*

## **Human Values: Precept and Practice**

In Sai Education the method of passing on knowledge and understanding of human values to youngsters is in a semiformal manner as used in our educational institutions. In order to do as Baba instructs we must widen our philosophy of Sai education and turn its light within ourselves. In this we, shall truly share in a universal new awakening also felt and experienced by many travelling on other paths The goal of Sai Education is full realization of human potential and as "The end of education is character" so too must "the bud of our personality flower into human excellence."

We teach children the meaning of values but we ourselves need to deepen our personal commitment and embodiment of them by confronting the real issues they place in our learning experience. We are real loving, laughing and crying individuals and we relate most closely to those in daily life with us. Love, for example, as a value is easiest when we use it in the wider community, rather than in our closer interactions.

Self-growth means transcending the limitations we have set upon ourselves and for this kind of Sai Education, a class of one is enough, if we bring to our learning the approach of a child—that one of an open mind and a willing heart.

Baba insists that "Education is not the acquisition of burdensome information regarding objects and men. It is the awareness of the immortal spirit within which is the spring of joy, peace and courage." He even goes as far as saying that the academic degrees which we achieve with such pride are "begging bowls for jobs."

Baba teaches us that true education is the investigation of the fundamental questions: Why are we here? What is the reason for this life? How will our actions in this life affect our future lives?



Education is an on-going process spread over many lifetimes and we have chosen this present life for a particular learning—a learning which will bring us ever closer to the understanding that we are divine beings and that the divine principle is within each one of us. This divinity manifests as Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-violence. We see the supreme example of this manifestation in the life of Baba Himself.

Baba says "The teacher should not try to rule through the easier means of fear, for that is full of dangerous consequences for the pupils. Try rather the path of Love."

Regarding parents Baba has this to say, "Parents must be infused with the basic truths of universal religion. They should not be seen worried, helpless, discontented and distressed—as if they had no God to lean on, no inner resources of strength to fall back on."

### **Fears in childhood**

What happens to us in childhood has a profound and lasting effect on the rest of our life for during our early formative years the patterns, habits and blockages are created. Too many of us grow up fearing to be wrong, fearing humiliation, fearing to be ourselves, fearing to risk close relationships. Such fears close us down and increase our defensiveness. We avoid situations where we are vulnerable and exposed. We build protective shields around ourselves which enable us to function on a relatively safe but superficial level. We are reluctant to take risks which may require us to reveal our real self. We project an image that we feel will be acceptable and pleasing to the world but this false image limits our personal growth and expression.

It is essential that we work at liberating ourselves and our children from the strangling, constricting effects of fear and realise that for every fear we dissolve there is a greater freedom for the personality to become whole.

We have to learn to take charge of our own lives, we have to plan our own journey from dark to light, from limitation to expansion, from self doubt to self confidence. We have to transform the old patterns, habits, thoughts and energies so that we can move towards achieving our own potential.

Baba says, "There is nothing to fear in the whole Universe—God is everywhere, within us, and around us. We lack belief in ourselves and the eternal presence of God. We haven't realised this Truth."

### **Integral education**

Sai Education works with the whole child and all the aspects of the personality—the physical, intellectual, emotional, psychic and spiritual. If personal growth and transformation are to take place all these aspects of the personality have to be nurtured

Traditionally our schools have promoted academic excellence with pupils acquiring intellectual skills and knowledge. The emphasis has always been on learning about the outer

thinking rather than developing divergent or intuitive thinking. Learning has been a means of gaining information regarded as final instead of showing a child that what we know now may change and that there can be many ways of solving a problem.

If we are to move forward in education we have to take into account the inner world of the child and allow the child space to experiment to be creative, to learn new skills which we may not have. We have to allow the child to take risks and go beyond his perceived limitations. We must allow the child to use every opportunity to develop every level of the personality. The whole brain needs to be stimulated so that there is a balance of intuitive as well as logical reasoning powers.

Adults must acknowledge and help unfold the child's inner life through the use of imagery, story telling, poetry, prayers, quotations, silent sitting or meditation.

We must attach importance to a child's dreams and drawings for those can be methods of communicating what is going on at a subconscious level in the child's life. Children should be allowed to "be" as well as "do".

The whole of life is a learning experience. The reason we have incarnated is to learn and we each have our own curriculum with specific lessons we personally need to learn. How we view the content of these lessons is crucial.

Baba says, "Accept success and failure with equanimity." This is very necessary because we do not always understand the lesson inherent in any given experience at the time it happens. When we are in the throes of disappointment, sadness or loss we may fail to see that this is the springboard for a great leap in terms of personal and spiritual growth.

—*Judith Berry, U K.*

## **Experience with the Avatar**

I have just returned from the most thrilling visit with Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I would like to share my experience with readers of "Sanathana Sarathi".

I spent a total of 20 days with Baba in Puttaparthi and Brindavan. The day after I arrived at Puttaparthi, Baba called our group for an interview. There were four men, eleven women and a little boy of three. There were also seven or eight of Baba's college boys in the interview room. He talked to the boys in Telugu, and talked to us in English. He manifested some Vibhuti and gave it to a few of the ladies. He then asked one of the women what she wanted. She replied, "I want a ring, Swami." He then waved His hand in the familiar manner and produced a gold ring with three small diamond pieces inserted on it. He put it on her finger and said "perfect fit, as

with black bands for her. He announced the time shown by the watch as 7: 17 am. I looked at my watch and it was indeed that time. For another lady in the group He manifested a small Lingam (in the size and shape of a pigeon egg).

He then called our group to another room and blessed one of the younger fellows very much and talked mostly to the ladies. He asked the men what we were doing. When any one of us (men) wanted to ask Him a question, He would simply hold His hand, showing us to wait and telling us "I will see you separately." We interpreted this in two ways that He indeed will see us separately in an interview or in our hearts. It did turn out that He meant the latter.

After we were in Puttaparthi for eight days, Baba left for Brindavan. We all left the next day to be near Him there. I was there for another 12 days—and left for my other engagements.

When I arrived at the Ashram on Jan. 15th, I was rehearsing with myself that if Baba ever asked me what I wanted (as often He does with people on different occasions), I would simply say that I wanted the ability to love everyone and everything unconditionally. While waiting for Him to appear for His afternoon darshan, I felt that He was telling me "just love me". That night while I was lying down on my "bed" in a large hall, where 75 other men were also sleeping (and making all kinds of noises), many thoughts swept through my mind. I was very happy having seen Baba after 14 months, and was looking forward to a very profitable visit this time. Then a thought came to my mind. Being always fascinated with birds, this thought also had to do with birds!

### **Dove and service**

I felt that in our spiritual ascent we are like birds who need two wings. These wings are LOVE and SERVICE. But this bird has a lot of weights attached to his feet which make his flight impossible or at least very difficult. These weights are anger, arrogance, attachments, fear, gossip, greed, hate, hypocrisy, impatience, jealousy, lust, pride, vengeance, violence, worry, etc. Then it appeared to me that these three elements of LOVE, SERVICE and "excess weights" are not independent of each other. If I can strengthen my love of everyone (or Baba), or render unconditional service to others, I can then automatically reduce these bad qualities in me.

For the next 17 days, while enjoying the presence of Baba, I wondered where I shall start my spiritual journey: increase my love for Baba, increase my unconditional service, or try to reduce these bad habits. Then Baba started to answer my question.

When I left for India I had some pistachios and almonds which I wanted to give to my friends at the universities I was planning to visit at the end of my stay in India. These nuts are very much liked by the Indians, and are generally expensive there. I had five small packages of about 400 grams each to give to these friends. At Brindavan, a building was under construction where many labourers, including women and young boys, were working. It appeared to me (Baba's doing) that I should give some of the nuts to these people. I gave two of the packages to different groups of women to share at their lunchtime. I kept the next package to give to one of

Baba's college boys were giving talks on their education, and during the bhajan following these talks, I felt the greatest joy I have ever experienced in my life. I knew this bliss was by Baba who wanted to give me a reward for bringing a little joy to these labourers' hearts. What a fantastic joy and bliss for such a little service! When the programme was finished at 6 p.m., I went to a corner to sit and meditate in order to absorb the energy and love emitted by the Avatar. As soon as I closed my eyes I remembered that I needed to give one more package of nuts to a boy labourer I had seen several times. I went to the construction site; there he was standing at a corner, as if waiting for me. This was a good time for him to receive the nuts, as he was to leave work shortly.

By this example Baba answered my question and showed me that the first step toward my spiritual Sight is to strengthen my wing of SERVICE. With this first step, and simultaneously trying to strengthen my wing of unconditional LOVE and reducing the "excess weights" of bad qualities, I know I can start my spiritual Sight.

I am now counting the days toward my next visit to Baba. While doing so, I will make every effort to get my "wings" ready and drop my "excess weights" for my spiritual flight!

—*Mehdi N. Bahadori, Teheran*

*SRI RAMANAVAMI SANDESH:*

## **Rama—the Indweller**

### *Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

Every man takes birth in this world to discharge three kinds of debt. The first is the debt to God. The second is the debt to the Rishis (sages). The third is the debt to one's parents. The Divine permeates every cell in the body, endowing it with divine energy. It is the power of the Divine which keeps every limb in the body functioning through the action of this Divine energy. It follows from this that man has to be conscious of this energy and be grateful to the Divine for sustaining and protecting him. If he fails to do so, his life is a waste. Discharging the debt to the Divine means engaging oneself in sacred actions and in serving others and thereby dedicating every action of the body to the Divine. It is when such a divinely endowed body is consecrated for holy purposes, by constant performance of sacred, sublime and dedicated actions, that the debt to the Divine is discharged.

### **Debt to the sages**

Next comes the debt to the Rishis. The ancient sages, by devoting all their energies to penance and spiritual enquiries, have bequeathed to mankind the great scriptures which should serve as guides for ordering their lives in the world and beyond. It is the sages who have offered to mankind the Upanishads, the Puranas and the epics for the proper regulation of their conduct in life along ideal lines. We must recognise the supreme significance of the scriptures for

avoided and what are the right actions which are obligatory for everyone and their injunctions should be scrupulously respected. The prescribed duties should be performed and the prohibited actions should be eschewed. It is only then that the debt owed to the Rishis gets discharged.

### **Debt to parents**

The third one is the debt to the parents. One's body is derived from the flesh and blood of the mother. How much sacrifice is involved in giving birth to a child and rearing him with continuous care and love is beyond description. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the life you lead are all the gift of your parents. It is one's primary duty to please one's parents. Only thus is the debt to the parents discharged. Nor is that all. The debt to the parents has to be repaid by acting properly and rendering service to society.

### **Dasaratha's decision**

It is for these reasons that Emperor Dasaratha paid' his debt to the Divine and through his Yagnas and Yajnas, he discharged his obligations to the Rishis. But he was unable to discharge the debt to his parents (pitru runa). He did show due reverence to them. But owing to the lack of a worthy son capable of sustaining Dharma, he could not fully discharge the obligations he owed to his parents. Dasaratha was one who realised the supremacy of Dharma. Hence, to overcome the lack of a son, he decided to perform the Putrakaameshti yagna (the special sacrifice for getting blessed with a son). The desire to have a son should not be for the protection of one's possessions and properties. Nor should it be for ensuring the performance of one's funeral obsequies. Nor for rendering any type of service to oneself. The main purpose should be to have sons who will practise righteousness in the service of society. It was with this aim that Dasaratha decided to perform the Putrakaameshti yagna.

The sages Vasishta and Jabali and others heartily welcomed the Emperor's decision. At this stage, the Emperor's Prime Minister Sumantra recalled to him the advice which the Sage Sanatkumara had given previously. Sumantra said "Oh king! You have forgotten what Sanatkumara told you. Sanatkumara had enjoined on you to get the blessings of the great Sage Rishyasringa and perform the yagna with Rishyasringa as Brahma at the sacrifice."

Thereupon, Dasaratha, accompanied by a number of priests, proceeded to the ashram of Rishyasringa. Rishyasringa readily responded to the Emperor's appeal and came for the yagna together with his spouse, Santha.

### **Putrakaameshti yagna**

Conforming to the procedure laid down for the Putrakaameshti yagna, Dasaratha first embarked on an Ashwamedha (Horse) sacrifice. For this sacrifice, a horse that has certain specific characteristics is required. It should bear all the prescribed insignia. In the season of spring (Vasant) the search for a suitable horse was started. It was only by the return of the next Spring season that it could be found. Another year went by before the horse could be appropriately prepared for the yagna. Then, the horse was released to go round the realm. It

the yajna were spread over three years.

Brahma then appeared. Who is this Brahma? He is described as a deity with four faces. The four-faced Brahma told Dasaratha: "Oh king! Your desires will be fulfilled. Complete the yajna with expedition." Heartened by the deity's assurance, Dasaratha distributed largesse to one and all generously and completed the yajna. The scriptures declare, "Yajna is the very form of Vishnu." Who is Vishnu in this context? It is not the form bearing Shankha (Conch) and Chakra (the Wheel). Vishnu refers to the Supreme One who permeates everything in the cosmos.

### **The vedas as children**

At the completion of the yajna, a deity rising from the sacrificial fire appeared before Dasaratha carrying a bowl of "payasam" in his hands. What is the unique greatness of this "payasam" (a sweet liquid). It represented the essence of all the Vedas. When Dasaratha's three queens drank the "payasam", the four Vedas were born as four children for Dasaratha—Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. Rama represented Yajur Veda, which is the embodiment of Dharma. Lakshmana, who was always immersed in reciting the name of Rama and ever dedicated to his service, represents the Rig Veda. Bharata, who loved always to sing the name of Rama and revelled in chanting the Divine name, represents the Sama Veda. Shatrughna, who was ever devoted to serving the other three brothers and who had conquered the internal and external foes, represents the Atharvana Veda. The four brothers thus represented the four Vedas. It is only when the Ramayana is studied for its esoteric significance, rather than from a superficial point of view, that the full meaning of the epic will be clear to us.

### **Manifestation of pranava**

The significance of the advent of the four brothers may also be realised from another point of view. The Pranava mantra "Aum" has been equated with the Supreme Brahman. In this three-letter word "A" stands for Lakshmana, "U" stands for Bharata and "M" stands for Shatrughna. The "Om-kara" that emanates from the combination of these three sounds represents Rama. Hence the scriptures have declared that the Rama Principle symbolises the primordial "Om-kara". Moreover, Valmiki brought out the unique significance of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita as a manifestation of Om-kara. Lakshmana, representing "A", stands to the right of Rama, Rama, representing "U", is in the middle, and Sita, representing "M", is to the left of Rama. Valmiki described the combination of the three as the embodiment of divinity.

### **Symbolism in the Ramayana**

The symbolism of the Ramayana may be viewed from another angle. The human body, with the five organs of perception (Jnanindriyas) and the five organs of action (Karmindriyas) represents the chariot, Dasaratha. The heart is Ayodhya, that which is not easily penetrable. The heart is, however, subject to pleasure and pain. The body is related to the three gunas, Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Symbolically, of the three wives of Dasaratha. Kaushalya represents Satwa, Sumitra represents Rajoguna and Kaikeyi represents the Tamoguna. This means that the human body is wedded to the three gunas. What is the Dharma that should be followed by this body? The fourfold Purusharthas (goals of life) are the goals prescribed for man: Dharma, Artha, Kama

acquisition of wealth should be related to Dharma (Righteousness) and Kama (desires) should be related to Moksha (liberation). Man today ignores Dharma and Moksha and goes only after Artha and Kama. Consequently he becomes a prey to sorrow and misery.

### **Purity of heart**

Of the four Purusharthas, Dharma is most important. What is this Dharma? It is essentially purity in thought, word and deed (trikarana shuddhi). The complete harmony between thought, word and deed is the mark of a high-souled being (Mahatma). Without unity of thought, word and deed, there can be no fulfillment in life. It is the duty of every man to achieve such fulfillment by leading a life of triple purity as Dasaratha did. The consummation of all sadhana (spiritual practices) is purity of the heart.

It should be realised that there is room in the heart for only a single person. It should not be regarded as a long sofa or as a musical chair. God alone should be installed in the heart. It is because today men change their loyalties from moment to moment that their devotion gets diluted and their aspirations remain unfulfilled. With a pure heart and one pointed devotion anything can be achieved in this world.

### **God or the world**

Sita demonstrated her complete disregard for all worldly pleasures when she chose to accompany Rama to the forest. All arguments of Rama about the hazards of life in the forest, with wild animals roaming about, were of no avail. She said when she had the Lord of all beings by her side what danger could befall her. However when, on seeing the golden deer in the forest, she expressed a desire for it, she distanced herself from Rama and her troubles started.

As long as you are attached to the things of the world, whatever worship you may do, you will not have God-realisation. It is not necessary to give up everything; it is enough if you enjoy everything as a gift from God and offer everything to God. Everything is a manifestation of God. You can enjoy anything with that awareness.

### **Maricha and Rama**

Even some of the rakshasas understood the Divine Reality of Rama. Maricha was one of those who realised the omniscience, the omnipotence and the Divine greatness of Rama. The sage Vishwamitra took Rama (and Lakshmana) for the protection of his yagna from the depredations of Tataka and her sons. Maricha was one of the sons. After Rama had killed Tataka, Maricha appeared to disturb the yagna. Rama aimed an arrow at him which threw him off miles away. That experience made Maricha realise the Divine puissance of Rama. He declared that he had not seen anyone who could equal Rama in power. Going to Ravana, he explained to him the unique powers of Rama even as a young lad. He told Ravana: "Oh Ravana! There is no one in this world who is as powerful as Rama. There is no parallel to him anywhere. His unexcelled beauty is beyond words. His form fascinates even men. I have beheld! his divine beautiful form." Ravana kept in mind all that Maricha had told him.

Later, Ravana's sister came to Ravana with a bleeding ear and nose, wailing before him. Ravana asked her: "How is it, sister, that anyone could cut your ear on one side and the nose at another place? With all your powers, what were you doing when the ear was cut first and the nose later? It is impossible for anyone to cut both of them at the same time." Surpanakha replied: "Oh brother! What shall I say? All the time I was looking only at the beautiful form of Rama. While I was gazing on his face, I was not aware of what was being done to me. All my senses were paralysed while I was lost in seeing the charming form of Rama. After Rama left, I realised my plight. That is not all. Even more beautiful than Rama is Sita." She told Ravana that after seeing the beauty of Sita she got the feeling that Ravana alone was worthy of Sita and that she did not deserve to stay in the forest.

As she spoke in this strain, Ravana's passion was stirred. He again summoned Maricha and told him that he needed Maricha's help in an important undertaking. He told Maricha: "You are a pre-eminently capable person. You can understand demons and deal equally with the Divine. You are capable of assuming any form. You must therefore go to the Dandakaranya forest and separate Rama from Sita." At that stage, Maricha told Ravana: "This is a disastrous proposal. It is said that men who are destined for destruction develop disastrous ideas. No one can conquer Rama. You can never hope to acquire Sita in all your life. Rama is God incarnate. Give up this suicidal idea."

Inflamed by passion, Ravana paid no heed to Maricha's warning. He told Maricha that if he did not act as Ravana wanted, he would be beheaded. Maricha thought within himself. "Either way, my life is in danger. Rather than die at the hands of this wicked Ravana, it is better for me to meet with my death from the Divine hands of Rama." It was with the desire to be slain by Rama that Maricha agreed to obey Ravana's command. It was thus a Rakshasa who first recognised the divinity of Rama. It was later that Vishwamitra announced Rama's divinity.

### **Rama—the indwelling spirit**

The Rama Principle is manifested in the Gayatri mantra. Rama is the embodiment of the three aspects of Time. He is the Lord of the three worlds and is the embodiment of the three gunas. Hence Sri Rama is the indwelling spirit in every human being. To realise this truth, it is not necessary to be a great scholar or scientist. However great a scholar may be if he has no eyes, he cannot see the world. However great a scientist may be, when he is fast asleep he cannot see anything. But a man with open eyes if he is no scholar or scientist, can see the world when he is awake. The power of sight is not derived from scholarship or science but is a gift of the Divine.

Moreover, scholarship does not enable a pandit to understand his own true nature, though he can teach others. True scholarship consists in cultivating a pure heart.

Every person who has a purified heart experiences the Divine some time or other. We have any number of examples of such realised souls. Valmiki was originally a highway robber. By the grace of sages he became the author of the Ramayana. Nanda experienced the Divine though he



of the elephants, and Dhruva, a mere stripling, could get the grace of the Lord by their devotion. Sabari, an illiterate denizen of the forest, became a great devotee by the constant remembrance of Rama's name. Through her devotion she could get the blissful experience of welcoming Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in the sage's ashram.

There are in the world many such devotees who have achieved God-realisation without profound scholarship or elaborate austerities.

Hence the Divine Rama Principle is not something to be remembered once a year but every moment of our life.

Ramanavami falls in a period of the year when Nature puts on her new vesture after shedding the old. Rama thus represents all that is beautiful in Nature.

### **Appeal of the Ramayana**

The Ramayana has been divided into two parts—Poorva Ramayana and Uttara Ramayana. Poorva Ramayana (the earlier part) deals with the prowess of Rama as a hero (Dheera) who destroyed Vali, Ravana and others. The Uttara Ramayana reveals the compassion of Rama (it is filled with Karuna Rasa). Valmiki has compared the sweetness of the Ramayana to the sweetness of the sugarcane juice. The sugarcane has a hard rind and is full of knots. Nevertheless the juice from it is sweet. Likewise despite the many evil characters in the story and the sad episodes in it, the epic maintains its sweetness. The appeal of the Ramayana is inexhaustible.

When the Ramayana story is understood in its inner essence, it will transform human nature. Rama should be regarded not as the Prince of Ayodhya, but as the Atma-Rama, the Indweller in every heart. Dedicate your mind, speech and body to the Divine and thereby raise yourselves from the level of the human to that of the Divine.

Some of Rama's actions have been criticised by scholars on various grounds. Seen, however, in the right perspective, it will be found that Rama acted in each case according to the nature of the person. In killing an ogress, Rama is accused of committing "Striathya" (the sin of killing a woman). But it is not so. He was destroying the Tamo guna which she symbolised. He gave liberation to Sabari, who represented the Rajo guna. He purified Ahalya, who represented the Satwa guna, absolving her of all her lapses, and restored her to Gautama. In the case of the Rakshasa brothers, he destroyed Kumbhakarna and Ravana, who represented the Tamo and Rajo gunas, and made Vibhishana, who symbolised the Satwa guna, the ruler of Lanka. It is only when we destroy the Tamo and Rajo gunas within us that we can make the Satwa guna reign in our hearts. This is the primary duty of every human being. This should be our ideal. It is by imbibing these great qualities of Rama and regulating our lives in this way, we shall be able to divinise ourselves.

A student had referred to the advice given by Siva to Parvati to chant Rama's name. The term "Manorame" used in the sloka has two meanings. One refers to Parvati. The other signifies

delights the heart.

(Swami concluded His discourse with the singing of bhajans in praise of Rama in His mellifluous voice, entralling the entire gathering. The function concluded with the offer of Arati to Bhagavan and the distribution of Prasad to the devotees).

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Kalyana Mandap, Brindavan, on April 3, 1990**

# The Glory of Bharat

*Dear students, embodiments of Divine Love! Teachers! Patrons of education!*

To every man born on earth Truth is the visible manifestation of God. The entire cosmos composed of moving and immovable objects has emerged from Truth, is sustained by Truth and merges in Truth. "Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantham-Brahma" Truth is Brahman Truth is eternal. Vedantins equated Truth with Brahman (the Supreme). Hence everyone has to revere Truth alone.

Sathyam and Dharma will not submit to any one. Every kind of strength, physical or otherwise, will have to come under their sway. Success follows Sathyam and Dharma.

Whatever your scholarship or position, you have to cultivate respect for human values. Indian culture is unexcelled and stands supreme. Students have forgotten its grandeur and glory. In the pursuit of modernity, students are oblivious to their inherent divinity.

What the students have to safeguard is not the nation. They have to protect Sathyam and Dharma only. These two will protect all. Giving up Truth and Right conduct, educated persons, in the name of country and nation, are undermining the country. It is more vital to cultivate virtues than go after scholarship or other possessions of a transient nature.

It is a pity that even the elders, lured by modernity, are following occidental ways, giving up their own ancient culture. It is no wonder the younger generation is following their example. Leaders, parents and teachers are not setting the right example to young people. Our ancients led exemplary, noble lives because of their practice of virtue. They pursued the four Purusharthas (goals of life) and shared the benefits and joys derived therefrom with others. Young people today indulge in all sorts of practices. Of the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—they have given up Dharma and Moksha and are only pursuing Artha (material welfare) and Kama (sensual desires). As a consequence, disorder and insecurity have grown in society. The loss of peace and security is the direct result of forgetting Truth and Righteousness.

## **"Do not forget"**

Students! Do not forget our ancient culture. This is the very life-breath of Bharatiyas. Bharat has offered to the world the gems of this culture.

"Samskriti" refers to the process of refinement of every object before it is made fit for human use. For example, paddy has to be converted into cooked rice before it is fit for consumption. In the process it undergoes many changes and acquires added value. Likewise, man should not remain in the state in which he was born. He should manifest his inherent divinity. Students should therefore try to acquire, in addition to academic knowledge, qualities like humility and discrimination, which will help them to become full-fledged human

purposeful life.

Love is a great quality in man. But it should be shown not only towards other human beings, but also towards all living creatures. This is the mark of true culture. "Adveshtaa sarvabhoothaanaam", declares the Gita. There should be no ill-will towards any living being.

The Upanishads, the Gita and the Puranas have all declared that there is no greater dharma than Truth and that victory goes to those who have truth and righteousness on their side.

Dear students! Take note that you have to live for the sake of an ideal and not for mere living. To lead an exemplary life, you need love of the nation and love of the Spirit (Atma). Realise the greatness of your nation, its sacredness, its purity, its vastness, its sublime ideal: and bow overflowing with love it is. Belittling their own country, Indian students are going abroad. No country in the world has all that Bharat has. Born in this land of Karma, Yoga and Thyaga, students should understand and cherish its cultural heritage. Their ignorance of this culture is due to the absence of teachers and parents who could convey the elements of this culture to the students. During the fifteen days of the summer course, you have to learn how to harmonise this ancient culture with the needs of the modern world and to lead lives governed by Truth and Righteousness. Position or power is not important. They are transient. One should not be proud about wealth, progeny or youthful vigour. All of them may go in a moment. Adolescence is a precious period in one's life. It should be rightly used.

Remember that Bharatiya culture transcends the limitations of time, space and circumstance. Endeavour to know its unique greatness.

In the coming weeks I shall be speaking on the functions of the body, the senses, the mind, the Will and the Atma from the spiritual point of view, as desired by the Vice-Chancellor in his welcome address. It is essential that students should know about these matters. Of what avail is it for one to know all about the external world without knowing who he is in reality? You have to know the nature of the Brahman and the Self. Devotion is the most important requisite. Without devotion to God, nothing can be accomplished.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the song, "*Hari bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi.*")

*(From Bhagavan's discourse on May 20, 1990, at the Brindavan Campus Auditorium, inaugurating the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality for students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.)*

**Swami's Greetings and the Devotees**

discourses, arousing and awakening that divine quality within us. We are "Prema Swarupa" and that is exactly what He says of Himself. (S.S.S Volume 2 p. 125.) He repeats this greeting at each of His discourses in order that we may open up our stubbornly closed consciousness to this remarkable fact. We can only be thankful for the moments in which we experience within ourselves the true expanse of this magnificent good fortune and overwhelming bliss. That these moments remain only moments is due solely to the limiting influence of our mind. It disturbs our meditation, disrupts us during bhajan singing and even in Prasanthi Nilayam it can happen, as we wait for the Lord's darshan, that it overcomes us with concern about our return flight.

Are we really embodiments of Divine Love?

Swami doesn't make it easy for us—in worldly sense! —with our efforts to recognize our innermost being. In order to calm our worldly awareness, He allows us neither alcohol, nor nicotine nor drugs. During the Mahasivaratri festival thousands of people in and around Poornachandra Hall sang holy songs through the night. No one was drunk, no one smoked, no one started a rumble. It was purely the ecstatic jubilation of a night in the presence of Bhagavan Baba with His blessings that conveyed to all the joyous feeling that they really are that which He declares each of us to be: "You are the embodiment of Divine Love!"

From their huts, houses or perhaps also palaces, where they had prepared themselves in silent prayer and meditation, people had come to experience freedom from everyday disappointments, in this community of Sai's Love.

Many people in the west, young and old, want the same thing. They call it self-realization. They believe they can by-pass the difficult physical and psychic preparations and tests belonging to a shaman's spiritual training. But irresponsible use of drugs will not bring one the feeling of God's Presence and many young people must bear the consequences of an often irreversible addiction, perhaps with their lives. This is perhaps the retribution for attempting to interchange the Divine Self, that in India is referred to as Atma, with the earthly ego, which man can indeed alter with the use of drugs.

I love the rare nights in which sleep eludes me, because I can think about Swami and bring my questions and concerns before Him. While as an old country doctor I have accompanied many people in their final steps to His throne, I nevertheless have a rather boyish relationship to the Divine. I once challenged Him as to why He permits His picture to appear everywhere in books etcetera, not only in India but throughout the whole world. It seemed vain to me and called to mind various cults. Like lightning I had the answer in my precocious mind

"The pictures should remind you of the omnipresence of God. They have a power which can protect you. This power is in all of my pictures, not just those on which Vibhuti or Amrita appears. I allow the pictures due to your lack of faith. They remind you that I am ever with you and in you, for you are the embodiments of Divine Love!"

In another night confusion began to agitate me once more, and I asked Swami again: "Swamiji! We should be embodiments of Divine Love and nevertheless there are people who kill and those who trigger wars in which so many fall into despair and tragedy." Swami settled my thoughts just as Krishna had calmed Arjuna:

"The warrior neither kills nor can he be killed. Have you forgotten that you are all instruments of God's hand? Nothing can occur against the will of God."

In 1914 and again in 1939 it had gone so far. Following the first world war, the people did not learn anything. After the second, under the threat of atomic destruction, mankind appeared to be growing wiser. In spite of His reserve from missionizing, it is indeed the voice of Sai in the ears of those who can hear His loving whisper that has saved mankind. That the wicked also have a higher sense, that they also belong to THE ONE without a SECOND—to this we must accustom ourselves, even if it is the most difficult aspect of the ancient Indian wisdom revealed to us now through Sathya Sai Baba, to comprehend. May we succeed, as did Phyllis Krystal with the aeroplane terrorists, in meeting the divine core of our enemies with love, and thus disarming them!

"To meet our enemies with LOVE!" That was already said by someone before Sathya Sai Baba. Many who have been with Swami have then read the message of the New Testament with "new" eyes and found they can call themselves "Christians" for the first time. Previously they may have taken Jesus' teachings of miracles and healings as beautiful legends, relating to which some nice festive celebrations still exist, but which present-day wars or other atrocities have not been able to prevent.

We are beginning to comprehend that it was not a failure of Jesus Christ but rather a failure of mankind that led to these misunderstandings.

May our prayers lead us to an understanding of the Divine revelations:

"I am with you all days 'til the end of the world". (Jesus Christ)

In Sai's words: "I live in your hearts. There you can find me."

"The Kingdom of God is within you."

In Sai's words: "You are Embodiments of Divine LOVE!"

*—Lothar Scholz, Austria*

*"What greater misfortune can there be than the fact that Bharatiyas make no effort to understand their great and Divine culture, based on the most sublime ideals?"*

*"Love is the form of Brahman. Brahman is filled with Love. Love can be secured only through Love. Only when one is firmly established in Love can he be qualified to experience the One without a second."*

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

"Sathyam Vada; Dharmam Chara" "Speak the Truth, pursue Righteousness." This is the great pronouncement of the ancient Upanishads and scriptures of Bharatiyas. Truth and Righteousness are the stepping-stones to human greatness. The Puranas have also declared: "Sathyameva Jayathe", "Truth alone triumphs." Victory adores Truth, "Sathyaanaasthi Paro Dharmah" "There is no greater Dharma than Truth", declare the Puranas.

Truth is God. It is supreme folly to forget this fact and seek to obtain the grace of God by all kinds of practices.

The Bhagavata has indicated a more arduous path. Emperor Bali told his Guru Shukracharya, "Can there be a greater sin than going back on one's plighted word?"

The same truth was revealed by the Goddess of the Earth (Bhudevi) in another context in the Bhagavata. Bhudevi lamented: "Oh Lord! I can bear the burden of any number of sinners. But I cannot bear to carry those who have betrayed Truth."

The glory of Truth has been proclaimed by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the epics. The Upanishads have expounded the characteristics of Truth (Sathya). "Sathyaanna pramadithavyam, Dharmaanna pramadithavyam" ("Do not disregard Truth. Do not be indifferent to Dharma"). "In any circumstance do not give up Truth. Overcome all difficulties by adhering to truth" is the teaching of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and other texts.

### **Harishchandra's example**

Harishchandra, who gave up his kingdom, wife and son and even chose to serve as a watchman in a burning-ghat, is the supreme example of one who stood for Truth. Vishwamitra, who subjected Harishchandra to the most severe tests and ordeals, ultimately declared: "The whole earth can be held in the palm of one's hand. The entire ocean can be drunk at one gulp. The earth and the sky can be rolled into one. But it is impossible to make Harishchandra utter a lie."

Through Truth not only can the world be subdued, but it is possible even to realise the Lord of the universe. Today in Bharat, because people have given up Truth and Righteousness, they

have to dedicate yourselves to Truth. In offering worship to Rama and Krishna, prayers are offered to their manifestations as Truth. "Sathyam vachanaaya namah", "Sathyapriyaaya namah", "Sathyaswaroopaya namah" ("Salutations to the One whose speech is Truth, who is a lover of Truth, who is the embodiment of Truth".)

In the cause of upholding truth, Sri Ramchandra had to go as an exile to the forest. Rama told the sage Jabali: "For rulers in the Ikshvaku dynasty, the greatest calamity is going back on the plighted word."

### **Pothana's faith**

God should be worshipped as the embodiment of Truth. This is the primary duty of every Bharatiya. Srinatha was a great scholar and writer who was the Court poet of the Andhra ruler, Singabhupala. He came to his brother-in-law, Pothana, who was living in poverty, and entreated him to dedicate his Bhagavatam to Singabhupala. "If you dedicate your Bhagavatam to that ruler, he will reward you with all kinds of riches", said Srinatha. Pothana replied: "Sri Ramchandra is Lord above all kings. When I have Sri Ramchandra, the King of Kings, what need is there for me to submit to earthly rulers? It is God who offers spiritual benefits, earthly benefits and other benefits to everyone. Cannot the protector of so many countless beings, take care of me?" said Pothana. Pothana firmly held to this belief.

Provoked by Pothana's stubborn attitude and attributing it to Pothana's conceit, Srinatha conveyed his feelings to Singabhupala. The ruler became furious. He sent his soldiers to wrest the Bhagavatam from Pothana. Pothana was prepared even to give up his life, but would not surrender the Bhagavatam. On the orders of the ruler, his men set fire to Pothana's house. Pothana prayed: "Oh Sri Ramchandra! Will you not protect at least your own life-story, apart from protecting your devotees?" Appealing to Sri Rama to protect the Bhagavatam, Pothana closed his eyes in meditation. Except the Bhagavatam, everything else was consumed by the flames.

Singabhupala heard about this remarkable phenomenon. From that moment he became a devotee of Rama. It is only when one's devotion is firm, pure and unwavering that the Lord is ready to extend every kind of protection. Unfortunately, in this Kali era, faith is continually changing because of worldly desires. Man is willing to barter away the precious gem of his life for a piece of charcoal. If he realised the true value of human birth he would not treat it so lightly and go as far even to discard God. Tulsidas also said that the man who did not know the preciousness of the Lord's name, casts it away as worthless. Hence, it is essential to realise the infinite worth of the Lord's name. Mira also recognised the uniqueness and greatness of God's name. "Enjoy the nectarine sweetness of the Lord's name", says Mira. Instead of coffee and tea you must drink the sweet essence of the Lord's name. For the man who has installed the Lord in his heart, there will be no troubles of any kind.

It is not easy for all people to recognise the truth about God. When Socrates was attracting the youth of Athens to get interested in the pursuit of wisdom, his mission was misunderstood by



greatness of the path of devotion (Bhakti marga)". People prefer the "Bhakti marga" (the path of enjoyment) to the Bhakti marga. Today men pursue worldly studies with diligence, but few are interested in the pursuit of Mukti (Liberation). How can such persons ever realise God, whatever may be their education? All efforts are directed towards worldly and material ends, but no effort is made to attain spiritual realisation. Education today enables one to develop intellectual abilities, but does not promote good qualities. Of what value is such education? Book learning may convert the bead into a library. But it is of no practical use.

Socrates was condemned to death for turning the minds of the youth away from worldly concerns to spiritual matters. Socrates preferred to end his life by drinking poison received from the hands of his disciples rather than die at the jailor's hands. This means that more value was attached to spiritual purity than to the physical life. Today only sensual pleasures, which are transient and unreal, are valued. Those who imagine that they are deriving pleasure through their senses do not realise that it is the senses that are enjoying them and weakening them.

### **From the atma to the human**

What is devotion? It is not doing Japa or sitting in meditation or doing bhajans. Essentially it consists of two things: one, lack of interest in worldly things; two, love of God. Whatever you do out of love for God is devotion. You may engage yourselves in the ordinary duties of life. Only convert them into acts of worship by offering them to the Divine.

All of you are devotees, but for want of proper advice you are confused and feel depressed. On account of this confusion and depression you develop doubts. Sai does not ask you to renounce the world. But, in what way should you live in the world? You should enjoy the world with a spiritual outlook. You should realise that you have come down from the Atma to the realm of Nature. Today the reverse view prevails among sadhakas. They wrongly think that they are proceeding from Nature to the Spirit. You have emerged from the Atma and not evolved from Nature. You are the children of immortality. You are sparks of the Divine.

You must recognise the Divinity that is in everyone. Learn a lesson from the birds and insects. If a crow sees some edible, it does not start eating it all alone. It summons other crows and enjoys the food in their company. Look at the ants. If one ant chances upon a lump of sugar, it will not start eating it all by itself. It will bring other ants and enjoy the repast all together. Is man worse than crows and ants? Should he not have the sense of unity which these creatures have? Even the ants seem to have some sense of the Divine. That was why Thyagaraja sang: "Oh Rama! May the Brahman, which is present as love in the ant and in the Supreme, protect me!" Thyagaraja recognised the omnipresence of the Divine in everything from the smallest to the vastest.

People recite Thyagaraja song. But in practice, if Brahma were to appear before them they will offer worship. But if an ant crawls on them they will kill it. Does this demonstrate their sense of oneness? The presence of the ant is not relished. But the spirit of sacrifice and sharing which the ant has is not to be found in man. Neither the practice of hoarding nor that of

exploiting tendencies are growing among men from day to day.

Embodiments of Love! Realising that human life is precious, fill your hearts with sacred thoughts and lead noble lives, dedicated to the service of society. Such service is indeed service to God. If you offer worship to one idol in your shrine you are worshipping only one. But when you render service to society you will be offering worship to innumerable forms of the Divine.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajana binaa Sukha Santhi Nahi*")

**From Bhagavan's discourse at Dharmakshetra, Bombay, on 29-4-1990**

### **A Little will go far**

Laugh a little sing a little  
As you go your way!  
Work a little Play a little.  
Do this every day!

Give a little take a little,  
Never mind a frown—  
Make your smile a welcome thing  
All round the town!

Laugh a little love a little,  
Skies are always blue!  
Every cloud has silver linings,  
But it's up to you!

### ***SUMMER SHOWERS AT BRINDAVAN***

### **Memorable Festival of the Spirit**

Bhagavan Baba, among innumerable other things, is the Divine Alchemist. Whatever is His Sankalpa, it is transmuted into "something rich and strange."

So it was with the fifteen-day Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality which Bhagavan decided to hold at Brindavan from May 20th to June 3rd for the present and old students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

The last summer course, held in 1979, was for students chosen from all over India. This year's course- held after an interval of a decade- was confined entirely to Sai Institute students. Over 1100 students joined the course, including 500 students (250 boys and 250 girls) who were admitted to the degree courses this year.

Weeks before the course was to begin, Bhagavan was busy at Brindavan attending to every minute detail to ensure that all arrangements for the boarding and lodging of the students and guest-speakers were satisfactory.

The entire complex of buildings in the Brindavan campus received a facelift. Freshly painted, the buildings looked as good as new and presented an attractive appearance. The gardens of the campus were given a new look and at every turn one was greeted by Bhagavan's many memorable sayings.

Unlike the previous summer courses, the accent in this year's exercise was on a well-conceived programme of lectures designed to give to the students a synoptic view of Indian culture and spirituality and relate it to the problems of contemporary society as influenced by advances in science and technology. The guest-speakers were a galaxy of leading personalities from different walks of life- from a former Chief Justice of India (Mr. P.N. Bhagavati) and Justice Mrs. Padma Kashtagir to a couple of retired generals from the Indian Army (Gen. Mahadevan and Gen. Chibber), several former and present Vice Chancellors of Indian Universities (Prof. V. K. Gokak, Mr. Hanumanthappa, Bangalore, Dr. Chitti Babu, former V. C. of Madurai University, Dr. Jagadish Narain, former V. C. of the Roorkee University, Dr. Selvi Das, Mysore), a veteran representative of India's foreign service (Mr. Rasagotra), a leading scientist and educationist (Prof. S. Sampath), several specialists from the academic community (Dr. Ragbunathacharya, Sri Venkateswara University, Dr. A. V. Bhanoji Rao, Singapore University, Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai, Bangkok University) and a few other:, including Sri G. V. Subba Rao, retired Chief of the Energy Department of the United Nations, and Mr. S.D. Kulkarni, a historian, Mr. K. R. Prasad and Dr. Fanibunda. From the Sai Institute, the speakers were Dr. Saraf, Prof. Anil Kumar, Prof. Hemalatha, Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath and Prof. Zeba Basheeruddin.

Apart from these lectures, which were given in two sessions of two hours each, in the morning and the afternoon on most of the days, Bhagavan's daily discourses in the evening on all the fourteen days from May 20 to June 2 constituted the most insightful exposition of the mysteries governing the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the *Atma*. Every discourse was replete with references to the great scriptural texts and were punctuated by poems and *slokas* rendered in Bhagavan's own mellifluous voice.

On the final day, June 3rd, Bhagavan delivered the valedictory address in which He summed up the essential message of the summer course and exhorted the students not to be content with merely listening to the speeches but strive to put into practice at least a few of the teachings.

well equipped to lead ideal lives and serve society in all possible ways.

Two days earlier, an examination was held for all the participants.

The general feeling among the students was that they had benefited immensely from Bhagavan's discourses and the lectures of the guest-speakers and it was a rare privilege for them to receive so much valuable knowledge from such an assemblage of eminent leaders, in so short a period, and under the divine aegis of Bhagavan.

On most days, speeches by students or members of the Institute faculty preceded Bhagavan's discourses. These speeches, describing their experiences of Bhagavan, not only revealed what Bhagavan meant to the students but also the global implications of Bhagavan's Avataric mission.

—N.

### *Children's Corner:*

#### **How the Rains Came**

It is said that there was a great drought in Texas many years ago when the Comanche Indians roamed the land. Crops would not grow and the grasses dried up so that the buffalo, deer and antelope had nothing to eat. The tribe was dying from starvation.

The wise Shaman knew the reason for their suffering. His people had become selfish and uncaring. They had turned away from the days when everyone shared and helped each other. They neglected all the wisdoms of their forefathers.

The Shaman's daughter sat by his side remembering well the stories of the hunt of the buffalo and how the deer and antelope played in the hills. Now, everything was gone. The hills were parched red; the meadows bleached yellow by the spirit of the sun- the animals had disappeared. A tear fell from her eye as she thought of all the little children who would not know the beauty of their ways and the truth of their legends.

"Surely, father, there is a way to please the Great Spirit so he will send us rain", she pleaded.

Saddened by his daughter's tears, the Shaman replied, "My child, if we could learn to live in harmony with the earth and repay our elders for all that they have given us and open our hearts to our brothers and sisters, all would be well." His daughter listened well.

That night as the full moon shone brightly in the sky, the daughter called the tribe together around the blazing fire. "You must all offer your most prized possession to be burned in this fire. It will be your sacrifice to the Great Spirit."

Many prized gifts and trinkets made the flames dance and lick the dry air. All night warriors and women kept the fire burning. In the early morning, the youngest child of the tribe approached the fire and threw in her only doll. The blue feathers in the doll's hair flared brightly and the little Comanche watched sadly for the doll was her favourite toy. She loved it like a sister.

When the doll was completely consumed by the flames rain began to fall. It was a soft gentle rain that fell for several days washing away the drought. Birds began to sing and a blue flower, one that the Comanche had never seen before, began to blossom on the hillsides.

The tribe rejoiced for they knew well that the Great Spirit had been pleased by the littlest Comanche's sacrifice.

Every spring blue blossoms called Blue Bonnets cover the fields of Texas.

*(A Folk Tale from Texas)*

*AVATAR VANI:*

### **“Give up Selfishness: Cultivate Unity”**

"All the ills Bharat is suffering from are due to the lack of unity", declared Bhagavan Baba, in His discourse to a vast gathering of devotees at Dharmakshetra, Bombay, on April 27. Bhagavan spoke at length on the prevailing deplorable situation in the country after four decades of independence and attributed the disorder and violence prevailing everywhere to the ubiquitous growth of selfishness and self-centredness. Referring to the lack of patriotic spirit among the youth, Bhagavan said: "It is only when you have ideal leaders, ideal parents and ideal teachers that the students will be inspired to act on right lines."

In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said:

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

The people of Bharat have long been the upholders of Truth and Righteousness. Justice has been their basic way of life. Every Bharatiya is the inheritor of Truth and Righteousness. It is the bounden duty of every true Bharatiya to adhere to Truth and right conduct without deviation. The welfare of the world is the basic belief of Bharatiyas. This is their vow and their penance.

True Dharma (Righteousness) consists in constant practice of Truth and Right Conduct. In this lies victory.

to all kinds of troubles. What Bharatiyas have to protect is not the country but Truth and Righteousness; these will themselves protect them.

Every Bharatiya youth should have Sathya and Dharma as his twin ideals and regulate his daily life on that basis. Today the advance of modern science and technology has swept away the old culture and moral values like a typhoon. Moral values are fundamental for human life. Alas! These values have been almost totally destroyed. Science and technology have created formidable problems for mankind in their physical existence. Man's entire life is absorbed in selfish and self-centred pursuits.

### **Science and the spirit**

It is true that science and technology have conferred some benefits. But they have done greater harm than good. They are undermining the very root of humanness. While providing temporary and transient comforts, science and technology have turned humanity away from the spiritual quest altogether. They have served to encourage ostentation, possessiveness, self-interest, self-conceit and jealousy.

As a result, you do not find any trace of these good qualities which ought to distinguish man as a human being. At every step, man is straying from righteousness. In every word that is uttered, falsehood prevails. Love is absent from his vision. Every desire is misconceived. Every craving is inspired by greed. Sublime ideas have vanished. Spiritual concepts are treated with levity. The human consciousness is getting weakened. Likes and dislikes, attachment and aversion are having free play. In short, what we are witnessing is the eclipse of all that is human. Entire life has become artificial. The urgent task today is to nourish and cherish the human Spirit.

### **Youths: then and now**

Fifty years ago, young people strove for the freedom of the country in a patriotic spirit. They tried to follow the example of great national leaders like Sivaji, Samarth Ramdas, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Sardar Patel and others. They walked in their footsteps. They used to adore the pictures of these leaders. If you examine the attitudes of young people today, you will find chaos and confusion in their hearts. Patriotism has disappeared. Self-interest and selfish concerns rule the roost. In their rooms, in the place of pictures of national heroes, you see only pictures of film stars. These are the deities whom they worship. On their tables you see transistor radios and video sets. Love of the nation has vanished from their thoughts. What is the reason for this? The root cause is the absence of exemplary parents and teachers. Even among the leaders, there are few that can be considered ideal examples. It is only when you have ideal leaders, ideal parents and ideal teachers that the students will be inspired to act on right lines.

Therefore, if today we seek to set the students on the right path and raise them to a higher level, the parents should consider it their primary duty to set the right example. But parents do not seem to pay much attention to this.

In society today, love of God, fear of sin and social morality have disappeared. It is only when these three are promoted that you can have real human advancement. Peace has become a casualty all over the world, because people have lost the fear of sin, the love of God and basic ethics in social relationships.

Wherever you turn, you see only disorder and conflict today. Nor is that all. Fear has gripped everyone. You are haunted by fear whether in your home or out in the streets. Fear grips you when you get into a bus or a train, whether you are going in a car or in an aeroplane. How is life to be rid of fear?

The whole nation is afflicted by fear in many ways. When will we be utterly free from fear? "Thyaagenaike amrutatvam aanasuh," declares the Upanishad. Only by renunciation can immortality be achieved. It is through desirelessness or detachment (Vairagya) that fear can be banished.

Today people do not understand the meaning of desirelessness. They think that giving up hearth and home is renunciation. This is not what Vairagya implies. Whatever we do should be done in a spirit of goodwill and service. Everything you do should be regarded as conceived for the nation's well-being. The welfare of all must be looked upon as the motto of the nation.

From very early times, Bharatians have been offering to other countries treasures of the Spirit. From times immemorial they have lived up to the ideal "May all the worlds be happy!" To uphold this ideal, the rulers, the scholars, the sages and others made many sacrifices. Today the spirit of sacrifice is not to be seen anywhere.

### **Selfishness dominant**

It is selfishness that is the cause of all the cruelty and violence today. It is more than four decades since Bharat achieved its freedom. What is it we have accomplished after attaining Independence? All that we have achieved are strife, dispute, riots and violence. Selfishness has reared its head in these forty years.

Embodiments of love! Get rid of selfishness. Regard yourself as an integral member of society. Develop the faith that your welfare is bound up with the welfare of the society. Develop your social consciousness.

In human life, there are three important things: One is the individual; the second is the family; the third is the society. Today in whatever he does, man is concerned primarily about his individual interests. From there he proceeds towards concern for the family. But few care to take any interest in what concerns society as a whole. If society is not in good shape, how can individuals be well? Individual welfare is based on social well-being.

Consider every human being as a spark of the Divine. Every man is a child of immortality. Today we are failing to cultivate that sense of unity. All the ills Bharat is suffering from are due to the lack of unity. Union is strength. Lacking unity, we are becoming weak. To promote unity, we have to give up selfishness.

People talk about spirituality. What does it mean? Is it performance of Japa or sitting in meditation? No. Spirituality means the quest for oneness. It means discovering the underlying unity in the apparent multiplicity. Preoccupation with one's own destiny is not spirituality. That also is a form of selfishness. Hence, in every way, the awareness should be obtained that the cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. ("Vishwam Vishnuswaroopam"). The truth of the Upanishadic declaration, "Isaavaasyamidam sarvam " ("All this is permeated by the Divine") should become a firm conviction. Every body is like a bulb in each of which Truth shines as a manifestation of Divinity. The One has willed to become the many. Therefore, spirituality consists in recognising unity in diversity. All are children of one God. Like the waves of the ocean and the rays of the sun, Love emanates from the Divine in infinite drops. There is an inextricable relationship between God and Love. Hence, "Love is God; live in love." Your lives have to be lived on this basis.

### **Mental transformation**

These days men go through changes but minds do not change. The clothes are varied, but qualities remain the same. We need today mental transformation.

I have been coming to Bombay for the past nearly thirty years. You have listened to many discourses and read many books. You have gone to many high-souled persons. You have performed many kinds of service. But how far have you reformed yourselves? There is little change in you. The essence of spirituality is mental transformation. It has been said: "The mind is the cause of bondage or liberation." Without mental transformation, what is the use of all spiritual sadhanas? What is the use of prayers? Prayer does not mean uttering words with the lips. Prayer must come from the heart.

Embodiments of Love! Remember that the hands that serve are greater than the lips that pray. Dedicate yourselves to service to all. Real humanness consists in the spirit of service. Quantity does not matter; it is the quality of service that counts.

There is competition whether in performing Japa, dhyana (meditation ) or bhajan. This is not proper. Whatever is done should be performed wholeheartedly and spontaneously. The primary requisite is purification of the heart. When the heart is purified, man gets Jnanashuddhi (the Supreme Wisdom). Fill your heart with the Divine. Dedicate every action to the Divine in a spirit of detachment. Divine love can be secured only by dedicated service to the Divine. God responds bounteously to what you offer. Kuchela got, in return for a handful of parched rice given to Krishna, limitless prosperity. Draupadi was rewarded likewise. How can you expect God to love you if you do not love God? God's grace is like a bank. You can draw money from



God's grace through love and sacrifice.

When people claim to be Sai devotees, they should lead ideal and exemplary lives. Broaden your minds. Cultivate human values. Love, Truth, forbearance and compassion are the highest human qualities. Hatred, envy and greed are animal qualities. If you develop at least a few human qualities, you can progress towards God-realisation.

At present, when you approach God, it is only out of selfish concerns. Selfishness is rampant in every action. It is most essential to get rid of selfishness. Only then divinity will manifest itself in you. Develop sacred love in your hearts. The feeling "I and you are one" should grow. Spirituality consists in filling the heart with love, dedicating all actions to the Divine and striving for the welfare of all.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho.*")

#### ***THE POWER OF LOVE***

### **From Despair to Discovery**

It took becoming blind for me to really see. I am twenty-nine years old, and I have been seriously ill with multiple sclerosis since age fifteen. At the onset of my illness it was misdiagnosed as "chemically induced depression and loss of co-ordination". Neurological changes caused my healthy and extremely athletic body to slowly deteriorate.

Fatigue made it impossible for me to maintain over-achiever's straight A-plus status in the gifted advanced placement classes at school. For six years my illness was diagnosed as a "hysterical, psychotic, depressive disorder." My legs became sluggish, my grades dropped, and the fear within me grew to terror. The psychiatrists methodically quizzed me on whether I felt like committing suicide. After six weeks of such questioning, I began describing to the doctor how I wanted to do it. Then, at age sixteen, I was committed to an adolescent psychiatric institute for nine months.

The psychiatrists told me there was only a God for people who were weak and could not believe in themselves. After they taught me all about suicide, I took three massive overdoses which left me breathless and comatose.

After awakening from the coma, I should have felt blessed to feel the sunshine and to be alive; however, I did not. But I still had some of my sight then, and a constant curiosity about the world.

How old, or young, did my mom look when she died four years ago? Is my dad's bald spot bigger? Do I look my age? Are my eyes the same color, or are they glassy, lifeless, and dull?

The darkness inhibits my sense of this fast-changing world. At times the frustration brings tears to eyes that don't see but can still cry.

My condition worsened after a head-on crash on my moped, in which I impacted my head at 30 mph into a telephone pole. My jaw and the bones of my face were crushed. A massive reconstructive surgery was done, and the optic nerve deterioration was clearly seen in my eyes. The damage was severe and irreversible. Labour Day 1980, the day of my accident, was the last time I drove a motor vehicle. I was twenty years old. Again I was diagnosed, this time accurately, as having multiple sclerosis. M. S. meant to me, "no treatment, no cure." I lost the rest of my sight. I succumbed to a wheelchair. I was forced to quit Cal Poly University. I became bedridden, blind, mentally and physically beaten. I entered a nursing home, ready to die... that was January, 1983.

### **How the change came**

However, there was a change—I am now a world-renowned Olympic Equestrian Champion. My will gave me the power to win against all odds. No, there was another will within me, not Darwin's evolution, but my love for my parents and family. The will to live came back when my mom said she loved me, so it was all right for me to "go". My will was to help the mentally ill at that institution where I had been labelled "hysterical", and to defend the other kids there who could not defend themselves. I desired to show the world a heart, a love that never quits striving to honor those I love, especially my little brother, who came into my ICU room when I was full of tubes to keep me alive.

I am still blind, but only through my blindness do I see. Could God have given it to me as a gift? I began training on horseback from a wheelchair. My trainer used an intricate language of verbal cues over a walkie-talkie to guide me around an otherwise darkened arena.

### **The blind equestrian**

I am the only blind rider on the U S. circuit. My glorified walkie-talkie communication and the story of having been bedridden has filled the hearts of millions who have read my story in publications throughout the world. I trained for three years straight in exercise, visual imagery, and riding meditation.

My motto in the speeches I have made is, "A silver medalist takes the weekends off, I wanted to go for the gold." I wrote my life story by dictation. I can write only with special writing guides for the blind. But is this the ego speaking? How do I enter an arena and flawlessly manoeuvre my horse around many obstacles, weaving around poles, through L-shapes, and over as many as three jumps in a row-almost three feet high-without seeing them? Over the hurdles I have no fear, but how? I am so blessed to have had everything taken away and replaced with love. I see with my heart—and need not fear the threatening wooden

stare—as life left her body four years ago—was not painful, for my eyes can only remember life. My wheelchair is a friend that, intermittently, gives me rest. My eyes still see me running. When I could run, did I ever thank God for that graceful speed? No, because I was sightless and crippled in other ways. Could I have ever imagined my miserable life to be a God-planned gift?

### **The power of love**

On the days of my gold medal victories—as the press swarmed around me pushing their microphones close, and cameras whirled and clicked—they asked, "How do you win among all the sighted competitors?" My reply was, "Love and the memories of those who loved me when I was less than nothing." "But how do you win every single time? You've won 18 state, national, and international championships- blind?" I reply, "Justice, love, and God when combined with blindness, helps one to see the light."

With sight I saw only darkness. God guides us as a traffic sign which says, "wrong way." But are we grateful that the sign is warning us of impending danger? No, instead we curse our lousy luck, meeting a turn we didn't expect. Pain is a gift God uses to test our limits.

### **Visions of Baba**

My mother's death brought about a quantum leap in my spiritual growth. I began to see visions down a tunnel of light as answers to prayers. My mom's spirit and many others appeared in colored robes- with one man who was prominent in those visions. He was clothed in an orange robe and had Negroid features. Again and again, visions turned into future truths, and the man in the orange robe seemed to direct the visions. Could there be a physical spirit-world as the Bible says, a kind of, "Heaven on Earth"? My heightened excitement made me want to run and shout! I've found the truth, but who are these spirits I see so clearly without sight?

Several family friends had returned from India after witnessing a man who performed great miracles before their eyes. I listened to them, but was still sceptical. I considered taking a trip to India to be in His presence, to "witness" this holy man. But I can't witness anything. I will never see for myself if it is true that He is God. Angry, I saw another vision, reminding me in moving picture form of a premonition that led to the healing of a tumor in my jaw. The strange man with the frizzy, black hair was directing the entire show. Dejected, I looked and studied Him closely. He was as clear to my unseeing eyes as though He was really there. He was short with an orange silk robe, bare feet, kind brown eyes, and dark skin.

### **"God has come"**

Still frustrated—that I could never see the holy man in India whom my friend had visited—I called my friend. I thought at least she could describe the miracles, and I could imagine Him. She said: "He is an *Avatar*, an incarnation of God in human form. He can do anything and knows all. He can heal from within." Feeling more blind than ever, I imagined a tall, turbaned figure. I asked, "What does He look like?" My friend said, "He is short, dark, with frizzy hair, Negroid features, loving brown eyes, wears an orange robe, and He goes around in His bare feet!"

witness this holy man. Nor did I need eyesight to see His miracles. Even in blindness, I know that God has come.

—**Mikko Mayeda Ontario, California**  
(From the U.S. Sathya Sai News Letter)

**TESTAMENT OF FAITH**

**Divine Grace at Work**

The last para of the article on page 273 of the "Sanathana Sarathi" of October 1989, which reads "We should all be like the elephant, ever-ready, ever watchful, taking each opportunity to praise the Divine, not only in Swami, but in each person or thing that our life touches," has impelled me to write about my experiences. I prayed to Swami and by His grace it was made possible for me to write this article.

Bhagavan graciously afforded me opportunities to visit Puttaparthi twice, including the opportunity to attend His 60th Birthday celebrations and also to be present at Brindavan on Easwaramma Day (May 6 1984). After seeing Swami on this day I felt within myself that My Lord would be with me for the rest of my life.

I am now over 50 years old and have come up in life the hard way by the grace of God. My life has been full of obstacles I was able to overcome difficulties by daily prayers. Only after seeing Bhagavan on Easwaramma Day in 1984, I started to feel that God has answered my prayers and directed me to Swami.

I left school in my early teenage before completing my secondary education and started working in a firm. But, God gave me courage and guidance to continue my education by private studies and I joined public service in Sri Lanka in 1959.

All human beings have desires and ambitions. But these cannot be achieved without His grace. I wanted to achieve a professional status in my profession. After working for 16 years in Sri Lanka, I went to the U.K. for higher studies in 1975, after selling all my belongings. I studied there till 1977 but could not achieve what I wanted because of many domestic problems. I left the U.K. in 1977 and went and worked in Nigeria till 1983, but all the time I was thinking of my professional qualification. I left everything in His hands and came back to India in 1983 as my son was studying in Bangalore.

My wife was a Sai devotee before I got married in 1970. We have only one child, a son, and we named him Brindavan. He is now 18 years old. While working in Nigeria we thought of sending our son to India for education, but never thought that he would go to Bangalore. In 1982 when we went to India for our annual holidays, we visited Bangalore. Getting school admission

information for admission in the following year (1983), we were told that there was a vacancy for my son for 1982 and, if we wished, we could admit him immediately. I was a little hesitant as we did not go prepared for immediate admission of the boy. We felt that it was Bhagavan's direction and accepted the offer. I left my wife and son in Bangalore and left for Nigeria. Before I left I visited Bhagavan's ashram near Whitefield in 1982.

### **A memorable visit**

After finishing my work in Nigeria, I came back to India in September 1983. I was trying to get jobs but failed. All the time I was thinking of my professional qualification, but at the same time I felt it was beyond my reach because of my age and other factors. Suddenly, one day a friend of mine came from Sri Lanka to Bangalore and took me to Whitefield on 6th May, 1984. I had Bhagavan's first darshan on that day and I felt a great sense of relief in my mind. Within a few weeks I was able to make arrangements to get admission to pursue the course of studies in the U.K. and left for U.K. in July 1984.

Immediately on arrival in London, I went to a friend's place at Ilford to get accommodation. Since nobody was there, I dropped a note and came to the road. At that time a gentleman from a nearby house came out and asked me whether I wanted any help. I told him the purpose of my visit. He took me to his place. When I entered it I felt a holy experience. They were conducting prayers and Holy Ash was dropping from several photos of Swami. I told him that I had had Bhagavan's darshan only a few weeks earlier in Brindavan and was coming from Bangalore. He was very happy, as he also came from India, and spoke about Bhagavan's miracles. He told me that I should visit Sai Villa at Meads Lane, Seven Kings, U.K., so that I could get more of Bhagavan's blessings and volunteered to help me. It was really a wonderful experience as an unknown person in a foreign land came out to tell me about Swami.

### **The presence everywhere**

When I went to my brother's place in Surrey, I was told that a room had been arranged for me at Campbell Road, East Ham. I moved into the place on the following day. When I entered that house, I noticed a photo of Swami on the wall of the sitting room. The owner of this house was also a Sai devotee and an Indian. I thought it was a great coincidence and happily started my studies.

After a few months it was found that I could not follow the course of studies as it was too difficult for me, due to the introduction of modern technology and other new systems. My age and some domestic factors were barriers to my concentration. I thought of discontinuing the course, but somehow or other I carried on. I prayed to Bhagavan for help.

I went to Sai Villa in December, 1984 and saw many people handing over letters to Sri Sanjeevan Sarma to get answers from Swami for their problems. I do not know how to describe the holiness that prevails at Sai Villa. It is a holy place like Prasanthi Nilayam. Devotion and Love shown by Sri Sarma and family were exemplary. Something urged me also to hand over a letter to get a message from Baba. So I did. On the following day I got the message from Sri

thrilling moment and I left everything in His hands and continued my studies. The result came in June 1985. I passed the examination and it was a glorious moment in my life as Bhagavan had helped me and guided me from the beginning. I was the only Asian who passed the examination (RICS) at that time except for very few from Singapore and Hong Kong. All the others were from the U K. What can I say on this? The Lord knows everything. Swami says: "You must struggle. You cannot go to the top without an effort. Have faith in ultimate victory, gather courage and faith from wherever you can get them . . . Can you pass an examination without studying the texts?" (Swami's Discourse 'The Underlying Truths', 10-7-1959)

### **Swami's continued guidance**

I left the U. K. in June 1985 and went back to India to join my family. I was planning to migrate to Australia, as I could not find any job suited to my qualification. The application for emigration was lodged and I was waiting for along time. I was qualified for migration in all respects but unfortunately the process dragged on indefinitely. I got frustrated as I had been jobless for several years.

Suddenly an old friend of mine from Brunei telephoned to me in August 1987 to come there to take up a job. He is also a Sai devotee. While staying in Brunei the application for migration to Australia was processed and came through within six months. All the events happened on Thursdays. It was Swami who came to my help. I do not know how to write all the Divine experiences in detail. The Lord is always with us to wipe our tears.

My experience shows that our duty is to do the right thing and leave the rest to Him. When I look back on my past life and experiences, I could come to the conclusion that God always follows us and directs us in every action that leads to ultimate truth. But, we must have full faith in Swami.

I always remember Swami's teachings: "Render as much service as you can to others. Involve yourselves in social service. And have God's name on your lips. Whatever you do, do it with love and not as a mechanical routine. Don't render service with a sense of compulsion from others. Service should be done with spontaneous feeling from the heart. Not force but the Source (The Divine) should inspire you." (Bhagavan's discourse on 4.10-1989). Let me pray to Him to help me practise the same.

—*San Amir, Sydney, Australia*

### **LEARNING TOLERANCE:**

### **Bully becomes Friendly**

Serada was an eight-year-old girl who was constantly bullied by Vickie, a ten year old. Vickie called Serada 'four eyes' because she wore glasses. She mimicked Serada's accent and

made Vickie more belligerent.

In frustration, Serada talked to her mother. "Mom, what can I do? Vickie makes me feel so bad."

"Have you done anything to provoke her?" Her mother asked.

"No. But I've called her a few names when she makes me mad."

Serada's mother smiled and put her arm around her daughter's shoulder. "Dear. Why don't you try being nice to her," she suggested.

"NICE! How can I be nice to her when she is so mean to me?" Serada said.

Serada's mother explained that since acting like Vickie didn't solve the problem and only made it worse, may be she should try another way. "Being tolerant and kind always helps, Serada?" Her mother said. "Tell her she's pretty or smart or anything that might make her feel better about herself. See, what happens."

At school the next morning, when Vickie started to bully Serada again, Serada remembered what her mother had said. She noticed how nicely Vickie was dressed and said sweetly, "You look pretty today Vickie."

Vickie sneered but Serada continued. "Hey, where did you get those sharp shoes, I sure like them"

"My mother bought them in Detroit, Serada. Do you really like them?" Vickie asked. They both began to speak together in a much more friendly manner. Vickie never bullied Serada again and they became good friends.

***(From the EHV Manual for Teachers, Canadian edition)***

*Temples are intended to instruct men in the art of removing the veil of attachment that lies over their heart. That is the reason why Thyagaraja cried in the temple at Tirupati, "Remove the veil within me, the veil of pride and hate." The fog of Maya melted away before the rays of Grace and so, he could discern and describe the image of Divine Charm In the song, "Sivudano Madhavudano" and drink deep the sweetness of that Form. The churning of his heart by the Divine Formula produced the spark of Jnana, and it grew into the Flame of Realisation.*

*Not only in this Kaliyuga but even the earlier yugas, the Kritha, the Treta and the Dwapara, Namasmarana has been the secret of liberation from bondage. The temple is the place where*

## **Bhagavan's Mission Forges Ahead in Africa**

*The Sai message is reaching more and more countries in the African Continent. "Sai Africa News", published in London by the Central Coordinators for the African region, carries in its December 1989 issue, an interesting report by Mr. Dare Ggunkolati on Bhagavan's special concern for Africans. Following are excerpts from the report*

The year 1989 rolled in just like any other year and African devotees went about the usual execution of their various "action plans" drawn for the year, covering Spiritual, Educational, and Service activities.

For a few of them, Baba and Puttaparthi have been visited several times over and they have, therefore, become familiar with Swami's superlative radiation of positive rays of love, affection etc. But for the majority of them, Baba's physical form and the much-talked about "abode of unequalled peace", called Prasanthi Nilayam still remained a big dream because of the huge transport costs involved, more so when most of their countries are currently undergoing structural adjustment of their national economy.

But towards the end of the year, the story took a new turn. To the amazement of many and to the surprise of one of the African Coordinators, Mr. Dare Ggunkolati who was present on this particular day, Swami Himself called on him to "go and bring 'Negro' African devotees." What a task! Who was he to complain after all? He believed that with Swami's blessing, the mission was as good as accomplished.

The execution of the assignment started in earnest, at least to coincide with Bhagavan's birthday in November, 1989. First and foremost, Baba's instruction was conveyed in writing, by the Central Coordinators, to all Sathya Sai Centres in Region V (Africa). In response, the Centre Chairmen filed names of eager devotees and then arrangements to put them on board flights to Puttaparthi began. The joy in the hearts of the devotees is better imagined than described in words. They were really joyous at having the opportunity to celebrate Baba's birthday right there with him, as special guests having been specially invited by Baba.

The "Negroes" were called in for interview on 27th November. They were blessed by Baba. As one would expect a host to please his guest, Baba spoke to and cracked some jokes with them. He, as usual, gave them gifts ranging from pendants to pictures and, of course, Vibhuti.



Africans again, the second time, and this time, for a longer period. It was an unprecedented opportunity ever given to a group of people. They were not only given audience, but were personally lectured... even had several knotty spiritual questions answered. Baba was so happy to meet his "Negro" devotees that He materialised two "Lingams" for two of them as a lasting spiritual treasure and gifts from the heart!

Apart from this historic "pilgrimage" of the "Negro" devotees to Prasanthi Nilayam as Baba's special guests, Africans experienced Baba's attention and presence throughout the year. Lots and lots of testimonies have been narrated, most of which may sound incredible to non-devotees.

As far as we are concerned and on the basis of what we have heard, felt and seen, Baba is REAL! He radiates LOVE beyond what any mortal can explain. For this and more, we are grateful to Him.

The year 1989 witnessed the SAI message reaching more and more people and countries.

May Baba continue showering His blessings on our great continent and region—AFRICA.

**OM SAI RAM**

*(Editor's Note: "Sai Africa News" contains detailed reports of the varied activities of Sai centres in six African Countries: Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Sai centres are functioning in 11 Countries and there are active Sai groups in 8 other Countries).*

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

## **Sanctify the Body**

*Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!*

The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are vestures worn by man. Only when you understand the significance and purpose of these entities can you make proper use of them. You wear trousers, coat, banian, shirt etc. Only when you know how to use each of these items can you use them in the right way and get the benefit thereof. Otherwise you may make bizarre use of them, like putting on the banian over the shirt. Hence, you see to it that the clothes are worn properly. Likewise, your body is a garment. It is only when you know how it should be worn and how it should be used that you can make good use of it and get the best out of it.

*"Dahyati iti dehah":* "The body is that which is burnt". This is the derived meaning of the word "deha" (the body). It is well known that the body is burnt after death. But the body

contaminated and riddled with disease. It is a bundle of bones. It will not save you from the ocean of birth and death. Therefore, cling to the lotus feet of Hari. Oh mind!" This was the prayer of the sages. The body is made up of the five elements and is impermanent. Only the Indwelling Spirit is eternal and unchanging. You may accept the body that you have assumed and even enjoy it. But you should know how to guard it and enjoy it.

Another name for the body is "Sarira". The word is derived from the term, "Siryathi iti sariraha": "That which is liable to decay". At birth the body is a lump of flesh and blood. As it grows it acquires beauty of form in youth. Then it is overtaken by the ravages of old age. The body is thus subject to many changes.

### **The body as a temple**

A third name for the body is "Mandir" (temple or shrine). It is described as a temple enshrining the eternal divine Atma (individual soul). Viewed as a temple, it has to be regarded as the sacred and pure abode of the Divine. As such it should not be misused. This implies that the body is intended to be used for having good thoughts and good deeds.

Because the body is given for performing right actions, it has to be maintained in a fit condition. It is the instrument for all activity and therefore should be maintained well.

Every time before you do anything, you have to put to yourself this question: "I am the indwelling divine Atma in this body. As such, is it proper for me to do this action or not?" You have also to determine whether the particular action is proper or improper. Only then you will be using the body in the right way. You dare not use the body according to your whims just because you have got it.

### **Kshetra and kshetrajna**

The body has also been called "Kshetra". The Gita enjoins that one should know what kshetra is and who is the Kshetrajna. You are the Knower of the field dwelling within the body (the kshetra). You have to remain as a witness and see that the body is properly used.

We describe Kasi (Varanasi), Badarinath, Tirupati as Kshetras, because they are associated with the Divine and enjoy a holy atmosphere. Sacred actions like worship are performed in these places. Similarly, in the kshetra of the body, good thoughts and good actions should prevail. This is the inner meaning of the appellation kshetra (holy place).

The other meaning of the term 'kshetra' is field. In this field of the body, the fruits we reap are dependent on the seeds we sow. If you sow good thoughts, you reap the fruit of good actions. Evil thoughts will yield only bad results. The body is thus a field in which the seeds of merit and sin are sown. In cultivating a field for growing crops, we wait for the right season and the appropriate conditions to sow particular seeds. The suitability of a land for growing a particular crop has to be decided. Sowing cannot be done indiscriminately. However, for this body, considered as a field, there are no such constraints. It can be cultivated in all conditions and at all

good crop or a poor crop. You may not realise your expectations. But in the case of the human body, you are bound to reap the fruits of the good or the bad thoughts you sow as seeds. You will have cent percent return. As you sow, so will you reap. The crop depends on your thoughts and the harvest will be determined by your actions. You must therefore ensure that only seeds in the form of good thoughts are sown. You should not misuse the body as you like.

### **Importance of food**

Those who wish to use the body properly and see that they have good thoughts and perform good acts, have to take note of two factors: Regulation of diet and regulation of their environments.

You must seek to know what kind of food you should eat. You should not consume any kind of food merely to appease hunger. You must take only Satwic food. Our thoughts are determined by the kind of food we consume. The body is cleansed by water. The mind is purified by Truth. It is only when what is conducive to truth is taken that you can pursue the path of Truth.

As the body is a sacred shrine you should not take in any intoxicating substances. Articles of food which promote Rajasic qualities (like anger) should be eschewed.

### **Food for the senses**

What is Satwic food? The prevalent view is that fruits and milk constitute Satwic food. This is not all. What is consumed by the mouth is not the only thing that goes into the body. The other sense organs like the eyes, the ears, the nose and the hands also "consume" objects from the outside world. Through the eyes you have to see only what is pure. To see all kinds of things indiscriminately is fraught with dangers. The power of sight should be used only for sacred purposes. Unfortunately the vision of youth today is getting increasingly perverted (Keechaka Drishti). The result is they meet with the same fate as Keechaka (in the Mahabharata) who was destroyed by Bhima. Students should be particularly careful in this regard. It is only when they use the eyes in a pure and godly way will they be receiving Satwic impressions through the eyes.

The ears also need pure food. This means that you should listen only to sacred speech and hear only matters about the Divine. Always hear good and pleasant things about others. In this way, you must safeguard the ears from pollution. Only then will you be "consuming" Satwic food through the ears.

Only fragrant and sweet smelling scents should be absorbed through the nose. When foul smell is inhaled disease sets in. If you inhale foul air, you are likely to breathe in disease producing germs. You must inhale pure air in a clean open space.

Even the hands must "consume" pure food. This means that you must perform good acts with your hands. That is the way to treat the body as a temple.

and action (arising from the misuse of the five sense organs), you will be able to Divinise yourself (become the Paramatma). If the senses are fed with polluted stuff, you cannot become pure merely by taking milk and fruit. You must take in pure Satwic food through all the five sense organs.

### **Five gates for the body**

There are many doors to a temple. They are intended to let in devotees who seek to worship God. Gateways in temp-s are intended only for devotees to enter. Similarly there are for this temple of the body five gates. What is the purpose of these doorways? If we build a house and erect doors in it, they are for the use of our kith and kin and not for all stray animals to walk in. If such animals enter, the doors are shut against them. Likewise, the doors in this sacred body should be kept open only for sacred and Divine entrants. Only then it deserves the name "Kshetra" (shrine) it ceases to be a temple if unholy objects are allowed to enter it.

### **The company you keep**

Next comes "Vihara" (moving in different places). You will have to consider seriously what sort of places you should visit, what kind of environment in which you should live and what type of persons with whom you should associate yourselves. You should eschew all bad company, because your thoughts are related to the company you keep. Young people today are cultivating bad company. They take easily to bad ways. This is an affront to the human body. The sages of yore chose to live in solitude for directing their thoughts towards God. But even this is a sign of weakness. For instance, if you want to subdue anger, can you do it by any amount of penance in a forest? As your anger arises in the midst of people, it has to be conquered only in the same milieu and not in an unpeopled forest. You may remain tranquil as long as you are in the forest but when you come back to a crowd, you will be the same old irate person.

If you want to control your senses, it is a delusion to imagine that this can be done by some kind of rigorous penance. It can be achieved easily if you understand the subtle workings of the body. You can utilise your new car well, for instance, only if you know all about its working and how it should be run.

### **Proper use of the body**

All the troubles of man are due to the fact that he does not know how to make proper use of his body. Hence, he is a prey to sorrow and disease. One thing should be remembered: No one can go against the Divine Will. No one can alter the Lord's law. It should be realised that the body functions because of the consciousness (Chaitanya) within it. Just as the lights, the born and the engine in a car, though inert in themselves, begin to function when the power is supplied to them from the battery, likewise the organs in the vehicle that is the human body (the eyes, the ears etc.,) can function well only if the Atmic consciousness animates and activates them. Just as a magnet attracts iron filings by its magnetic power, the Atma is responsible for the operation of all the organs which are inert by themselves.

### **Three misconceptions**

him as his own. Another is to regard persons who do not belong to him as his own. The third is to regard the evanescent as the eternal. Man considers the body as his real self. If that is the case, why should he say, "This is my body." The statement clearly implies that he is different from the body. (The owner is different from what he owns). When a man says, "This is my kerchief," he is apart from the kerchief, which he can cast away. Hence, how can one say that he is the body? This is the first mistake.

Secondly, in worldly affairs man is misled by the belief that he is the owner of properties of various kinds—houses, vehicles, etc. You build a house and call it yours. You sell it and it is no longer yours. Likewise, you buy a car and call it "Mine". When you sell it, it ceases to be yours. So, it is yours as long as you use it. Forgetting that all these possessions are temporary, you develop attachments for them. Nothing is yours. How can those which belong to the body be yours? All these are caused by the cloak of delusion (Maya), the sense of possessiveness and the aberrations of the mind. All of them are passing clouds. Before marriage, no one can say who is the husband and who is the wife. Before birth no one can say who is the mother and who is the child. Only after birth, you declare, "He is my son." Only after marriage, you say, "This is my wife." All these relationships are associated with the body. The same person is called in different ways according to various relationships.

You have to do your duty by your kith and kin. But while discharging your duties, you have to keep the Supreme always in mind. The worldly life has to be led, with spiritual relation as the goal. As long as you live in the world, you have to conform to the ways of the world. But the ideal must be based on the recognition that nothing belongs to you—neither mother, nor father, kinsmen or wealth. All these are related to the changing body, which is the basis for all mental aberrations. It is wrong to regard the body as permanent. But it is essential to keep the body in good health as long as there is life, just as you must ensure that your boat does not spring a leak till you cross the river. The body has to be kept clean and for this purpose you have to practise chanting the Lord's name and doing Japa. The Divine cleanses the heart, when you offer it to God.

Students! Besides the body, you have to reckon with the sense organs, the mind and the Buddhi. It is only when their nature is properly understood will one be able to lead a full human life. In the absence of such understanding, man becomes a prey to many difficulties.

There is constant talk about Sadhana but no special sadhana is needed if one gets at the Truth. All sadhana is aimed at perceiving the Truth.

During the ensuing fortnight, if you are able to grasp the nature of the body, the senses, the mind, the Buddhi, and the Atma, which is the Supreme Witness presiding over all of them, you will be able to master the mystery of the cosmos (which is made up of the five basic elements, the Pancha Bhutas). As God is the basis of everything, you have to develop faith in God.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Chitta Chora, Yasodake baal*").

**From Bhagavan's discourse on the evening of May 20 at the Brindavan Campus  
auditorium**

No excuse is tenable for shirking a duty. A job has to be performed not as a mere routine which has to be completed but should be done with a sense of duty and commitment.

Guru Nanak called his son and said: "Clean the 'Go-shala' my son! Today I have forgotten to clean it."

The son had taken his bath a few minutes earlier and had already dressed himself. He did not like to go to the 'Go-shala' (Cow-shed) lest his clothes should get dirty. He said to his father

"I have yet to do my obeisance and I should go there neat and clean." He then went away from there to the temple.

The Guru called his pupil Angad and asked him to clean the 'Go-shala'. He nodded and immediately went there to do the job. After cleaning it he took his bath once more and went to the temple for the obeisance.

The next day Guru Nanak declared Angad his successor before a large congregation.

Usually according to tradition the son always succeeds his father as the Chief Priest. Guru Nanak's decision was a big surprise for the followers.

When the Guru's students gathered in his chambers, one of them asked him, "Gurudev! Why did you break the tradition and appoint Angad your successor?"

"... because, I think Angad is more qualified than my son. One who is hesitant even to clean a 'Go-shala' can never clean the society."

*(From Bal Vikas Magazine)*

**GURUDEVA VANI:**

## **The Human Chariot**

*Dear Students!*

Man is a combination of body, mind and Atma. The three together help man to reach the highest stage. The body is the instrument for actions. The mind is the means of cognition. The changeless and permanent Reality is the Atma. This is the divinity in man.

have different names and characteristics, but it is their joint role which helps man to divinise himself. Their alienation from each other degrades man to the animal level.

"Antahkarana" is used both in common speech and in spiritual parlance. What is its form, its nature, its special quality, and what is its purpose? When we enquire along these lines, we find that the mind itself takes the subtle form of Antahkarana (the inner activator). The mind assumes four forms: Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara, (mind, intelligence, memory and ego). Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara are three subtle forms of the mind. According to the function that is performed, the particular name is given. The same Brahmin, when he is performing puja in a temple, is called a priestly Brahmin (pujari); when he is working in the kitchen, he is called a Brahmin cook; when teaching students, he is called a Brahmin teacher, and when interpreting the almanac (Panchaanga) he is called a 'Panchaanga Brahmin'.

In the same manner when the mind is engaged in thought processes, it is called Manas. When it is engaged in the process of enquiry and discrimination between right and wrong, it is called Buddhi (intelligence). The third name is Chitta, the will or the decision-making agency. It has the function of memory. When the mind identifies itself with the body in action it is called Ahamkara (I-am-the-doer).

The mind, although one, displays these varied forms on account of the different roles it assumes. The mind is the cause of all things. The whole cosmos is a projection of the mind. "Manomoolam idam Jagat" (The mind is at the root of the cosmos).

### **Mind, thoughts and actions**

Man derives his name from the possession of the mind. As a man thinks so he becomes ("Yad bhaavam tad bhavati"). Man means mind and mind means man. What is the mind? It is a bundle of thoughts. What we enjoy or suffer in this world are the consequences of these actions. The good and bad things in the world are dependent on man's actions. What is the impulse for these actions? Thoughts. It follows that only when man's thoughts are good, his life will be good.

Thoughts are highly potent. They survive the death of a man. Hence it is essential to keep out bad thoughts from our minds. It is bad thoughts which separate man from man and make them forget their common divinity. When men realise that the Spirit in everyone is one and the same, there will be no room for differences.

Proceeding from the individual, man gets related to society, the nation and the world. The peace of the world depends on the individual. The individual as well as the world are based on the mind. Hence the need for proper disciplining of the mind. Like a fish swimming against the current and saving itself from dangers, man should combat the evil thoughts within and protect himself from dangers.

### **Colours of the mind**



his condition. The mind is the source of all thoughts and because different persons have different thoughts, there are differences amongst them. Because of these differences, different colours are attributed to the mind. For instance, the mind that is filled with anger is red in colour. A selfish mind is brownish. An egoistic mind is of the orange hue. The mind dedicated to God is pure white. We stain the mind with different colours. They do not come from outside. It is each one's thoughts which impart a particular colour to his mind. Hence it is only when the mind is filled with good thoughts that one's life can be peaceful and safe.

### **The charioteer and the horses**

Today the world is riddled with fear. Whether you are at home or out in the streets, you are haunted by fear. The root cause for this ubiquitous fear is the absence of pure and sacred thoughts in the mind. The whole world is a maze filled with fear at every turn. You know how to enter the maze (Padmavyuha) but you do not know how to get out of it. This was the tragedy of Abhimanyu. You know how to enter the maze of worldly pleasures but do not know how to get out of it. You will know the way out only when you submit your thoughts to the scrutiny of the Buddhi (intelligence).

### **The mind and intelligence**

In the Kathopanishad, the body is compared to a chariot, the senses to horses, the mind to the reins and the Buddhi to the charioteer. What is the role of the mind in this analogy? The reins (mind) are between the horses and the charioteer. This means that the mind is between the senses and the Buddhi. If the mind follows the dictates of the Buddhi, it will be safe. If it gives free rein to the senses, it will be a bond-slave of the senses and as a result experience sorrow.

Allowing the senses free rein is the Pravritti Marga (the external path). Controlling the senses is the Nivritti Marga (the internal path). Most people are content to pursue the external. Few are concerned to explore the internal.

In the Upanishad analogy it must be noted that unless the charioteer (Buddhi) holds the reins (the mind), the chariot cannot be managed properly. If the senses (the horses) are given free rein, the chariot will be in trouble and everyone in it will be in trouble. What is happening today is the misuse of the body and violence to the Atma.

Most people today are engaged in causing harm to others. Even if they succeed in this, they do not realise that the ill they do will come back to them many-fold. An outstanding example is found in the Mahabharata. Duryodhana and Dussasana subjected the high-minded Pandavas to innumerable hardships. What was their fate ultimately? They were utterly destroyed,

Students! Don't think of doing harm to others. Whatever evil you do will recoil on you sooner or later. There are some persons who cavil not only at other men, but even against God. This seems to be natural to them. In fact God has done them no harm. Yet they revile against God. It is the nature of some evil-minded persons to do harm even to those who have done them no harm.

Students should totally avoid bad company, because bad traits are contagious. Cultivate the company of the good.

Remember that when one is born he comes with a garland given by the Creator - the garland of the fruits of good and bad actions done by him in previous lives. Engage yourselves always in good thoughts and good actions. Be grateful to God for all that He has given you.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho, Rama. Rama, Ram!*" After the discourse there was a musical presentation of the Rama story by old students of the Institute.

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 24-5-1990**

*SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:*

*GURUDEV VANI:*

## **The Abode of the Spirit**

*Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

The human body, although it is valueless in itself and is impermanent, has to be carefully protected because it enshrines the Divine Atma. This is man's foremost duty.

Without a strong physique, man is subject to numerous ailments. The ancient Romans, who were aware of this truth and who were the forerunners of western civilization, displayed deep concern regarding the development of the body.

The body is a world in itself. It is not merely the outer form. It is the collective embodiment of various organs and limbs. Each organ has its own beauty, which has to be fostered. A body afflicted with disease is incapable of any resolute action. Pure and sublime ideas can emanate only from a healthy and strong body. Men of all faiths are agreed on this.

The Divine Spirit illumines the body though it is compounded of flesh, blood and many impure things. The Atma does not grow with the body's strength nor does it decay owing to the body's weakness. The Atma Principle is not subject to growth or decay. It is ever pure, precious and immutable.

### **Temple of the spirit**

People professing different faiths are all agreed on the need to nourish the health and happiness of the body because they regard the body as the temple of the Lord within. Instead of practising right actions and putting the body to proper use, many subject the body to various

starving the body?

Man's primary aim should be to achieve Atma Jnana (Self-realisation). The first step in this quest for self-knowledge is to understand the nature of man.

However many lives one may have had the body he has assumed now is new. Divinity is inherent in man. The discovery of his real Self calls for appropriate enquiry leading to the perception of the Real. Through this perception, man can experience the cosmos in its entirety. Without going through this process, man remains merely human in form, with no realisation of his true Self.

### **Limits to use of the body**

When we regard the body as an instrument, we should realise that the prescribed limits for its use have to be observed. Every object in the world is governed by certain regulations. Likewise this body is also subject to restrictions. In our actions, in our speech, in what we see and what we hear, in our thoughts, we must seek to promote purity and sanctity. When this is not done, all God-given limbs and organs are misused and man ceases to be human and becomes a demon.

As the body is a kind of 'Limited Company', limits have to be observed with regard to food, drink, speech and hearing etc. Excesses in these spheres result in great harm.

Every individual thinks that it is enough if he takes care of himself. He should realise that he is a part of society and that he should be equally concerned about the welfare of society as a whole.

Man today is subject to more maladies caused by mental worries than by consuming bad food. There should be a limit even to intellectual speculation. Excessive cerebration leads to delusions and mental aberrations. Various mental diseases also arise as a result. A study of university students showed that 80 to 90 percent of the students in several universities were suffering from one or other type of ailment caused by psychological factors. Students should see that in this most precious stage of their lives they do not become a prey to ill-health and disease. They should keep their minds free from worries and not indulge in excesses of any kind. They should not waste money, food, time and energy in any manner.

### **Maintaining balance**

The country today is faced with grave economic problems. It can progress only when selfishness and self-interest are given up. The spirit of cooperation has to be promoted. A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends on maintaining the balance, whether it be walking, riding a bicycle or driving a car. Today this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and misuse of technical skills. Through sight, hearing, speech or thought, knowledge is being misused or wasted. Every action

maintained and the body will be in good shape.

Students! Life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man's sorrow and sickness? Not being content with what he has and lamenting over what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to enquire into what is past or what is in store in the future. What is most important is the Present—which contains both the past and the future. Hence make the best use of the present and lead ideal lives. Develop self-confidence. With self-confidence, you can accomplish anything and secure joy. You will be able to face any difficulties and overcome them.

### **Duty and god's grace**

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever positions you may hold, sometime or other you have to know the truth about your Self. Start knowing it from now. You have to be on the alert all the time. You can never know when the Lord's Grace, His Love and Benediction will be showered on you—at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. You cannot see what is happening in the spiritual world, nor can you understand the workings of the Spirit. When you go on performing your duty and enjoying what you do, that itself will confer bliss on you.

### **Food, head, God**

Only man is endowed with the capacity to discover his Divinity. All other species live on what is provided by Nature. Man alone lives on prepared foods of various kinds. Birds and animals which live on natural foods are not prone to diseases. But man by becoming a slave of his palate cultivates tastes of various kinds and consumes different kinds of non-vegetarian food. It is significant that those who live on vegetarian food are less prone to diseases while meat-eaters are subject to various diseases. Man should consume what is in accord with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins. Are there not proteins in vegetables, milk and curds and pulses? Non-vegetarian food not only affects the body but also the mind. Food, Head, God—these three are inter-related. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts.

Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding between man and man. The main reason for this condition is the kind of food that is consumed. Students! Be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. The ancient sages used to eat only once a day. They declared that the man who eats only once is a Yogi, the one who eats twice a day is a Bhogi (enjoyer) and the one that eats thrice a day is a Rogi (a sick man). Today people go on consuming food at all times, not to mention drinks and snacks in between. With the result that indigestion sets in. Young people should be satisfied with 2000 calories of food per day. This is enough to sustain them. Anything in excess will cause indigestion and sleeplessness. Loss of sleep gives rise to many ailments. Don't worry about sleep. If you go to bed without any worry, you will get sound sleep.

Our ancients wished to live long for the sake of a Godly life and for that purpose preserved their health in body and mind. Today people look aged by the time they are 60 or 70. You may have read in the Mahabharata that Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 at the time of the Kurukshetra war. They were in the vigour of youth and fought great battles. Bhishma, who was the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies, was 116 years of age. Today, very few survive upto that age and many are decrepit long before they reach that age. Bhishma was engaged in fierce battle for nine days. What was the source of his strength? Strength of mind, strength derived from food and, above all, strength of Spirit (Atma Balam).

Today spiritual strength is totally lacking among the people. Self-confidence is constantly going up and down. There is no steadiness of mind. When the will is weak from moment to moment, how can there be any firmness in life? Everyone must endeavour to develop the courage to face the vicissitudes of life, joys or sorrows, gains or losses, with equanimity.

There are many today in the country who claim to be believers in God. Because these believers do not conduct themselves properly, many are turning atheists. They talk about devotion (Bhakti), but in their actions they are epicures (Bhukti). Devotion is what the sage Narada expounded after churning the Upanishads and gathering the nectarine cream out of them. It is only when devotion is constant and unchanging that its fruits can be realised.

Students! The body, the sense organs, the mind, the Buddhi (intellect) and the Atma are the five vital elements constituting man. Students should learn the secrets about each of them. Once they have understood the truth about them, they need no other spiritual discipline. This Summer Course has been organised to give you an insight into the mysteries of these five entities.

Once an old woman came to me and said that her mind was causing her endless trouble by its restless wandering. I asked her, "Where is your mind? Show it to me, I shall destroy it." She said "I don't know where it is." I told her, "If you do not know where the mind is, how do you say it is troubling you? Is it the mind that is troubling you or are you troubling yourself? When you do not know the cause of your trouble, to blame the mind is meaningless."

You have to understand how the mind and the senses function. All are valuable, as the Divine never creates anything that is valueless.

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 21-5-1990**

## **Sai Phenomenon Baffles Italian Savants**

*A remarkable article on Bhagavan Baba, entitled, "Is He the Saint we are waiting for?" appeared in the conservative Italian Journal, Il Gazzettino, on December 31, 1989. The following*

There are those who hypothesise that we have in front of us the leader prophesied by St. John. But there was also Nostradamus who wrote of 'a man dressed in orange who lives in India and who will unite all of humanity under one religion'; Pope John XXIII, when he was apostolic nuncio in Turkey, mentioned 'a barefoot saint in India who preaches also to Christians.'

In the village of Puttaparthi, Sai Baba says, 'what I will to happen, what I order becomes concrete. Divinity expresses itself through My hand. I am a Divine Incarnation, a father who arrives to save his drowning son.'

Sai Baba is 64 years old, and since His birth has continued to confound scientists, upsetting the laws of physics, and stupefying all those present at His prodigious acts. They tell of raising the dead, cancer victims in the last stage cured unexpectedly, tetraplegics and paraplegics who regain the use of their legs without difficulty, the blind who after his intervention, re-acquire their sight. And so on: multiplication of food, powers to calm the fury of nature, materialisation of more or less precious objects.

He does not want money and not even recompensation. The message He launches to the world is the fundamental one of all religions and He is able to demonstrate that His prodigious acts are beyond the perception of our sensory organs, that another reality exists.

### **A conference in Padua**

A few days ago, at the Department of International Studies at the Faculty of Political Science at Padua University (Italy) a conference was held entitled 'The Sai Baba Case', in which a physician, Dr. Giancarlo Rosati, and a priest, Don Mario Mazzoleni, participated, among others.

'The man of science, in front of Sai Baba, is in difficulty because He cannot find explanations', commented the doctor. 'One can observe the authenticity of some phenomena, but we don't have the scientific notions to explain what transcends the laws that govern our reality. When you go to Him, one feels strange sensations: one feels protected, loved. When there are few people around Him, there are 10 to 20,000, but often there are even a million people waiting to be received.'

### **Control over the elements**

Don Mario Mazzoleni, a theology teacher in Rome, added, 'I saw him with my own eyes cure four persons of cancer already in metastasis, bald from their chemotherapy treatments—they returned home perfectly normal after Sai Baba's intervention. One day it was pouring at Puttaparthi. Sai Baba came out to meet His devotees. Above our heads appeared a kind of clearing, from which the sun appeared. In the rest of the ashram it was raining cats and dogs but we saw the sun.'

months of life strange things occurred that no one was able to define; the child stretched out His hand and on His palm out of nowhere, flowers and sweets appeared. At school He materialised pencils, notebooks, and fruit for His companions who considered Him a Divine being. He demonstrated knowledge of the past and future of all those who approached Him. Inside a temple situated close to His home, instead of the statue of the divinity, devotees saw the smiling face of the child Sai.

Thus pilgrimages to the isolated village of Puttaparthi began. It was not possible to provide food for all the pilgrims, so Sai Baba materialised directly from the sand, rice, fruit, and sweets. He declared: 'I incarnate from age to age for the benefit of humanity. When rectitude is gone, when corruption dominates the world, I descend in human form to communicate with you.' And on that occasion to demonstrate His powers, He threw flower petals into the air which, falling down, formed the name Sai Baba, which means Father and Mother.

### **Scientists baffled**

It is said that He knows all of the sacred scriptures of all the religions of this planet, even though He never went out of that territory, even though He left school at the age of 14. Scientists from all over the world are put in difficulty when discussing specialist matters with Him. He is able to communicate with pilgrims from all over the world without an interpreter.

People who have been to India bring back this testimony: 'He is a master, who clears up one's doubts. He tells you what is right and what is wrong, and what one needs to do to reach the door of the unknown. In front of one's conscience there are no more justifications whatsoever.'

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

## **Royal Road to Realisation**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Control of the senses should be one of the primary aims of students.

More than the sense organs, the sensory perceptions are powerful. They are: sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

Among the sense organs the most important one is the mouth (or tongue) with the power of speech ("Vaak"). If one can conquer the tongue he will be the master of all the other senses.

The tongue has two functions: speaking and eating. Whoever is able to master these two faculties, will be able to raise himself to the level of the Divine. When the tongue becomes silent,

awakened. Then one should strive to turn the Buddhi towards the Atma (the Divine).

True sadhana (spiritual striving) consists in turning the tongue towards the mind, the mind towards the intellect and the intellect towards the Atma. While this royal road is available to man, he chooses to immerse himself in worldly pleasures and gets submerged in sorrow.

### **Atma is the basis**

No one tries to find out what is the base for the senses. Nor does one seek to know who is the enjoyer of the pleasures derived through the senses. Students should recognise the intimate relationship between the external phenomenal world and the world within oneself. Is it the body or the senses or the Atma which derives pleasure from consuming food, or seeing a beautiful sight or smelling a fragrant object? It is not the body, much less the sense organs. It is the Atma, which fosters, presides and rules over all of them, that is the root cause. The Atma is the basis for the external world and is the motivator of the internal world. When the cardinal role of the Atma is understood as the root cause of everything, the temporary and transient sense organs will cease to have dominance over us.

### **Bridle the mouth**

The most important sense organ is the tongue. Mastery over it will enable one to master all other sense organs. The Kathopanishad has compared the senses to horses. What are the characteristics of a horse? It can run fast. But once a bridle is put in its mouth, its entire movement can be controlled. How is it that a small bridle is able to control such a large animal? For the horse the mouth is most important. Once the mouth is bridled the entire animal comes under control. In the human context the mouth is the most important among the five sense organs. With a small flame we can kindle a big fire. The power of speech is like the flame. With its fire we can do many things. By controlling speech (and the tongue) you can require the capacity to master the world. Using the power of speech (Vaak) you can achieve something splendid or indulge in something mean. Speech can be employed for blessing one or blaming one. In a dithyramb in praise of the tongue, Jayadeva sings: "Oh tongue! You are pure! You are sweet! Do not indulge in idle talk. Sing the glories of the Lord—Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!"

"A slip of the foot may not cause much harm. But a slip of the tongue may take you to hell," says a proverb. When the tongue is used recklessly, it can cause great pain to the heart. There is no doctor on earth who can heal the wound caused by a harsh word.

### **Senses and objects**

When the senses are associated with worldly objects, they can give rise to pleasure as well as pain. For instance someone outside is abusing you, as long as the abuse is outside the range of your sense organs, you are not affected by what is said. But if the abusive words reach your ears, you get excited and enraged. What is the reason for this excitement and anger? As long as there was no contact between the external happenings and the sense organs, the individual was unruffled. It is the contact with the sense objects that provoked the strong reaction.



As long as the words of praise have not reached your ears, you derive no joy nor do you feel a sense of endearment. But once you have heard the words of praise, you rejoice in them and develop a love for the speaker.

### **Cultivate equanimity**

What is the reason for disliking one or loving another? It is the contact with the things in the external world. The senses will be able to get on peacefully only when they have minimised their contacts with the world outside. In the alternative, if the individual is able to treat good and bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant with equanimity, he will remain unaffected by the impressions received by the senses.

It is not so easy to control the sense organs. The easier path is to develop an attitude of equipoise. You have to enquire how to achieve equal-mindedness, without giving way either to elation or agitation. You have to develop the conviction, "I am not the sense organs. I am not the body. I am the Atma." When you have acquired this conviction the sense organs will cease to be a bother. By constant contemplation on the idea that you are the Atma, you can transcend the human limitations and experience the Divine.

### **A father's advice**

You may have heard about the great and noble Englishman Philip Sydney. While he was at school his father wrote to him a letter giving some words of advice. He wrote, "My dear son! Every day offer your heartfelt prayers to God. Strive always to turn your mind towards God. Behave with respect and humility towards your teachers and fellow students. Do not give room for anger, greed or discontentment. Don't take to heart any criticism levelled at you. Don't get elated by the praise of others. Don't indulge in criticism of others." Towards the end of the letter the father inscribed an important warning. He said, "If you have to make a promise to anyone, make it only to God and to none else. Speech is a gift of God. Hence the pledged word must be offered only to God. You have no right to give a pledge to any one else. You will be guilty of misusing your word. If you follow this rule your glory will shine. Your wisdom will grow. You will stand forth as an ideal student. Always control your tongue. Never allow it to run amuck." Philip Sydney followed his father's advice and achieved great eminence.

Students should note that excessive talk pollutes the mind. Students should not concern themselves with any matters other than their studies. A "Vidyarthi" must be a seeker of knowledge and not a "Vishayarthi", a seeker of sensory objects.

The tongue is prone to four types of vices: [1] Uttering falsehood, [2] Talking ill of others, [3] Indulging in scandal, and [4] Excessive talk. These four tendencies undermine peace of mind. Students should try to avoid these four evils and adhere to truth and righteousness. Thereby they will be sublimating their lives.

The five sense organs subject man to different kinds of troubles. In the case of animals each sense perception affects only one animal. For instance, the deer is affected by sound. On hearing certain sounds the deer gets frightened. The elephant is influenced by touch. The touch of the mahout's goad makes it obey him. The moth is a victim of sight. It is attracted by a flame and falls in the fire. The fish is a victim of taste. Attracted by the taste of a worm it swallows the bait and is caught. The bee is attracted by smell and falls a victim to this temptation. Each of these is subject to the power of one of the five sense perceptions. But man is a victim to all the five allurements!

[Bhagavan then related the story of Prahlada, how he was unaffected by all ordeals to which he was subjected by his father on account of his unflinching devotion to the Lord. Though he was a young lad he had such control over his senses that every attempt to lure him into the sensual ways failed. He was resolute in his faith in God. Nothing could shake it.]

The sense organs are subtler than the body. The mind is subtler than the sense organs. The Buddhi (intellect) is subtler than the mind. Subtler than all of them is the Atma. They will have to come under the sway of the Atma.

### **Students' behaviour**

Because the sense organs are highly potent, the first task for man is to bring them under his control to lead an ideal life. Because young people today have not developed sense-control all their actions and behaviour are devious. They are unaware of how they should sit in the classroom, how they should walk about, how they should read, how they should sleep or how they should behave towards their parents, elders and friends. They have no concentration while talking to anyone. By constant practice of right conduct they will acquire control over all their senses. Constant practice alone can bring about proper behaviour in every situation—walking, talking, eating etc. While walking on the road, students should have their eyes on the ground. They will then have no distractions.

Young people today do not know how to sit properly. They sit with their backs bent. This causes various ailments and leads to premature old age. While walking or sitting, you must be straight like a stick. There is a physiological reason for this. A very important nerve, the Sushumna Naadi, runs through the spinal column, from its base in the Mooladhara to the top of the head, the Sahasrara. If this gets bent the results will be serious. The importance of the Sushumna Naadi is known only to those engaged in spiritual sadhana such as Kundalini Yoga.

Don't interest yourselves in affairs that do not directly concern you. Students have to cultivate self-discipline during this precious period in their lives. The body and every organ in it has to be kept in good trim. The body is the instrument even for God-realisation.

### **Culture and spirituality**

The ancient sages lived long years in good health because of their physical and spiritual discipline. Students should follow their example to make their lives sublime. They should stand

of Indian culture. There is no difference between culture and spirituality. In fact the culture of all countries is based on spirituality. The two are integrally related. Dividing cultures on the basis of nationality or religion is a sign of narrow mindedness. Religion is a much-misunderstood word. Religion really means Realisation. It is the same common experience for all who have realised God.

Bhagavan concluded his discourse with the Bhajan, "*Madhura, madhura Murali ghana syaama.*"

### **From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course In Brindavan on 23-5-90**

*GURUDEVA VANI:*

### **Purity of the Mind: Role of the Senses**

*Dear Students!*

What man has to achieve are not the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, Wealth, Fulfillment of desires and Liberation). The primary goal of man should be the purification of the Antahkarana (The Inner Activator) and subduing it.

The world is based on the mind. All that happens in the world—joy or sorrow, sin or virtue, truth or untruth—has its origin in the mind.

The mind is like a mirror; it has no inherent power of its own. It is dependent on the sense organs (indriyas). It sees through the eyes. It cannot see by itself. It hears through the ears and has no inherent hearing capacity. Likewise it functions with the aid of the sense organs. Consequently, the offences committed by the senses are reflected in the mind. The senses are associated with the mind's various processes. If anything goes wrong, who is to blame—the senses or the mind? No blame attaches to the mind by itself. It is the association with the senses which pollutes the mind.

The scriptures have declared that there are three defects relating to the mind: *Mala*, *Vikshepa* and *Aavarana*.

### **Food and mental purity**

Man commits many offences, knowingly or unknowingly, not only in this life, but also in previous lives. The imprint of these actions is carried by the Chitta (the associative memory) over many lives. When the mirror of the mind is soiled by these relics, the mind cannot perceive anything in its true state. This is the reason why man is unable to recognise his own true nature. Hence, it is necessary to cleanse the mirror of impurities on it. How is this to be done? By regulating one's food and recreational habits.

the ills from which men suffer today are due to the fact that the things they consume have been got by unrighteous means.

Hence, to purify the mind the first prerequisite is pure food. But it is not always possible to ensure such purity in every respect at all times. To get over this difficulty, the way out is to make an offering of the food to the Divine and regard it as a gift from God. To the question, "Who is God?" the answer is given in the Gita sloka which declares that the Lord dwells in everyone as Vaishwanara and digests the food that is consumed. When before eating, the food is offered to God, it becomes "Prasad" (a gift from God). All the impurities in the food are thereby removed. This helps the process of cleansing the mind. This practice has to be kept up continuously.

### **Steadying the mind**

Vikshepa is a defect in the mind caused by wavering and lack of steadiness. Arjuna confesses that he is unable to control the mind, which is restless and ever-changing like the wind. Various practices like meditation, concentration and prayer have been recommended for steadying the mind. Students are not trying to cleanse their minds by the proper methods. Instead they are polluting their minds in all possible ways. It is only when you have the body, the senses and the mind under your control, that you will be master of your-self.

### **Love the motherland**

Why is the country today afflicted with so much disorder and chaos? Because people are preoccupied with the external and are totally ignoring the Spirit within. The entire educational process is vitiated by selfishness. Without any regard to whether the methods adopted are righteous, fair and just, or not, educated people are engaged in acquiring money and position by any means. It is the same motive that is impelling many students to go abroad. Why this crazy obsession over acquiring wealth? Real wealth consists in the practice of virtue. Learn to love and serve the land of your birth.

Of what avail is your life if you cannot love your own Motherland? Take a pledge to serve your country with all the knowledge you have acquired. Use your talents for the benefit of others and not only to enrich yourself. When you develop such broad-mindedness, your mind will come under your control spontaneously.

Your foremost duty is to show your gratitude to your parents to whom you owe everything. You have to take care of them in their old age. Such discharge of duty is itself a Sadhana, a form of Yoga. No other spiritual discipline is necessary. By this means you can divinise yourself.

"Aavarana" is the covering which envelops the mind and prevents it from seeing things properly. It makes you feel that the body is your true self. The cover which distorts your vision is made up of the six enemies of man-lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion and envy. Of these evil qualities the worst is pride (mada). Students should totally eschew pride and cultivate humility and reverence, which are the hallmark of true education.

(Ahamkara) and "Mine" (mamatawa).

### **The antahkarana**

Students! The mind, the intelligence, the Chitta (memory or will) and the Ego (Ahamkara) together constitute the Antahkarana (the Inner Activator). What is the Antahkarana? Karana means an instrument. Antahkarana means the inner instrument. There is no need to get bogged over the meaning of Antahkarana. For instance, the eyes see the external objects. The ears hear sounds from outside. The mouth speaks to those outside. The nose recognises smell coming from outside. The hands are engaged in external actions. All these organs have a form. But the mind, the Buddhi (Intelligence), the Chitta and Ahamkara (Ego) have no form. The Antahkarana is the formless combination of these four.

The Antahkarana is subject to four kinds of defects. One is "Bhranti" (delusion). The second is "Pramadam". The third is "Karanaapaatana". The fourth is "Vipralipsa". These four defects sully the "Antahkarana".

### **Delusions and dangers**

"Bhranti" is the deluded state of mind in which one mistakes a rope for a snake and a snake for a rope, regards the unreal as real and the real as unreal, the temporary as permanent and the permanent as temporary.

These delusions lead to dangerous situations ("Pramadam"). If you hold on to a snake, thinking it is a rope, you are bound to have trouble. Man today regards the body as real. This is not correct. The body is like a water bubble. It will perish some time or other, somewhere, somehow. It is a bag of bones. Treating the body as real, people are forgetting the power that can use the body on right lines. If it is the sense organs that enable one to see, hear, and so on, how does it happen that even when all the organs are there a dead man is unable to see, or hear? This is because the power which enables the organs to function is not there. The body may be compared to a torchlight. The eyes are like the bulbs. The intelligence is the switch. If with all these, there is no light, what may be the reason? There are no battery cells inside. The blood cells in our body are like those battery cells. They carry a divine energy in them. There may be cells, but if the divine power has left them, we cannot make the senses function. It is only as long as that divine power remains in the body that it can do many wonders. But to regard the body as real by itself, is fraught with danger.

You attach value to various relationships. All these are temporary and passing. No doubt you have a duty to do by your parents. But this applies to every relationship, which carries its own specific obligations. All relationships arise in course of time and end in due course. They have nothing permanent about them. Hence they are not "Sathya" (unchanging truth), but "Mithya" (momentary).

The third defect is "Karana-aapaatanam". "Karana" means instrument. "Aapaatana" means "weakness". The weakness of the organs is the third defect. The senses are prone to certain kinds of afflictions. These afflictions affect the mind and cause mental illnesses.

What are the types of illness to which the senses are liable? The senses never function in their fullness to perceive totally things as they are. They tend to behave according to the circumstances. This may be illustrated by a story.

### **Circumstances and logic**

In a village there were two farmers, one the village headman, the big landlord of the village, and the other a small farmer. One day, the bulls of the two farmers were involved in a fight as a result of which the head man's bull died. The small farmer was deeply worried about the incident and was at a loss how to explain the matter to the village chief. In his nervousness and fear, while relating the incident to the big landlord, he stated by mistake that his bull had been killed by the headman's bull in a fight. Immediately the landlord started consoling him, saying, "Even intelligent human beings kill each other. When unintelligent animals do so, you should not make much about their conduct."

Meanwhile the small farmer realised the mistake he had committed. He hastened to inform the big landlord that it was the latter's bull that had died in the encounter between the two animals. Immediately the landlord got enraged and asked: "What nonsense is this? It is a serious matter if your bull has killed my bull. You must be very arrogant indeed to let your bull commit such an outrage. You have to pay a penalty of Rs. 500."

The big landlord considered it a natural occurrence if his bull had killed another's bull. But he considered it a crime for another's bull to kill his animal. It is because the senses are prone to such varying responses according to circumstances that they tend to view right as wrong and wrong as right.

The senses lose their natural capacities when they are ailing. For instance, when a man suffers from malaria, the tongue loses its natural capacity and finds everything bitter including sweets. When one suffers from jaundice the eye fails to distinguish colours in their true hue and sees everything as yellowish. "Karanasapaatana" refers to the ailment the mind suffers from on account of afflictions affecting the senses.

"Vipralipsa" refers to jealousy. It is a very bad quality in a man. He cannot endure the happiness or prosperity of another. There is no cure for this disease.

### **No room for envy**

Feel happy when you see someone who is happy. Do not give room for envy. Develop fraternal feelings towards your fellow-students. Rejoice in their achievement, without any feeling of envy.

All that you have to do to achieve purity in thought, word and deed is to follow these five injunctions

See no evil; see what is good.  
Think no evil; think what is good.  
Hear no evil; bear what is good.  
Talk no evil; talk what is good.  
Do no evil; do what is good.

When you adhere to these five prescriptions as the very breath of your life, you will achieve purity of mind and experience ineffable bliss. From this moment, you have to cultivate control of the body, the mind and the senses, when you have the vigour and strength of youth. Acquire God's grace in abundance now, when the time is opportune. Your future will then be bright and secure.

Remember: God never forgets devotees, it is the devotees who forget God. God never gives up the devotee; only the devotee leaves God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari bhajan binaa sukha santhi nahi.*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 25-5-1990**

### **May I turn to Thee, Oh Lord**

*When the fire of fury consumes me  
And to contain it I struggle in vain,  
May I have the glimpse of Thy smile  
That can quell the raging conflagration.*

*When dread stares me in the face  
And I am at my wit's end,  
May Thy raised palm flash for a while  
Beckoning me to be undaunted and stand.*

*When lust grips my mind unawares  
And shrouds my vision with its uncanny spell,  
May Thy motherly form rise in my mind  
Turning me into a grass before the gale.*

*And I pass by the distressed like a robot  
May Thy compassionate eyes flash forthwith  
Making me ashamed of my stony heart.*

*When the blows of life ruthlessly pound  
Making me awfully weary and sullen,  
Father! May Thy lotus feet be in sight  
To peacefully rest my drooping head on them.*

**—Dibakar Sahu, Orissa.**

### **Be Still**

Within my prison cell I gaze upon the mirrored wall,  
Seeing my lesser self- the Jailer of us all,  
Lord, in Thy Secret Place within, accept my humble prayer  
That self may die and pass away; and in purer air  
Of Truth and Freedom I may fly, freed from all desire;  
I who am (ere I was born!) spark of Thine Own Fire.

What! Kill desire? Excise its warm and beating heart outright?  
To sit in smug complacent indolence on some false height  
Of pseudo spiritual achievement; deaf to cries for aid  
Of hunted stag or vivisected dog? Not thus a way is made

To reach the Heavenly Mansions—rather seek to bring to birth  
Heaven's Kingdom—Love, Compassion upon the suffering earth!

And yet, my Soul, be still! Desire, be still! Strange paradox  
It is that in thy so frantic strivings are the bars and locks  
That hold apart from thee the harvest of thy dreams.  
Watch then, O heart, and pray: in stillness shalt thou see the gleams  
Of sunrise stitch with golden thread the rim of yonder hill,  
And show to thee thy Promised Land; be still, O Heart, be still.

**—Ronald M. Heffer, U.K.**

**STUDENTS' CORNER:**

**"Get Nearer to God"**



"I know no Mantra, Yantra or Stotra; I know no invocation or contemplation. I know no stories in your praise; I know no mudras, not even how to cry out; I simply know that to run to you, Oh Mother, destroys all distress". Thus sang Sri Sankara.

One must develop true reverence and deep love for God. We must take refuge at His feet. When Mahatma Gandhi fell a victim to the bullets of a fanatic, his last words were: "Hey Ram." He was so constantly contemplating on God that even his last breath was God-centered. The mind which develops an intense feeling for God does not stray away from the Divine path.

The blessed Lord speaks in the Gita: "The class of the wise can be known from this sign. Their minds and senses are wholly directed towards Me. They live absorbed in Me. They discuss among themselves and instruct each other about Me. They are forever joyous and blissful due to this knowledge, their self-knowledge."

God loves us so much that He has endowed us with marvellous instruments in the body, the mind, and the Spirit. In *Hamlet* we read: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a God! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals."

God loves us so much that in return we must express our love to Him through love and service of mankind. We are born in this world not for acquiring wealth or social status, but to cherish love. Life is a flower of which love is honey. This love of Prema should be cultivated in an unselfish way.

God's Divine nature is love. His love remains the same always. Born of God's love we must foster unbounded love. One is not going to lose anything by showering his love upon humanity. Instead he comes closer to the Divine.

*A bell is no bell till you ring it.  
A song is no song till you sing it.  
And love isn't put in your heart here to stay  
Love isn't Love till you give it away.*

Let us come nearer to God by loving one another as He loves us. God is Love.

**—R. R. Neeraja, X Std., Salem**

*If everything is dedicated to the Lord, there will be no room for worry or sorrow or even joy. If you rid yourself thus of attachment, Santhi can never be disturbed. I, my, mine, my own, your, yours when these ideas take hold of the mind Santhi suffers a set-back. To get the attitude of sincerely offering all to Him, Prema is essential, Prema combined with faith in oneself. That is what is called Bhakti. Cultivate it steadily every day and derive joy therefrom. Again, one should also have a mind filled with Samarasa, a vision of equality, the conviction that fundamentally all*

*SUMMER COURSE IN BRINDAVAN*

**Character Alone Counts**

*"We are fortunate to be in the radiant presence of Bhagavan Baba, who is among the greatest teachers humanity has been blessed with- resplendent like the great figures of the past, like Sri Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ and Adi Sankara", observed Prof. S. Sampath, former Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in the course of his address to the Summer Course at Brindavan.*

*Before presenting his paper on "The Symbiosis of Science and Spirituality-sine qua non of Human Progress", (extracts from which will be published later), Prof. Sampath referred to the accent on human values in the Sai system of education. He observed*

The cultivation of human values is a key-issue in the Sai Educational System. This is what the scientist, Albert Einstein, said a few years ago:

"It is essential that the student acquires an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of what is morally good. Otherwise, he, with his specialised knowledge, will more closely resemble a well trained dog than a harmoniously developed person."

My young friends: You should develop a commitment to work, exemplified by a deep interest in whatever you are doing. Scientist J.B.S. Haldane has given an imagery, to describe this interest, in these words: "Take a cobbler engaged in making shoes; or a man doing pottery; or a person turning a machine in a workshop; or an office assistant adding up columns of figures at his desk. If the individual worker has a genuine interest in what he is doing and has a feeling of concern for the human consequences of his act, such a person too is entitled to be described as one with a scientific bent of mind. Science is not the monopoly of those privileged to belong to the class of scientists-able to peer through a microscope and look at the mysteries of matter, or use a computer to solve a complex equation."

**Concern for man's destiny**

Putting it more strongly, Einstein wants the concern for man and his destiny to become the chief motivating force behind all our technical efforts.

Competence should be looked upon as our elementary duty. To make progress in our lives, we need more than competence-a continual striving to reach higher standards of performance.

reading one of his earlier compositions. When a friend expressed surprise over this, as his previous recording of this piece was regarded by all as having reached perfection, Rubinstein said: "I cannot agree. Once a person begins to think that he has achieved perfection, he loses the motivation to do better, and he will have nothing more to contribute. He might as well stop living." This is a moving lesson in self-improvement and the labour of love that it calls for.

We should also subscribe to the concept of building up high expectations because high expectation often leads to high performance. When someone spoke to a Dutch lady about the high incidence of language skills in children in her country, she said, "This should not be surprising. We expect it of our children."

In prescribing a series of arduous tests for those seeking the hands of their daughters, our ancient kings were wise. They wished to acquire from out of the suitors, those who were not only brave and clever but were impelled by a high motivation as well. We should develop the habit of *self-confidence* reinforced by a determination to reach the prescribed goal. When Charles Lindberg completed the first solo trans-Atlantic flight, a French journalist asked him this question: "When you set out to fly, were you confident that you will reach Europe?" Lindberg's answer was, "Do you believe that I would have commenced the journey if I feared that I would make it only part of the way?"

In recent times the world has been thrilled to witness the robust courage of astronauts drawn from different countries including our own.

### **Pursuit of excellence**

We should be prepared to ascribe to every accepted professional calling a standard of excellence based only on the performance of the assigned task. A missile may blow up in its pad, either because the Chief Scientist made an error in his computation, or a technician down the line did not adjust a screw properly. The end result is the same in both cases—failure of the mission. The lesson that may be drawn from this example is that there is a need to nurture good performance at all levels of activity. We need good scientists as much as good technicians. We need good doctors and good carpenters. We need good Cabinet Ministers and good bus drivers.

The cultivation of character is of paramount importance. Listen to this piece from the Panchatantra Tales: A tortoise was about to cross the river when a scorpion came along and asked for a piggyback ride. The tortoise said: "I am not so foolish as to take you. On the way you will give a sting and I will sink." The scorpion countered, "Where is the logic in what you say? If you sink, will I not sink too?" The tortoise saw the point and agreed to the ride. Half way across the river, the scorpion gave a sting and the tortoise became dizzy and started to sink. It asked the scorpion, "Now what is the logic in what you have done?" To which, the scorpion made this reply: "My dear friend, don't you see? It is not a question of logic now, but a question of my character."

In real life it is not logic which decides what we do. It is, on the other hand, our character. We should ceaselessly endeavour to develop our character on the right lines. All of us should practise humility. There is a moving story which may help to inspire us in this respect. One afternoon in the vicinity of the London Mint, an old man was standing. A stranger came to him, looked at him and asked, "Are you the janitor at this place?" The old man said, "I am, in a manner of speaking." "Do they pay you well? Do they treat you well?" were the next questions. To which, the reply was, "Things could be better on both counts." After a few other questions the stranger asked, "What, dear old man, is your name?" "Michael Faraday", was the answer. The old man was the President of the Royal Society. Real greatness walks hand in hand with genuine humility.

### **Teachers and students**

May I turn to the teachers present here? You are all here to develop people. In doing so, you develop an institution. While following the curricula-based programmes of study, you should accord the pride of place to student-teacher relationship. A Professor in the London School of Economics, on the day of his retirement, stated that his great regret was that, all his life, he taught economics, and it was only at the fag-end of his career that he realised that all the time he should have taught students. There is a lesson for all teachers in this poignant example.

Each teacher should ask himself or herself this question. Am I going to be a dispenser of knowledge? Or am I going to develop the personality of my students? You have to play the role of gardeners, who sow seeds every summer and each seed yields a thousand fruits, and each fruit in turn earns a thousand seeds which when sowed will further yield many more fruits. This has to be your grand mission.

The "Will to Meaning" is the most powerful urge of the psychological human being. Other "wills" such as those that relate to the acquisition of material gains or of the power to establish domination over fellow human beings are ephemeral in character and cannot generate real happiness. Such happiness is to be found in the attempt to discern and pursue goals that are worth-while in human terms.

### **Example of elders**

Older people cannot worship frivolity and expect young people to scorn them. As Bhagavan Baba has been always emphasising, there is an inescapable duty on the part of elders to set good examples for the younger generation. The young people should be willing to concede that it is not necessary to destroy the old in order to create what is new. The new can come out of the refinement of the old. The challenge before us all together—the young and the old, men and women, the wise and the not-so-wise, and the rich and the poor—is to build up our structure in such a way that all that is precious in our culture and heritage is safeguarded and synthesised with what is good in what is new.

It is the supreme task of our educational system to inculcate in the minds of the pupils a vision of these goals and a yearning to move closer to their attainment.

teachers that humanity has been blessed with- resplendent like the great figures of the past, like Sri Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ and Adi Sankara. Bhagavan speaks to us, in language that is easy to understand, in His Divine discourses, on the splendour of these goals—based on spiritualism—and teaches us to cherish them, make them a part of ourselves and treasure them in the inner recesses of our hearts. We should endeavour to be worthy of His kindness and compassion.

### ***A Smile***

*Happiness, like a smile,  
Is like a boomerang,  
When you give it to others,  
It always returns.*

### **Think 'happy'**

*Think 'happy' on a sad day  
And it will become a glad day.  
When things are seen as 'funny'  
A dark day will seem 'sunny'.*

### ***Smiles***

*When I was very very small  
Someone said one day  
Here's a basketful of smiles for you  
Try to give them all away*

*So through the years I did my best,  
To give them all away  
But the more I gave the more I had  
Every single day.*

*Dear Students!*

The body wields influence over the senses. The senses have even greater influence over the body. The body cannot exist without the senses and vice versa. They are inextricably interdependent. Each is useless without the other, like the positive and negative ends of an electric current.

Proper protection of the body is an essential duty of the individual. In this connection the role of the senses is remarkable. The wonders performed by the Divine defy description. Equally the part played by the senses is marvellous. The senses are subtler than the body. Although the potencies of sound, touch, sight, hearing and taste exist within the body, the senses exercise extraordinary power over all of them. Joy and sorrow, heat and cold are experienced when the sense organs come into contact with external objects. Without sensory objects the senses cannot function.

### **Functions of the senses**

It is not easy for anyone to comprehend or describe the myriad facets of the sense organs. The senses (indriyas) have another name called "Maatraah" ("Matra" is that which measures). The sense organs have the capacity to measure. How is this done? Take, for instance, a fruit. Which of the senses has the power to determine whether it is sweet or sour? Which sense organ decides the taste of an object? It is the tongue. The tongue determines whether an eatable is tasty or not and makes it known to the person concerned.

Which organ has the capacity to declare, in the case of a picture, whether it is attractive or otherwise? The determining organ is the eye. In the same way, the power to determine whether an object is fragrant or foul-smelling is given to the nose. The ear determines whether a certain note is harmonious or discordant. It is because the sense organs have this power of measuring and determining the particular characteristic of sense objects that they are called "Maatraah" ("Measuring instruments").

### **The senses as horses**

In the Kathopanishad, the senses are described as horses yoked to the chariot of the body. In regarding the senses as horses (Aswa in Sanskrit) what is the inner significance? "Aswa" means that which is continually restless. It is common knowledge that a horse, whether it is running or standing or sleeping, moves some part of its body or the other all the time. The tail, or the leg, or the back or the nose, some part or other is kept moving. It is because of its restless nature that the horse is called "Aswam". Take the example of a peepul tree: Whether there is any breeze or not its leaves are always rustling. Hence it is called "Aswattha" tree.

In ancient times, the rulers used to perform a sacrifice (yaga) called the "Aswa-Medha Yaga". "Aswa" means that which is fickle and restless. "Medha" means "Buddhi" (intelligence).

mind. Whoever is capable of capturing and controlling that horse is described as a "Dheemantha", a man of heroic intelligence. Worthy of meeting in combat. Here we see the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the term "Aswa-Medha". It is only when both the meanings are synthesised that we get at the whole truth. It is the duty of every person to control the horse-like senses. Only then can he become a hero. Whatever yagas or yajnas one may perform, whatever scripture he may have mastered, if he has no control over his senses, all these accomplishments are worthless.

### **Use and misuse of senses**

The term 'Matra' as applied to senses has yet another meaning. It indicates that there is a divinely prescribed limit to what each sense organ (indriya) can experience. For instance, the eye can only see, but cannot hear. The mouth can only speak but cannot see. Thus each organ has been endowed by God with a specific talent. Only those who use these organs according to the divinely prescribed functions will be acting up to the will of the Divine. Those who violate the prescribed limits will be going against the Divine will.

Hence everyone should try to use the sense organs with due regard to their prescribed functions. The nose, for instance, has been allotted a specific assignment. It should inhale and exhale air for the purpose of preserving an individual's health. The nose should distinguish between good and bad smells and take in only what is good and fragrant. This is the specific role ordained for the nose. Unfortunately the nose is used for taking snuff and inhaling foul air. By these practices, one violates the injunctions pertaining to the use of the nose. Thereby he commits a double offence: one, violating a Divine injunction and the other causing damage to his health. As a result, man becomes a prey to disease.

Likewise, in the case of the tongue. It has been given to man so that it may decide what is wholesome and what is bad in the food that is consumed so as to promote one's health, to speak sweetly and give joy to others, and to communicate one's innermost thoughts to others. The tongue, which has been given for these edifying purposes, is being grossly misused today. It is used for consuming narcotics, eating animal food, smoking, indulging in abuse of others, carrying tales, using harsh words (language) and causing pain to others. In these ways, the injunctions of the Divine are violated by setting at naught the prescribed limits. As a consequence, man experiences numerous troubles.

### **Control of the senses**

It is only by using the divinely given senses for the purposes for which they are intended that man can rise to the level of the Divine. You should not use the sense organs as you please just because you have them. They are like horses yoked to a chariot. You must know how to handle them properly so that the chariot can be used well. The horses must be in front of the chariot. Today, on the contrary, the horses are behind the chariot. This leads to dangerous consequences. If, on the ground that you should respect the senses and give them a place of honour, you place the horses (senses) in the chariot, what will be the result? The chariot cannot move at all.

This is like feeding a horse excessively, but not giving it adequate work. This also is likely to have untoward results. We are failing today to engage the senses adequately. They are being allowed to run amuck. As a consequence, the senses are threatening to dictate to the master.

### **Mind's ten wives**

This situation may be likened to that of a man with many wives. Uttanapada had two wives and because of the differences between them, the child Dhruva had to go to the forest to perform penance. Dasaratha had three wives. To comply with the demands of his youngest wife, Dasaratha had to endure the departure of his dearest son, Rama, to the forest. If such difficulties can arise for those having two or three wives, imagine the plight of one who has to manage ten wives! The mind has ten wives—the five sense organs and the five organs of action. Each organ seeks to enjoy objects of its own choice. The nose smells some good edible and wants to have it. The ear hears some sweet music and wants to enjoy it. The eye hankers after a new film. When all of them are keen about their own particular desires, how can the master (the mind) satisfy them all at the same time? Unable to satisfy them the mind gets frustrated. How can one wedded to ten wives get peace? It is only when the senses are kept under proper control that man would be happy himself and share that happiness with others.

### **Cultivating equanimity**

There is a method by which the demands of the senses can be reconciled and harmonised. This is by treating both good and bad with equal-mindedness. There are people who display such equanimity. Tukaram is an illustrious example. He was a saintly person. His wife was a termagant. By his calmness and forbearance, Tukaram managed to get on with her. Once, Tukaram was bringing home in his cart the sugarcane crop harvested from his small farm. As he was going home, the children of the village gathered round him and pleaded for a piece of sugarcane. In his boundless goodness, Tukaram allowed the children to help themselves to the cane on the cart. By the time he reached home there was only one stalk of cane left. Seeing this his wife got enraged, abused Tukaram, and taking out the cane, struck Tukaram with it. The cane broke into three pieces. Tukaram calmly remarked, "I was wondering how to distribute the single remaining cane to the members of the family. You have solved the problem. You can keep one piece and give the other two to the children."

Such forbearance and equanimity can be found only in a few high-souled persons. These qualities can be acquired only through devotion and faith.

You need not feel disheartened at the prospect of being unable to control the senses. By developing one-pointed devotion, the senses can be brought under control.

Kabir is an example of a godly man in a different situation. His wife was highly devoted and faithful, totally dedicated to serving the husband. One day, Kabir was plying his loom, chanting the name of "Ram" all the time. Suddenly, he called his wife and said that one thread had snapped and asked her to bring a lamp. It was noon and when she brought the lighted lamp, Kabir told her to take it away as it was not necessary. She silently took it back without any argu-



gratitude to God for His grace.

### **A lesson in sense control**

Here you have two examples of saintly men, who, despite their differing family situations, pursued their godly ways equally well. It is not the environment that matters. It is the purity of our impulses which count. Don't worry about the external environment.

The ancient sages regarded sense control as a form of penance. Disciplining of senses calls for an understanding of how the senses function. A Christian priest learnt a lesson in sense control from the driver of a horse carriage in which he was travelling. The priest noticed that the driver was beating the horse severely as it was approaching a railway crossing. Taking pity on the animal, the priest asked the driver why he was beating the horse unnecessarily. The driver explained that at the level crossing there were some white painted stones which caused a fright in the horse. He was beating the animal as the horse was more afraid of the whip than the white stones. The priest learnt that diverting 'the mind away from one undesirable thought was the way to turn it in the desirable direction.

The senses have been compared to animals (pashu) whose vision is externally oriented. Man should strive to be a master of the senses and not their slave. For this purpose, first of all, man should not pamper the senses. Man should realise that the pleasure derived from the senses is momentary and ends only in grief. If the senses are kept busy the right way, there will be no trouble from them.

[Referring to the episode in the Mahabharata in which Shishupala abuses Sri Krishna in Yudhishtira's audience hall and after Shishupala is slain by Sri Krishna, a flame emerging from Sishupala's body merges in Sri Krishna, Bhagavan said that Yudhishtira was surprised at this phenomenon. He questioned Narada how a vile enemy of Krishna like Shishupala could have such a glorious end as the merger of his spirit in Sri Krishna. Narada explained as follows]: "Abuse or praise relates only to the body and not to the Atma. The one Supreme Paramatma dwells in all beings. That being the case, who is the caviller and who is it that is cavilled? Who is a friend and who is an enemy? All are the same. The blood that constantly remembers God becomes an offering to God. (This is a reference to the blood flowing from Sishupala's body to the feet of Sri Krishna). Whether out of hatred or jealousy or attachment, if the Lord's name is remembered, that is sufficient. Shishupala remembered Sri Krishna's name more often than many devotees. Devotees remember the Lord at the time of worship alone. Shishupala in his intense hatred of Krishna had Krishna in his mind all the time, whether waking or sleeping. It was because of this constant remembrance of Krishna's name that Sishupala's soul could merge in Krishna."

### **God's actions beyond question**

Laymen look only at the superficial aspects of things. The Lord does not see things that way. He is free from hatred or envy, likes and dislikes. When these are attributed to the Lord they are only a reflection of one's own feelings. God is like a mirror. What you see is only a reflection of

is the outcome of your own actions.

Hence, no one is entitled to question the actions of God, accusing God of favouritism or indifference to someone or the other. Who has the authority to prescribe to God how He should conduct Himself?

The divinity that is present in everyone will find expression in varying types of behaviour. The actions of the Divine are totally free from self-interest. Because God is the embodiment of Love, no taint can adhere to God's actions. As God is the embodiment of all that is pure and untainted, any defect that is attributed to God is only a projection of the defect in the individual concerned. Your defective vision makes you see defects which do not exist in creation.

If the senses are properly used, they will offer the right impressions. Everyone should embark on the Sadhana for disciplining the senses.

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 22-5-1990**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

As long as a dream lasts, all that is experienced, heard or seen in it appears as real. Likewise, in Samsara (worldly existence), filled with likes and dislikes, everything seems real till the dawn of wisdom (Jnana). When one attains the state of Supreme Realisation, all that happens in the world appears as a dream.

The human body is composed of the five basic elements—Prithvi, Apa, Agni, Vayu, and Aakasa (earth, water, fire, air and space). These five are compounded together in an orderly way. The human body is described as the physical body (Bhautika Sarira). It establishes all types of relations with the world. This may be described as "Pancheekaranam" (the bonding together of the five components.) In the body, in its waking state, all the sense organs are active.

The body is the abode of pleasure and pain. It has three forms: Sthoola (gross), Sookshma (subtle) and Kaarana (causal). The gross physical body is "Annamaya" (permeated by food). It is inert. It is comparable to an instrument. What we see is only the physical body. Believing that this is real and permanent, man tends to forget the all-pervading and eternal Atmic principle.

The five vital breaths (pranas), the mind, the intellect and the ten sense organs (of perception and action) constitute the subtle body (Sookshma sarira). It functions in the dream state. In this state, the individual is oriented inwards. In it, man creates for himself a new world. The dream is itself the proof of its reality. It is self-constituted with no external relations. In the dream state, everything is created by the mind—forms, sounds and taste, which are experienced without any physical basis for them. This entire experience is limited to the individual concerned. If, for instance, ten persons are sleeping in one room, each person's dream is unique to himself. Each one's actions in the dream are unique to himself.

**The mind and the dream state**

There is no relationship between the dream and the waking state. One individual has a dream in which his friend harasses him in many ways. If after waking up in the morning he accosts his friend and asks the latter why he harassed him, the friend replies: "You madcap! I have not seen you at all!" This means that the friend in the dream and the troubles he gave are all self-created by the dreamer. All other dream experiences are also self-created. Hence, all the experiences in dreams are confined to the individual concerned and have no connection with others in the real world. The joys and sorrows experienced in the dream are the stuff of the dream state. It is in the dream state that one goes through the consequences of good and bad actions in previous lives. This means that the experiences are related to the subtle body (sookshma sarira). In this, the mind is the most important factor. It is the mind that creates everything.

names are given to it. When it is engaged in the thought process, it is called Manas. When it is engaged in discriminating between what is permanent and what is transient, it is called Buddhi (intelligence). In its role as a reservoir of memory, it is called Chitta. When the mind identifies itself with the body, it is called Ahamkara (ego). The four names are related to the mind and their combined aspect constitutes Antahkarana (the inner instrument). Thus, both the waking and dream states are creations of the mind.

The third state is Sushupti. "Su" means "good". "Shupti" means sleep. "Sushupti" means sound sleep. In this state the mind is absent. When the mind is not present the world also is absent. In the absence of the world, there are no experiences of joy and sorrow. The world exists as long as the mind is present. Joy and sorrow are experienced through contact with the world. Hence, the world is associated with joy and sorrow. The mind, thus, is said to be the cause of both bondage and liberation.

### **The atma and the five sheaths**

There is, however, one other state which transcends these states: the Atmic state. It is because of his identification with the body in the first three states that man forgets his spiritual reality. But, for all experiences the Atmic principle in everyone is the cause, though the physical forms are varied. Man is a prey to ignorance because, forgetting his Atmic reality, he identifies himself with the mind-body complex. The waves appearing in an ocean appear as different from each other. But they consist of the same water. Likewise, though man appears in innumerable forms, all these are like the waves appearing on the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Names and forms may be different, but the basis is the same.

The Atma, however, is covered in the human being by five sheaths: Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Kosas (sheaths). As a result, the Atma is not easily cognisable. The physical body is the Annamaya kosa (the sheath of food). The sheaths of Pranamaya (life-force), Manomaya (the mental sheath) and the Vijnanamaya (imbued with intelligence) form the subtle body (the sookshma sarira). The Anandamaya kosa is the causal or seed body (kaarana sarira). Although it has the name Anandamaya (blissful), it is not real bliss. It is the blissful state of the Atma that is reflected as an image in the sheath of Bliss (the causal body). The mind is like the moon, which is not self-luminous. The Atma alone is self-effulgent. It is this light which illumines the body, mind, the Buddhi and the senses and invests them with consciousness.

It is this Atmic consciousness (Chaitanya) which makes the cosmos function. For the entire creation, consisting of living and inanimate objects, this consciousness is the basis. All that is experienced by the body and the mind has no real connection with the Atma. Relying on the light coming from the sun, many people perform different actions. Some may do good deeds and some others may be indulging in bad actions. The Atma is unaffected by the consequences of these actions, just as the sun is not affected by the activities done with the help of sunlight. The Sun is a Witness. Likewise the Atma also is a witness to what is done by the body, mind and other organs. But man, because of his identifying himself with the body and other organs,

the mind that assumes these multifarious forms. For instance, if a person builds a house, he erects within it a bedroom, a drawing room, a kitchen and so on. All these separate rooms are for his comfort. But if the separate walls are knocked down, only one hall remains. Likewise if the walls created by the mind are removed, the Atma alone will be experienced.

### **Realising the self**

If man embarks on the process of casting off one by one the five sheaths which envelop the Atma, he will experience his true Self. This process consists in the, practice of Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana: Hearing, reflection in the mind, and meditation on the Divine. The body, the mind and the senses are merely like the husk which encases the grain. When the husk is removed, the rice alone remains. As long as man is enveloped in this husk, he cannot escape birth and death. When the husk (in the form of the five sheaths) is cast off, man is freed from rebirth, just as the rice without husk cannot sprout.

Even as you do not need a lamp to see the sun, there is no need to search for the Atma when it is omnipresent. The Atma shines eternally. No other sadhana is required to recognise it. As long as man is not aware of his own true nature, he will be under the delusion that the Atma is somewhere else remote from him. Like the ashes hiding the fire in burning charcoal, the delusion regarding the body is covering the Atma. Once the delusion goes, man will experience true bliss and understand the Cosmic Reality.

### **The "I" and the atma**

In this context, the significance of the use of the term "I" by everyone should be rightly understood. Without the "I", the world will have no existence. What is this "I" ("nenu" in Telugu)? It is the basis (Uniki). Because the same basic entity exists in all beings, it is called Atma. It is also called Brahman. Another name for it is "Hridaya" (the spiritual heart). It is also called "Aham" (I). All these different names refer only to the Atma.

When we use the term "Hridaya", we generally consider it as referring to the physical heart in the body. This is not correct. "Hridaya" has no physical limitations. "Hridaya" in the true sense of the word refers to that which is all-pervading. Forgetting this omnipresent spiritual heart, we tend to regard the physical heart in the body as the true heart. This betokens a narrow mind.

In ordinary parlance we use the term "Aham" ("I") in every context. This "Aham" is Brahman. When you declare, "I am a householder", the first reference is to yourself as "I". Another says, "I am a sanyasin". Here, again, the "I" comes first. Similarly in other references, the "I" comes first and then the description follows. When you separate the "I" from the person who uses it, the "I" alone remains distinct from the different individuals. This shows that the "I" is basic to everyone, whatever his status or form. This "I" which is present in everyone is the Atma, which is omnipresent. Because man forgets this basic truth, he is the victim of endless sorrows and doubts. What we should love and cherish is the Atma and not the body.

relationships. But these relationships are essentially impermanent. In cultivating these ephemeral attachments, men are failing to love the Atma, which is ever present and is the source of lasting bliss.

If you have doubts regarding Atma, it is because you have no steadfast love for the Divine. To develop firm love for anything, you have to get the conviction that "it is mine". Unless you acquire such a conviction regarding the Atma, you cannot become a "Sthithaprajna" (a man of steadfast wisdom). You will not achieve real bliss. You cannot reach the permanent state of Self-Realisation.

Develop the unshakable conviction that the Divine is present in everyone. Then there will be no room for developing differences of any kind. Conflict and disorder will have no place. Likes and dislikes will go.

Once you direct the mind towards the Atma, you have learnt the supreme mantra: "Aham Brahmasmi" ("I am the Brahman"). Whatever you do, eating or walking or seeing or speaking, do it with the Atmic consciousness.

### **The atmic "I" and the ego**

There are two "I's" in everyone the "I" that is associated with the mind and the "I" associated with the Atma. Consciousness of the Atma is the real "I". When this "I" is wrongly associated with the mind, it becomes "Ahamkara" (the Ego). When the "I" associated with the Atma experiences Atmic bliss, it realises that the universal consciousness is One, though it may be called by different names. When you eliminate the "Anatma Bhava" in you (that is, the body consciousness), you will have the Atma-Bhava, the consciousness of the Universal within you. Without this consciousness all sadhanas are of no avail.

The water vapour produced by the sun becomes a cloud and hides the sun itself. Likewise, the thoughts arising in the mind conceal the Atma. When the mind is eliminated the Atma alone remains.

For eliminating the mind and removing the delusions from it, desires have to be controlled. But the sadhakas of today have not reduced their desires. It must be realised that selfishness and self-centredness have to be got rid of. Selfishness is at the root of all the afflictions plaguing man.

### **Reform of the individual**

If the world is to be transformed, we must begin with the individual. His evil traits have to be removed. He must fill himself with sacred thoughts.

To start with, the individual must reform himself. Without the individual realising his true nature, all other accomplishments are of no avail. Man is exploring the most distant regions in space, but is not moving even an inch towards understanding his heart. Is this the journey man

can only breed sorrow. Enduring bliss can be got only by directing the mind towards God. That is the real sadhana. Without mental transformation all other changes are meaningless. Without changing your qualities, you remain in the same state as before. Develop good qualities and sanctify yourself. This is the message for everyone.

### **The guru in everyone**

Today is Gurupoornima. Poornima refers to the full moon with all his 16 aspects being illumined by the sun. In man there are sixteen black spots: the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy), the two gunas, Rajas and Tamas, and the eight types of conceit (mada) based on lineage and scholarship, wealth, youth, beauty, position and penance. It is only when man gets rid of these sixteen evil traits that he will be able to realise his oneness with the Divine (his poornatwa). Who is the one who enables man to achieve this state of fullness (Poornatwa)? It is the Guru. Guru refers to one who has transcended the gunas and has no form. The gurus of today are filled with qualities of all kinds. The disciples seem to be better than the preceptors. The disciples are making sacrifices. The preceptors are acquiring possessions. In this situation it is difficult to say who are gurus and who are disciples.

People today tend to be naive in their actions. Whenever they see some aged persons, they seek some mantra (spiritual message) from them. What is the mantra they really need? It is the understanding of their true nature. This mantra is within them. Each contains within himself the mantra, tantra and yantra (the spiritual message, the method of practising it and the instrument for implementing it). Your process of breathing contains the mantra you need: "So-Ham", "So-Ham". (Bhagavan demonstrated how this should be done). "I am That", "That is I". This is the mantra. What is the yantra (the instrument)? It is your physical body. What is the tantra? Your heart! When you have in you all the three, why go to anyone for a message? It is a sign of weakness and ignorance.

Your true guru is God alone. He transcends all gunas. He is beyond all forms. He is the only one who can dispel the darkness of ignorance and light the lamp of Supreme Wisdom (Prajnanam). It is a mark of ignorance to go after nondescript preceptors and seek messages from them. When they are wallowing in bondage themselves, how are they going to free you from bondage? How can one who is filled with delusions himself rid you of your delusions? Can one who is begging for food relieve your hunger?

Do not go in search of gurus. Strengthen your faith in the Atma. Seek to enjoy the Atmic bliss. Strive to develop the conviction: "I am the Atma". That is the true message. When you have grasped this Truth, all other things will be unnecessary.

For experiencing this Guru, there are no restrictions as to time, place or circumstance. Only for the man steeped in the mind, changes in time exist and he is bound by them. But to the man who has transcended the limitations of time, everything remains immutable. This spiritual state can be reached only through confidence in the Atma.

Gurupoornima is observed as a day for honouring the Guru. Some type of gurus welcome this day as the day which brings them income. They are an inferior breed. The real Guru is only one. He is the One, the God of gods, who is hailed as father, mother, teacher, knowledge and wealth and all else. He is the Supreme whom you must seek by your sadhana. God alone can transform your spiritual efforts into a transcendental experience. You have the vision of the Divine (Sakshatkara). The vision does not come from outside. It is within you, because the Divine is omnipresent. Only the person who considers himself separate from God will have the feeling that the vision of God comes from outside. God is everywhere. You are God.

It is the agglomeration of body, mind and the senses which is preventing you from recognising your inherent divinity. You are covering yourself in this manner. You are the cause of your bondage through the body and the mind. When you understand the nature of the body-mind complex, you will realise your true essence. It is enough if you develop the conviction that you and the Divine are one ("Aham Brahmasmi"). Cultivate steadfast faith in this Divine oneness through love. That love will lead you to Self-realisation.

Wherever you may be and whatever you do, regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine and act on that basis. You need not wait for a whole year to observe Gurupoornima. Treat every moment of your life as being intended for dedication to the Lord. This is the way to experience the Divine all the time at all places. This is true "Sakshatkara". Serve all and love all. Firmly believe that the Divine is in everyone and constantly act on this belief. Only by continual practice can you develop this sacred attitude. Fill yourself with self-confidence and courage. Make your life a complete offering to the Divine, who is the real source of all that you are and all that you have.

There was an old woman in Uttar Pradesh who used to give away many things in charity. She used to go about with her head bowed. Some people asked her why she was humbling herself in that manner when she could hold her head high because of the numerous gifts she was making to all and sundry. She modestly replied: "When the Lord is giving me so many things with His thousand hands, all that I am giving is only with a single hand. What reason is there for feeling proud about what I am doing? Should not people feel ashamed about giving to others with one hand what God gives to them with a thousand hands?"

Hence, everyone must develop the spirit of sacrifice (Tyaga). You must serve the people with your body. You have to cherish good and noble thoughts in your mind. You must use your wealth for supporting educational and other institutions to help the people. Give food to the starving. This is the way to lead a purposeful and sublime life. Life has been given to you not to fatten yourself. The body is the basic instrument for the practice of Dharma.

Dedicate your entire time to service and the discharge of your duties. Your sadhana must not be for selfish ends. It must promote the good of others.

Giving up selfishness, cultivating selfless love for others, sanctify your lives.



(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans: "*Hari Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*", and "*Prema Muditha manase kaho Rama! Rama! Ram!*")

—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 7-7-1990

GURUDEV VANI:

## **The Buddhi and the Atma**

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

According to the Upanishads, the human body is comparable to a chariot, the sense organs to horses and the mind, to the reins. The body, the mind and the senses are by themselves of little use. However beautiful a chariot may be, however fine the horses and however efficient the reins, without a charioteer all of them are of no use.

In the journey of life, the Buddhi (intelligence) is most important. ("Nischayaatmaka Buddhi") The intelligence is the determinant in life. In daily life, many difficulties and problems arise like waves, which man has to solve. What is the basic agency for resolving these difficulties? It is the Buddhi. Without the intervention of the Buddhi none of our problems can be solved. The man filled with doubts perishes ("Samsayaatma vinasyathi"). Because the Buddhi helps to end doubts, it has been described as one beyond the sense organs ("Buddhigraahyam athindriyam").

The Bhagavad Gita has laid down two banks to channel its message. Without these banks the river of life will be subject to many hazards and difficulties. The two banks consist of two eight-syllable mantras. One is "Sraddhaavaan labhathe Jnanam" ("The man of earnest faith acquires supreme wisdom"). The other eight-syllable mantra is "Samsayaatma Vinasyathi" (The one filled with doubts perishes). When life flows between these two regulating principles, it will be blessed with peace and happiness. It is only when man is guarded on either side by "Shraddha" (earnest faith) and "Nissamsaya" (freedom from doubt) he will be able to reach the goal of life.

### **The inner voice**

The Buddhi (intelligence) has some other names. One of them is "Antaryami" (the In-dweller). Man is guided by the voice of this Indweller in the conduct of his life. When problems arise, man waits for the directives of the Inner Voice. If this Inner Voice is not giving him satisfactory answers, he will be in a quandary. When he gets satisfactory guidance from the Inner Voice, he will be able to come to terms with the external world. Sometimes, one is found to remark: "My conscience does not approve of this." The Inner Voice is the voice of conscience.

When one is asked to "Follow the Master", the "Master" is one's conscience. When you follow the dictates of your conscience, you can reach the proper destination.

Another name attributed to Buddhi is "Vijnana" (confirmed knowledge). Vijnana helps to decide the truth relating to external objects. As the Buddhi investigates internal processes also and comes to decisions on them, it is not entirely correct to describe it as "Vijnana". Vijnana relates to the phenomenal objective world. Buddhi relates to the subtle realm of the internal. Hence the role of the Buddhi (intelligence) has to be correctly understood.

### **Role of the ego**

Occasionally, however, Ahamkara (the Ego) tends to envelop the Buddhi. The senses are subtler than the body. The mind is even more subtle than the senses. The Buddhi is far more subtle than the mind. The Atma is the subtlest of them all.

If it is said that Ahamkara (the ego) is able to envelop the Buddhi it must be deemed subtler than the Buddhi. The ego is extremely subtle. It is all-pervasive. It enters into all one's actions. This is the reason why man is unable to transcend the ego and comprehend the Atma.

Once, a king summoned an assembly of scholars in his court. He posed the following question before them: "Here you are scholars who have mastered the scriptures. Which of you is capable of attaining Moksha (Liberation)?" Not one of them, despite their scholarship, had the courage and confidence to stand up and give the answer. The whole assembly was stunned into silence. At that stage, one lay member of the public got up and said: "Maharaja, I may possibly attain Moksha" ("Nenu pothe povachchunu"). All the pandits felt outraged by this impudent claim from an unschooled person, who was totally ignorant of any of the scriptures and had done no spiritual exercise whatever. They wondered on what basis such a person could make such a claim.

The Maharaja asked the man: "On what grounds do you make your claim? It appears to be an insult to all the scholars present here." The man relied, "Maharaja! Please forgive me. When I said, 'Nenu pothe, povachchunu', its meaning is: 'If the I goes, liberation can be attained'. This is what I meant".

When the "I" (Aham) acquires a form, it develops into the Ego. The lesson of this story is that only when man gets rid of the body-consciousness, he will be fit for achieving liberation.

It is the identification with the body that promotes the sense of "I-am-the doer" (Ahamkara). As long as one suffers from egoism, his intelligence will not shine.

### **The buddhi and the atma**

Hence, efforts must be made at the outset to throw off the cover imposed by the ego on the intelligence (Buddhi). The Buddhi is very close to the Atma, and is therefore well situated to receive the illumination from the Atma. The Buddhi is in a position to receive 90 percent of its

activates the senses. The power of the senses is spread over the body.

If you want to illumine a dark room with the rays of the sun, it can be done by reflecting the sun's rays through a mirror on the dark room. Sunlight cannot reach the room directly. The light that is reflected through the mirror is not as powerful as the direct rays of the sun. In the same manner, the illumination emanating from the Atma when it passes through the Buddhi to the mind, from it to the senses and from them to the body, gets considerably dimmed by the time it reaches the body. If the Buddhi is kept totally pure and untainted, it will be possible to transmit to the body the full power of the Atma. Hence man has to strive to keep the Buddhi pure and holy.

### **Allies of the buddhi**

In the Taittiriya Upanishad—one of the ten important Upanishads—the Buddhi is compared to a bird. "Shraddha" (earnest faith) is the head of the bird. The right wing of the bird is "Rita" (the cosmic order). The left wing is Sathya (Truth). The main body of the bird is Mahat-Tatwa. The tail is Yoga. The Buddhi is thus composed of these five constituents. Hence, the Buddhi is an extraordinary power. It is only when all the five constituents are actively present that the Buddhi (intelligence) acquires its full form.

Once King Vikramaditya posed before an assembly of scholars the question Whether "Shraddha" or "Medha" or "Buddhi" is most important. Buddhi is of no use if it does not have "Shraddha" (earnest faith) as its motivator. The assembled scholars gave varying answers to the King's query. Ultimately the consensus amongst them was that "Medha Shakti" (talent) was the most important. The King was disappointed with their conclusion. The King told the assembly: "Of what use is Medha if there is no zeal and no determination?" There maybe many who are highly talented. But if they have no "Shraddha" (earnestness) what can they accomplish with their talents? If they lack determination (firmness of purpose) what can they achieve? Only when they have "Shraddha" and "Sthiratwa" (firmness) will they be able to develop the zeal for pursuing their objectives.

Hence, "Aasakthi" (zeal) is the first requisite. The next is "Sthiratwa" (firmness of purpose). These are the primary requisites for the Buddhi (intelligence) to function at its best.

### **Zeal and firmness**

It would be foolish on the part of man to depend only on his cleverness for leading a meaningful life. He has to develop a zeal for life and impart firmness to it. Then he will be able to accomplish any great undertaking. That is why the Vedanta has declared: "Shraddhaavaan labhathe Jnanam" ("Only the man of earnest faith can acquire the higher knowledge"). Without "Shraddha", nothing can be achieved. If you have a small piece of burning charcoal, you can fan it and create a big fire from out of it. If a man lacks "Shraddha", he will allow even a blazing fire to die out.

for getting it. He does not have the "spirit of work" in him. The advances in science and technology have made man a lover of comfort and ease with no interest in hard work. There is nothing wrong with science. It is the improper use of science that is leading man astray.

### **Food and the five sheaths**

Today we are witnessing radical changes in almost every field—political, economic, social, scientific, etc. But there is no mental or spiritual transformation. This is because the nature of the mind is not properly understood. The state of the mind depends on the food that is consumed. After digestion the grossest part of the food is thrown out as excreta. A subtle part becomes blood and flesh and provides sustenance for the body. The subtlest part goes to the mind. Hence the tendencies of the mind are based on the food that is eaten. First the food becomes the sustainer of life (the Annamaya Kosa): Then it affects the mental sheath (the Manomaya Kosa). Only after that, the Vijnanamaya sheath is reached. Beyond the Vijnanamaya is the Anandamaya Kosa (the sheath of Bliss). Of the liquids we consume, the grosser part goes out as urine. The subtle part sustains life (Prana). The subtle part of the food that goes into the mind and the subtle element in the fluids which gets into the Prana (life-force) together enter the "Vijnanamaya Kosa".

The bird of Buddhi (in the Upanishad analogy), in addition to "Shraddha", has "Sathya" and "Rita" as two wings. Although "Rita" is equated with Sathya (Truth), it has a wider connotation than Truth. It represents the triple purity- of thought, word and deed-that transcends time and space. The bird's tail is "Yoga". What is the purpose of this tail? It is through Yoga that balance is maintained between the two wings of Truth and Rita. Man has to maintain this balance in daily life. An aeroplane has a tail in addition to two wings. Likewise in man, Sathya, Rita and Yoga are needed to maintain balance in the body and regulate the course of life both in the mundane and spiritual spheres.

The Buddhi can function properly only when it is governed by Sathya, Rita and Yoga. What is the Yoga that is envisaged here? It is not the physical exercises of various kinds. Yoga here means control of the senses ("Yogah Chittavritti nirodah").

Then, there is the Mahat-Tatwa? What is this Mahat-Tatwa? It is the recognition by the Buddhi of the true nature of the Self. The man of intelligence is one who has realised his own true Self.

The Buddhi, thus, is not to be regarded as an ordinary aspect of the mind. It could be described as an image of the Atma, a reaction and an echo of the Atma.

Only after understanding the true nature of the Buddhi will the students be able to know whether they are guided by intelligence or by mental delusions.

After Rama's return from Lanka, Kaika, who felt penitent about all that she had done, sought "Upadesha" (spiritual guidance) from Rama to atone for her wrongs. Rama did not give her the advice directly, but indicated it indirectly. This is characteristic of all Avatars from ancient times. Avatars seldom give advice directly. What they wish to convey, they give indirectly. The reason is: there is divinity present in each human being and it is by making man realise it that he should be enabled to correct himself. If the correctives are applied directly, man will never try to realise his divinity. The indirect method is used to give to man the capacity to understand his divinity.

Everyone should first seek to know the answer to the question: "Who am I?" Without knowing who you are, what is the meaning in trying to know all about others? At birth you cry out "Koham?" "Who am I?"). You should not die with the same question on your lips. When you die, you should end your life with the assertion "So-Ham" ("I am He").

### **"So-ham"—the great mantra**

To get rid of "Ahamkara", there is only one path: it is to pursue the Godly way of life. When you are puffed up with the sense of ego, sit silently in a corner and observe what your breathing is telling you. It is declaring: "So...Ham". ("So" while inhaling and "Ham" while exhaling. Swami demonstrated how the breath is conveying the message) "So-Ham" is made up of the two words "Sah" (He, that is Brahman) and "Aham" (I). "I am Brahman" ("Aham Brahmasmi"). If this is constantly meditated upon and this consciousness grows within, the Aham ("I") will cease to be a bother. This Mantra has been described as Hamsa Gayatri in Vedantic parlance.

Students! You must note that this "So-Ham" mantra goes on in each of you 21, 600 times a day. "I am Brahman" is the message of the inner voice all the time. Ignoring this, each one identifies himself with the temporary name given to the body. In this way there can be no God-realisation. You will remain what you were according to the name given to the body. "So-Ham" is the name with which you were born. That alone is permanent. That is your real self. When you realise it, you will experience Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Krishna is described as Parthasarathi (the Charioteer of Partha). Partha does not refer to Arjuna alone. It applies to all children of the Earth (Prithvi). So, make Krishna your charioteer. As the Buddhi is a reflection of the Divine, make use of it to realise the Divine. Recognise also that for every endeavour, Love (Prema) is essential. The Lord is the embodiment of Love. He is the Sun of Truth. He is the abode of Truth. Through Love, seek to know your true Self with the help of the Buddhi and purify your mind. This is what I expect from you.

[Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan "*Prema Muditha*".]

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in the Brindavan Campus on 26-5-90**

## Lessons of a Debate

*"I am not merit nor sin.  
Neither happiness nor sorrow.  
Neither mantra nor holy water.  
Neither Veda nor Yajna.  
Neither food nor the enjoyer of food.  
I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa;  
Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram  
(Truth, Goodness and Beauty) "*

This mantra is likely to arise in everybody.

In the world man is a seeker of happiness, an aspirant for bliss. He strives ceaselessly, night and day, to achieve this comfort and bliss. In every sphere man desires two things: enjoyment of happiness, removal of sorrow.

What is the inner significance of man's perennial quest for happiness? The answer is given both in spiritual and scientific terms. Man's natural state is bliss. He is the embodiment of happiness. He is therefore entitled to seek happiness. If sugar loses its sweetness, it ceases to be sugar. If a rose loses its fragrance, it ceases to be a rose. Likewise, if man loses his natural condition of happiness and bliss, he has forfeited his human estate.

For instance, if one notices on the road a man with sad looks, he enquires why the other man is miserable, what is the cause of his sadness. This enquiry is made by every passerby because it is not natural for a human being to be sad.

Everyone is surprised at the man's sorrowful state. In the same bazaar, somebody is going in joyous mood; no notice is taken of him and no one questions him why he is not sad. His joy and gaiety are regarded as his natural condition and cause no surprise.

Man has been endowed with the body, the senses, the mind and the intelligence to experience his natural state of bliss. But unfortunately, because these agencies are polluted and misused, man is plunged in misery. The body is enveloped in the tainted cloaks of attachment and hatred (Raaga and Dwesha). The senses are shrouded in the soiled cloth of desires and sensuous pleasures. The mind is enveloped by all these four coverings. As a result, man is prevented from recognising his true nature. He believes that the physical and worldly pleasures and attachments and aversions are natural to him. These are all transient and ephemeral like passing clouds.

Realising that man's attraction for sensual pleasures is due to the kind of food that he takes, the ancients devised an easy and sacred method for purifying the food before eating. They used to sprinkle some water on the food and utter the mantra: "Annam Brahma! Raso Vishnuh! Bhokta devo Maheshwarah!" ("The solid food is Brahma, the liquids are Vishnu and the enjoyer of the meal is Maheshwara"). The sprinkling is done with "Sathya and Rita" (Truth and the Cosmic order which together sustain the universe). In performing this rite, the partaker of food is praying to the Trinity to protect him with "Truth and Rita". The prayer to the deities is to endow him with "Trikarana Shuddhi", the triple purity of thought, word and deed. By this rite, the food was being sanctified. The intellectuals of today, full of pride in their knowledge and skills, are ignoring the potency of Truth and Rita.

### **A historic debate**

Adi Sankaracharya, during his victorious philosophical travels through Bharat met Sri Mandana Misra and had a debate with him on "Medhaa Shakti" (intellectual ability). Both of them agreed on Ubhaya Bharati, a high-souled scholar, pure-hearted and utterly selfless, as one most competent to decide who was the victor in the debate. Ubhaya Bharati was none other than the wife of Mandana Misra. The choice was unique in many respects. That Sankaracharya was willing to have as judge in the debate his opponent's wife was remarkable. It was the greatest testimony to his faith in the utter impartiality of Ubhaya Bharati. Sankaracharya knew that the discriminating power of the Buddhi (intelligence) was superior to the intellectual ability of the Medhas. Students should understand the power of the Buddhi. It is not Buddhi as commonly understood, mere intellectual ability. It is intelligence in which Rita and Sathya are combined with Aasakthi (zeal) and Sthiratwam (steadfastness). Ubhaya Bharati was endowed with such intelligence. Buddhi includes also Yoga and Mahat-Tatwa, which have a purifying influence on the Buddhi. Buddhi is, thus, not only the capacity to think. Nor is it only the power of deliberation or the discriminating faculty. Beyond all these, it is the power of deep enquiry and judgement. Endowed with this capacity, Ubhaya Bharati decided in favour of Sankaracharya and against her husband. She declared that Sankaracharya had the better of the argument in the debate. This decision is based on Sathya and Ritam.

### **Ubhaya Bharati's Example**

Sankaracharya was extremely pleased with Ubhaya Bharati's verdict. Ubhaya Bharati then declared that in accordance with the understanding between the two disputants before the debate started, Mandana Misra, as the vanquished, should take to Sanyasa and become a disciple of Sankaracharya.

At the same time, as the devoted wife of Mandana Misra, acting upto the ideals of Indian womanhood, according to which the wife should follow the husband in weal and woe, Ubhaya Bharati decided to become a Sanyasini herself. Although she was under no obligation to adopt a monastic life, she decided to do so to set an example to the world. After that, she established an ashram in which she wanted to show to the arrogant scholars, who relied on mere intellectual acumen, that it was inferior to the intelligence that was associated with Sathya and Rita.

ascetic, who had renounced everything in life, sleeping on the wayside, resting his head on a hollow water jug, using it as a pillow and at the same time ensuring that nobody took it away. As long as you have attachment and ego, you can never understand the Atma or experience Atmic bliss. In order to convey a lesson to the ascetic, Ubhaya Bharati spoke within his hearing the following words to one of her disciples: "Look at that ascetic, who has ostensibly renounced every kind of attachment. But he has not given up his attachment to his water jug!" On hearing these words, the ascetic got enraged. He thought: "Is a mere woman entitled to teach me how I should behave?" While Ubhaya Bharati was returning from the river, the ascetic threw the jug at her feet and said: "Now, see what my renunciation is?" Ubhaya Bharati remarked: "Alas! You are not only filled with attachment (Abhimana) but you are also filled with ego (Ahamkara)." On hearing these words, the ascetic ran upto her, fell at her feet and pleaded for forgiveness of his faults.

### **Attachment and ego**

The root causes of man's bondage are Abhimana and Ahamkara, the possessive sense of "Mine", and the arrogance of egoism. Both these are the result of consuming improper food. When one gets rid of the feelings of "I" and "Mine" he will realise his true Self. These feelings are caused by the kind of food that is consumed.

(Bhagavan then related at length an episode from the Mahabharata in which the grandsire Bhishma was expounding all aspects of Dharma to the Pandavas from his bed of arrows. At one stage, Draupadi burst into laughter. The Pandava brothers were upset by Draupadi's unaccountable levity. Understanding their distress, Bhishma told them that Draupadi was an exemplary woman in every respect and there must be a good reason for her laughter. He asked Draupadi to explain her reason. She said: "Grandsire! The lessons which you should have taught to the evil-minded and wicked Kauravas, you are now teaching to my high-souled and righteous husbands. This appeared to me ironic and futile." Bhishma explained that he had been serving the Kauravas and living on their bounty. "Consuming the food received from such unrighteous and evil-minded persons, my blood got polluted. Arjuna's arrows have drained away all that bad blood. And the Dharma which was deep in me is now coming forth."

Students should realise from this episode how important food is in determining one's thoughts and actions. They should also understand the esoteric meaning of "Draupadi." Bhishma was full of praise for Draupadi's devotion to her five husbands. But there is an inner meaning for Draupadi which has a relevance to every person. "Drau-padi" refers to the five pranas—Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana—which are the life-breaths in everyone. All these five function in harmony in every person—man or woman—and maintain the balance in life.

### **Body, mind and buddhi**

The ways of the mind are remarkable. The scriptures have pointed out that when man follows the senses he becomes an animal. When he follows the mind he becomes a man. When he acts according to the Buddhi (intelligence) he achieves the state of Mahat-Tatwa (recognition of his great potentialities). When he recognises his identity with the Atma, he becomes Brahman.



If man cannot follow the Buddhi or the Atma, he should at least follow the mind so that he may be human. It may be asked whether the mind is not prone to bad tendencies. The truth is, the mind by itself is pure. It is by succumbing to the senses that it goes astray. If the mind allows itself to be guided by the Buddhi, it will not go astray.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Chitta Chora Yasodake Bal*".)

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 27-5-1990**

***LEST WE FORGET:***

### **His First Speech on Baba**

*After coming to Baba in the Fifties, Prof. Kasturi was for many decades the most entertaining and edifying exponent of Bhagavan's life and message. But the first speech he had to give on Baba in 1951 was quite an ordeal.*

*The following account of the incident, related in Prof. Kasturi's own inimitable humorous style, is reproduced from his autobiography, "Loving God":*

1951, December I received in the day's mail a letter from Baba, in the Kannada language, but in Anglo-Saxon script. I could neither read nor write the Telugu script and my understanding of the language was halting and inchoate. So, Baba had to devise this devious dualistic method of correspondence to communicate His orders. The letter made me both proud and penitent. It was a command clothed as a request. I was to unveil Bhagavan's portrait at the School Day Function of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba District Board High School, Bukkapatnam! As a measure of abundant caution, Baba had written that my being given this golden chance was a precious piece of good fortune.

I felt ashamed that I could not speak Telugu, for the vast majority of people who gathered at Bukkapatnam that day could not be acquainted with English, and Kannada was for them Oriya or Esperanto. So, after accepting the assignment most humbly, I went over to Bangalore, confabulated with a Telugu teacher at the Fort High School and wrote down in Malayalam script the Telugu version of my Kannada speech, while he dictated it to me word by word. I reached Puttaparthi and placed the half-boiled stuff before Baba. He laughed at my tremulousness and dismissed the manuscript. He said the speech should not be artificial; 'it must be *heartifcial*', He advised. So, I went back to Davangere, very much relieved. And also richer by one new English word!

prosperity to the irrigation engineers of the XIV century A.D. (employed by Emperor Bukka of the Vijayanagar Empire) who selected the lie of the dykes near this place for an anicut across the Chitravati River. Baba was attending the "Middle School" at this place when He grew old enough to leave the "Primary School" at Puttaparthi. He had no need to be taught; He used His teacher, for teaching His mates and companions that wise men and elders should be revered. He used His mates and companions to teach the villagers that children should be treasured as potential guides and pillars of society. The "Middle School" which He frequented at Bukkapatnam was raised to the status of a High School, with the help of a sizeable donation from the Raja of Venkatagiri, who was drawn to Puttaparthi by a concatenation of mysterious happenings willed by Baba. Baba had to proceed Himself to Madras to contact the Chief Minister, and secure sanction for the High School. For, the 'big man' in charge of the Presidency had doubts whether the tiny speck on the map deserved that prestigious institution. There was another snag too, which had to be resolved-whether the High School should be at the Eastern end of the anicut or the Western?

### **Bhagavan's high school**

The Bukkapatnam High School was Baba's first venture in promoting and patronising educational institutions for the young. It had the honour of being known by His Name. He was the President of the School Committee. He visited the School often and imparted constructive counsel to the Headmaster and other teachers. As part of the Birthday Celebrations Baba arranged every year a feast for the students of the School at Prasanthi Nilayam. He knew every boy by name as well as through his domestic background. His sympathy was profound and was expressed magnanimously in practice. He presented to the School a set of musical instruments so that a Band troupe could be formed for March Pasts, Rallies, Route Marches etc. They learnt to play Bhajan songs, whenever they assembled at the Nilayam. Mass Drill, with hoops, lazeem, and torches, were also presented by them at the Nilayam during festivals. He gave as Birthday Blessings uniform dresses for Harijan children. He equipped the School with furniture, a library, a sound system and a radio receiver with speakers. In fact, He nourished His School from birth and childhood and continued to be its Patron and President until it became one of the best High Schools in the District academically and otherwise.

### **A prophecy**

The School Day was to be presided over by the Hon'ble Sri Koti Reddy, Revenue Minister of Andhra. Baba had conferred on me the Ph.D. Honoris Causa, in the card He got printed to be sent to all invited for the function, and elevated the office of "Superintendent" to Principal. Tears welled up when I saw my name as "N. Kasturi, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., Principal, DRM College, Davangere", in the announcements.

I had to my credit a number of incomplete theses on which I had set my heart to win a Ph.D., from the Madras or Mysore Universities. I could not progress further than a few chapters on "Factory Laws in India"; I very nearly completed a study on "The Last Rajas of Coorg"; I copied from the Secretariat of the State of Cochin a few dozen files on "The Dutch Merchants at Cochin". So I had to confess to Swami when I fell at his feet at Bukkapatnam that I was not

formerly of the Mysore Forest Department, and an old friend of mine, intercepted with the query, "Of which University?" Swami turned to him and said "Puttaparthi University". (30 years later, on Vijayadashami Day, at the Poornachandra Auditorium, before a gathering of 50,000 devotees, with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India as Chairman and the Governor of Maharashtra as Chief Guest, the University of Puttaparthi—Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning—was inaugurated by Bhagavan as Chancellor. Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak, M.A., D.Litt., was installed as Vice-Chancellor...) No word of Baba can be casual or barren or fallow.

I arrived at Bukkapatnam an hour before the function started and was graciously ushered into the distinguished company. When my turn came, I rose from my chair and, fortunately without fumbling, drew down the length of ribbon on which the silvery silk veil was hung, exposing the magnificent portrait of the Lord. Then, I placed a flower garland around it.

### **The speech**

I addressed the gathering in English, as I had been permitted to do by Baba. I said that schools honour themselves by placing before the successive generations of pupils portraits of one or other of three inspiring personalities, Distinguished 'Old students', Generous Donors, and Illustrious World Personages. I mentioned that Baba was a pupil on the register of the School when it was a middle school. This made Him an "Old Student", "an Old Student" whom any school would most proudly own. He was also personally responsible for its elevation, establishment, and for ensuring its progress. He earned for it a historic victory. Baba was a Divine Phenomenon whose portrait would confer fame and power on any institution professing to promote knowledge, and to prescribe the norms of morality and spirituality in our country. The fact that He was the President of the School Committee was, I pointed out, of unique value because Baba loved children most and was ever intent on encouraging them to grow into able, efficient and honest citizens of the world.

That was my first speech on Baba. And I was wholly elated when He smiled at me as I nervously sat on the edge of my chair after ten minutes of tension. He had warned me against using notes and against exceeding the time allotted. He allowed the Minister to hold forth a few minutes more. His wife, a renowned social worker and orator in her own right, also spoke, until the gathering became restless.

I reached Puttaparthi late that night, after a dinner in Baba's Presence at the High School itself. The next morning, Baba called me into the room (popularly known as Korike Room from 'Korike' a Telugu word meaning 'Wish'—the wish-fulfilling room, in fact.). But, that day, it turned out to be, for me, a "wish-frustrating room".

### **Baba's leela**

Let me explain. On one occasion when I stayed at Puttaparthi, some princes of Venkatagiri Royal Family had told me of a peculiar prank that Baba Indulged in. When the mood was on, He would extend His hand towards a devotee who had a gemset ring on his finger and carp at him, "Oh! Shame! Why have you to carry stone without getting paid for it? How long have you

censure was technically correct) loosened the ring and placed it on His palm, Baba would blow His breath on it and it would be transformed into a new ring in which is embedded a portrait on enamel of His own charming Form. They showed me the ring that had undergone the miraculous impact of Divine Breath.

### **Baba and the ring**

I developed a wish to witness this unique miracle and to wear a ring so metamorphosed. So, I got a gold ring made with an oversize garnet affixed. I was sure His compassion would be aroused at the sight of my carrying a stone heavier than those which the others bore around. I was also hopeful that He would not miss noticing it, and He would give a bigger sized beautiful portrait. The Stone's appeal was inescapable. But, Baba encouraged me to suffer. He did not ask for the ring for full two years. That morning, I entered the Korike Room as usual with the right arm on my chest so that the garnet was right where its pomegranate brightness would be most patent. Baba held out His Hand for the ring! Ah! I placed it on that silken palm. My fingers shook in excitement.

Baba continued to speak. "Oh! You desire to have a big picture so that you can preen yourself as a big devotee. So, every one would envy you, it would make you famous. No. People parade my portrait on fingers, on watches, on lockets round their necks, on the walls of their homes, on the altars in their shrines. No. *Have me in your heart. That is my Home.*" Then. He blew His breath on the ring He held between His fingers. It was not there any more, my gold and garnet had dissolved into nothingness. I swallowed a sigh and, immediately thereafter, an incipient sob.

Baba spoke some good words about my speech before the School Day gathering. He inquired about my mother and my children. Then, He placed in my hands the Vibhuti packets, and opened the door for me to step out of the 'Wish-fulfillment' room.

### **A wish fulfilled**

I scarce had taken two steps forward when Baba called me in. "Poor fellow," He sympathised. "You want your ring back?" Then, most compassionately, with a sweet 'No' and a charming smile suddenly brightening His face, He waved His right palm in a circle and produced what struck me as a small lump of light. It was a gold ring set with nine precious gems, extolled in legends as capable of winning for the wearer the boons the nine planets can grant; pearl, ruby, topaz, diamond, emerald, lapis lazuli, coral, sapphire and zircon, 3 each in three sections. He put it on my finger. It was a perfect fit.

He said, "Now, you will not be announcing me, exhibiting me that I am yours, even before I acknowledge that you are mine. This ring is worn by many who believe that the Navagrahas (nine planets) have to be propitiated. By and by, you will discover that my Anugraha (Grace) can overcome the sinister designs of the nine planets. Until then, have this". I came out of the room, the second time, with a grin of joy, extending from ear to ear.

*I am Yours, Swami, Yours.  
As the potter moulds his clay,  
Mould me, Swami, as You wish me to be.  
Oh! Lord, the dweller of my heart.*

*Hold me, as the owner of the dog holds it.  
Pull me towards You whenever I go astray.  
Verily the chain is Your Divine Love,  
Oh! Lord, the dweller of my heart.*

*Throw light on faults of mine,  
That eyes outward may turn inward,  
Help me be as You wish,  
Oh! Lord, the dweller of my heart.*

*Merely lending these ears and eyes,  
To Your lectures and Darshan, NO, NO!  
Help me give my soul to You,  
Oh! Lord, the dweller of my heart.*

*As sweet is inseparable from sugar,  
Let You be inseparable from me,  
And I be inseparable from You,  
Oh! Lord, the dweller of my heart.*

**—K. Suneetha, Pre-Seva Dal, Visakhapatnam**

### **Judge not the lord!**

*God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the Sea,  
And rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;*

*He hides a smiling face.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.*

**—Dare Ogunkolati, Nigeria.**

*If each one does his duty, in the spirit of dedication, the Light can illumine all, but, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can darkness disappear? You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring Peace and Joy into you. The Incarnation comes to warp, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey with hope and faith. There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarreled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a will-o-the-wisp. Wisdom retorted that, without it man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it or use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but only when properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny; wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprint. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous.*

**—Baba**

## **Gurupoornima at Prasanthi Nilayam**

Bhagavan is "Gurunaam Guruh". He is the Divine Guru—the Supreme Preceptor of Preceptors. Hence, the Gurupoornima celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam are looked forward to by devotees from all parts of the world as an occasion for receiving Bhagavan's message as the Divine Guru.

This year's celebrations on July 7th were attended by an unprecedentedly large gathering of devotees from overseas and all parts of India. The Prasanthi Mandir had been gaily decorated with flags and festoons for the occasion.

As Bhagavan emerged from the Interview Room of the Mandir, He was greeted by the hymn "Gurur-Brahma, Gurur-Vishnu, Gurur-devo Maheshwarah", hailing the Lord as the Supreme Guru. This was followed by a programme of specially composed songs and bhajans in praise of Bhagavan, which was sung in chorus by the Institute's music group, to the accompaniment of the Institute's orchestra.

Two songs in Hindi, pleading for the Lord's darshan and grace, were followed by two songs in Telugu, one expressing the devotee's feelings owing to separation from the Lord, and the other, hailing Sri Narayana as the Lord of the Universe and dispenser of all prosperity and happiness. Another moving song in Telugu was an invocation to Krishna to come and protect the hapless devotees: "Raa Raa Krishnaiyya! Deenulanu kaapaada Raa Raa!" This was followed by a song in Malayalam in praise of Krishna. The crowning piece of the morning's programme was a lilting Hindi song, sung in chorus by the whole group, declaring that they cannot be without Sai even for a moment.

Bhagavan enjoyed the entire programme and asked the students to sing a few bhajans before He was offered Arati.

In the afternoon, an overflow gathering of devotees had assembled in the Poornachandra Auditorium to listen to Bhagavan's Gurupoornima message.

Before Bhagavan's discourse, three senior students—Vijaya Sai, Sai Nath, Ravi Mariwala, and Sanjay Sahni, Lecturer in Commerce, spoke on their experiences after coming to Bhagavan and what Swami meant for them.

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse (published separately). The celebrations concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

## **Gorkha Devotion to God and Duty**

It was darshan time at Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th February 1990. Bhagavan was slowly walking in front of the lines of ladies. There was hushed silence.

Suddenly an old Gorkha lady stood up in the back row. Oblivious to all the raised eyebrows and raised hands to make her sit down, she walked slowly towards Bhagavan as if she had all the time in the world. Swami knowing the devotion of the old lady paused with a flicker of a smile. She approached Him, as if she had a prior appointment. Slowly she bent down to offer a Padanamaskar and without hurry got up. Without even looking at Bhagavan she turned round in slow motion, while thousands of devotees watched in wonder and surprise. Without any sign of emotion, with steady and unhurried steps, she walked back to her place and sat down.

Watching her I recalled how during World War II Rifleman Agam Bahadur Rai had won a Victoria Cross. He got out of his trench, walked unhurriedly to within 35 yards of a fire-spitting Japanese tank, took a deliberate aim with his anti-tank rifle and blew it up. And then equally

—*Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Dr. M.L. Chibber*

## **God in the world of Business**

A question that is asked of me relates to my apparent ability to combine the divine with my world of business.

A devotee expressed to me that, while he is fortunate to spend two months each year at Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence, he is unable to retain his relationship with God when he is absorbed in his profession upon his return home. He said that this is a problem that he has never been able to solve.

Initially, before delving into this problem, I want to explain that I have been in close proximity to the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for a quarter of a century. My reference to "proximity" does not refer in an exclusive sense to closeness to the Form, but refers to having, by His Grace, the ability to receive His guidance on the subtle level.

Through meditation I have for a very long time striven to be entrenched in the divine life. Such background may explain why, in these circumstances, maintaining the divine consciousness in the midst of the business world is possible for me. There have been occasions, at executive meetings, when I have observed many executives wearing ever so serious faces, that I would see the comedy of the show. Inwardly I would talk to Baba and enjoy a happy time. My face, under those circumstances, would not reveal my joviality. I am also aware, however, that behind the serious facade are conscientious people who realize that the welfare of employees has to be weighed carefully to avoid making decisions that might create distress to others through their acts.

While I am working on business projects, I try to stay rooted in the divine. This wonderful contact becomes steadfast. It is far removed from anything that relates to an accomplishment. No words, thoughts or mantra, in my case, have to be recollected to retain the contact. One might liken it to a soaring eagle that appears to be fixed to the blue sky yet seeing all, feeling all, and being all, while the performance below continues.

God IS everywhere! From my own experience, working in the midst of almost 300 people, I have always felt a very strong Presence of God. There have been numerous occasions when sweet acts of love and kindness are witnessed which add an even deeper dimension to the inner joy.



corporation's employee bulletin. This has now grown into a quarterly, 24-page, fully illustrated two-colour magazine. In my position I am keenly aware of the activities planned for the employees. I am also cognizant of the many kindnesses, loving acts, the sorrows and the rejoicings of many of the workers. In times of illness and calamities I feel God playing His divine role. God's Love and Presence can be witnessed moment to moment, within and without.

Many of the employees come from a number of other countries, and their separation from loved ones for years is unavoidable. Some will return to their country, marry, and return here and wait for the required years anticipating the reunion with loved ones. In the meantime the employees maintain a high attitude awaiting their citizenship.

Just because one cannot feel the Love of God in the market place or be aware of His Presence, it does not remove Him. This, in my mind, is a condition in which the desire for God has developed to a stage where the yearning to see Him everywhere has expanded within the heart but the evidence still remains hidden. Grace is an essential ingredient, and deeds performed lovingly as one's duty in the world of business earn His Grace. One who loves the Lord and perseveres with implicit faith, will reap the reward. God will be seen clearly everywhere.

—*Charles Penn, U.S. A.*

*GURUDEV VANI:*

### **Trigunas and Panchbhutas**

*Students! Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Everything in the cosmos is Brahman. "The Divine shines in the rays of the sun. It is the Divine that reveals to man through his eyes the vastness and glory of the world. The whiteness and coolness of the moon which confers peace on men are derived from the Divine. The universe, which is based on the triple nature of time and which is sustained by the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara), is permeated by the Divine in the form of the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas)." (This was the meaning of the Sanskrit sloka with which Bhagavan began His discourse).

Nature presents a marvellous picture. No one can fully comprehend it. Whether it is blessing or bereavement, joy or sorrow, gain or loss, it comes from Nature (Prakriti). Nature presides over the destinies of all creatures.

This Nature comprises the three gunas. The Trinity represents the three gunas. The three qualities account also for the processes of creation, sustenance and dissolution. ("Srishti, Stithi, and Laya"). All the varied experiences in the world arise from the three gunas.

which is permeated by the Divine, man should seek primarily to divinise his life.

### **Creation and the creator**

The secret of creation is known only to the Creator. Others cannot hope to understand it. Scientists are engaged in exploring the secrets of creation. But none can plumb the depths of Nature's mystery. In scientific investigations, today's discovery is overtaken by tomorrow's findings. That again gets outdated in its turn.

Continual change is in the very nature of creation. It is not permanent or immutable. The Creator is the only eternal unchanging Entity. The spiritual path aims at seeking the nature of the Creator and thereby understanding the nature of creation.

The entire Cosmos, consisting of living and inanimate objects, is based upon the three gunas. Man should strive to understand the Principle that transcends the three gunas.

God is Spirit (Atma) incarnate. When terms like "Sathyam", "Jnanam", "Anantam", "Brahma", "Atma" or "God", are used, they all refer only to one Entity.

### **The elements and the gunas**

At the beginning the Pancha Bhutas (the five elements, space, air, fire, water and earth) emerged from the Atma. The five elements contain five characteristics. From the five elements began the process of fusion ("pancheekritam"). Out of this fusion, came the three gunas. The Cosmos is the visible form of the three gunas.

The Cosmos is permeated by the three gunas—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. The nature of the Satwa guna has to be properly understood. The Antahkarana (the Inner Instrument) in man represents the Satwic quality found in the five elements. Aakasa (Space or ether) has pre-eminence among the elements in representing the Satwic quality. From Aakasa emerged what is known as "Shuddha Satwa" (pure Satwa). This accounts for the human form. Aakasa accounts also for the emergence of the organ of hearing, the ear.

The second element is Air. The skin is the product of the principle represented by Air (Vayu). The eye is the organ representing the principle of the Fire element (Agni). The individualised aspect of the fourth element. Water is the tongue. The nose represents the individualised aspect of the fifth element, the earth (Prithvi). These five elements account for the five faculties of Shabda (Sound), Sparsha (touch), Roopa (sight), Rasa (taste) and Gandha (smell). As each of these faculties has emanated from one particular element, the five faculties are distinct in every individual.

Aakasa (Space) is represented by sound and the corresponding sense organ is the ear. The ear can only hear and not perform any other function. Likewise the skin can only experience the sense of touch (Sparsha) associated with Air (Vayu). The eye (which is the organ associated with

only taste. The nose can only smell, but cannot taste.

### **Role of antahkarana**

While each of the sense organs is limited functionally to its specific role, the Antahkarana (Inner Instrument) combines the functions of all the five organs. This alone has the capacity to experience all the perceptions of the five senses (the five Jnanindriyas). Are these sense organs functioning externally or internally? The answer is that they perform a dual role (both internal and external). If the physical organ, the ear, is present, but if the faculty of hearing is absent, the ear serves no purpose. If the faculty of hearing (the Jnanindriya) is present, but there is no ear (to receive sounds from the outside world), the faculty is of no use. The combined operation of the Jnanindriyas (the sense organs concerned with the inner faculties of the senses) and the Karmandriyas (the organs of action) accounts for the human personality. Here you have a loudspeaker. Without a mike, the loudspeaker is of no use. Without a loudspeaker, the mike serves no purpose. It is the presence of both which enables what is spoken inside to be broadcast outside.

### **Satwa and rajo gunas**

The five faculties of the senses (sound, touch, sight, taste and smell) are the Satwic expressions of the five elements. The five elements in their Rajo guna give rise to "Prana" (the life force). While the combined operation of the five elements in their Satwic quality is seen in the Antahkarana (the Inner Instrument in man), the collective functioning of the five elements in their Rajas quality expresses itself as the life-force (Prana). Among the five elements, in their individual expression of their Rajasic quality, Aakasa (Space) is represented by 'Vaak' (the faculty of speech). Vayu (air) finds expression in the hand. Agni (fire) finds expression in its individualised Rajoguna as the foot. The fourth and fifth elements (water and earth) find Rajasic expression in the excretal organs in the body.

You must take note of some significant facts in this posture of the elements. In its Satwic aspect, Aakasa (space) expresses itself as ear. But the same Aakasa, in its Rajasic aspect, appears as the 'Vaak'. It may be inferred from this that Aakasa has two children; the ear representing Satwa and the 'Vaak' representing Rajas. The ear, which is Aakasa's first child, receives the sounds coming from outside. The second child, the 'Vaak' responds from inside through the spoken word.

The skin is the first child of Vayu (Air) in its Satwic aspect. The second child, in its Rajasic aspect, is the hand. The skin recognises an ant crawling on the body. Immediately the hand tries to remove it.

It will be seen from these examples that the Satwic quality consists in receiving impressions from outside. The Rajasic quality consists in casting them out.

and what is Satwic is being rejected. In the natural scheme of creation, what should be received is that which is Satwic and what should be rejected is all that is Rajasic.

### **Satwa in prakriti**

The primary quality of Nature (Prakriti) is Satwa. Prakriti is called "Stri", made up of the three syllables—Sa, Ta and Ra. The significance of this term is: First of all, you have to take in what is Satwa. Secondly, "ta" implies developing some Tamoguna qualities, like submission, humility and modesty. "Ra", representing the Rajoguna, implies that there are occasions in life when some harsh firm resolutions will have to be taken. The Rajasic quality comes last and it means that Rajasic actions have to be done as a last resort when they are unavoidable.

In the cosmic process, it is the Satwic quality (the "Sa" kara) that comes first. Hence it is the duty of every man to develop the Satwic quality in every respect in thoughts, actions and attitudes.

### **Panchikaranam of the elements**

The Tamoguna brings about a mixture of the five elements. In this mixture, the five elements are not present in their full strength. The five are fused together ("panchikritam") in a manner which may be illustrated by the following example for purposes of easy understanding of a highly complex process: Suppose the five elements come together as five individuals each having one rupee worth of change. Aakasa retains half a rupee and distributes among the other four elements one-eighth of a rupee each. The second element Vayu (Air) also does likewise retaining half a rupee for itself, Agni (Fire), Water and Prithvi (the earth) follow the same procedure. In the result, each has one rupee, but its composition is affected by the exchanges among the elements of parts of their respective natures. Originally each element was whole by itself. The process of mixing has resulted in the presence of all the five elements in every "rupee". In relation to the human being, the process of "panchikrita" makes man a mixture of the five elements and produces diversity in qualities. These have been described in spiritual parlance as "shodasa kalas" (the sixteen aspects). What are these sixteen aspects? They are: the five Jnanindriyas (organs of perception), the five Karmandriyas (organs of action), the five elements, and the mind. Every individual has these sixteen constituents, although the sixteen "kalas" are attributed only to the Divine. Man has to realise his divinity.

### **The devotee & the goddess**

The ways of the Divine are not easily comprehended. Wishing the welfare of everyone in the universe, the Divine uses a myriad methods. It may be illustrated by the story of a devotee, aspiring for riches, who performed a severe penance for getting a boon from the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi. Man is prepared to undergo any ordeals for achieving material wealth, but will not take any trouble to realise the Divine. Lakshmi appeared before the devotee and asked him what he wanted. He replied that he wanted Lakshmi Herself. She agreed and said that adorning Herself with all ornaments. She would follow him, and asked him to go ahead. She said She would come to his house and hand over all Her ornaments to him. She imposed, however, one stipulation. "You must go ahead and never look back. If you look back, I will stay at that spot"

all kinds of sounds as She walked behind. Unable to restrain his curiosity to find out what all jewels She was wearing, he turned back to have a look at Her. He could not restrain his curiosity till he reached his home. The moment he looked back, Lakshmi stopped there and did not follow him.

This is what happens when one cannot restrain one's desire. Even though he got the grace of the Divine, the devotee could not benefit from it. This means that even if you are blessed with an abundance of Divine grace, you must acquire the capacity to benefit from it. To get this capacity, you have to obey implicitly the injunctions of the Divine. If the devotee in the story had adhered to Lakshmi's conditions, he would have benefited from Her favours. Failing to abide by Her conditions, he forfeited what he had been offered.

### **Nature and God**

The situation in the world is something similar to this. The world is permeated by the potency of the three (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas) gunas. Even our vision of the world is influenced by the three gunas. Examine your eye. The outer rim of the eye is red, representing the Rajo guna. After that, you have the white area, representing Satwa. At the centre is the black circle, representing the Tamo guna. So, even our vision is tainted by the three colours, red, white and black.

When you pose the question, "Where is God?" the answer is given by Nature itself. The revolution of the earth around itself at the speed of 1000 miles an hour accounts for the phenomenon of night and day. The earth's revolution round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour accounts for the various seasons, for rainfall and the cultivation of food crops. Thus the divinely ordained motions of the earth enable living beings to get their food. This is a visible proof of the existence of God. The Veda declares that the foolish person, even while seeing the acts of God, declares he has not seen God. He does not realise that Nature is the vesture of God.

What is the lesson to be learnt from the observance of Nature? It is "Kriyaaseelata", excellence in the performance of duty. It is because Nature ceaselessly performs its duty that the world is able to derive so many sacred benefits.

The secret and mystery of creation lies in the due performance of one's duty with earnestness and sincerity. In the pursuit of the mirage of sensual happiness, men are going on the wrong path. This can be seen in the life-style of people going to work or carrying on business. After what they imagine is a day of hard work, they go to clubs, where they become slaves of drink and ultimately ruin themselves.

Real happiness can be got only by rendering service to the public. Go to the help of the poor and the forlorn. You will derive strength as well as peace from such service. Your conscience also will feel satisfied. It is a pity that neither the rich nor the administrators are inclined to do such service.

It is all the more essential that students should have some ideals before them and look forward to serving society selflessly. You should realise that you are a part of society and that your welfare is bound up with the good of society as a whole.

Students! Whatever sadhana you may do, your primary concern must be to develop the love of God. When you develop that pure love, you can achieve anything.

In this context, the advice which Hanuman gave to Vibhishana, when the latter lamented that though he had been chanting the name of Rama he had not had the benefit of a vision of Rama, is relevant. Hanuman told Vibhishana that it was not enough to chant the Name. One should engage himself in the service of the Divine. Hanuman declared that while meditating on the name of Rama, he was also engaged in constant service to the Lord. That was how he had earned Rama's grace and become near and dear to Him. "I am ignorant of the scriptures, but I have dedicated my life to the service of Rama," declared Hanuman.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho!*").

**—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 28-5-1990**

*Like a feast to a starving man,  
Like rain for the parched earth,  
Like a child to one yearning for a son,  
The Lord comes to protect Dharma  
And save the virtuous and the good.*

"Sahasrairshaa Purushah Sahasra-akshas-sahasra-paad" The Lord has a myriad heads, a myriad eyes and a myriad feet. The entire cosmos and every living being in it are reflections of the Divine. Oblivious to the presence of this sacred Divine within himself, man embarks on the quest for God. He behaves like a man who goes to his neighbour for milk, forgetting the wish-fulfilling cow in his backyard.

Avatars are of two kinds: One, Amsa-avatar; two, Poorna-avatar. All human beings are "Amsa-avatar" (partial incarnation of the Divine). "Mamaivaamso jeevaloke jeevabhutah-sanaatanah" ("A part of My eternal Self has become the Jiva—individual soul—in the world of living beings", says Krishna in the Gita). These partial incarnations, caught up in Maya, develop egoism and possessiveness and lead worldly lives. The Poorna-avatars, however, subduing and transcending Maya, manifest their full divinity to the world in their lives. The Poorna-avatar may behave, according to the circumstances, as if He were subject to Maya, but in fact He is free from Maya at all times.

In the Rama Avatar, for instance, Rama conducted himself as if he was subject to Maya, but upheld Dharma for promoting the welfare of the world. The Krishna Avatar was different. Keeping Maya under control, He manifested His leelas (miraculous deeds). This was why Vyasa, in his Bhagavata, characterised Krishna as "Leelaamaanusha Vighraha" (The Divine manifesting as man for performing His Leelas). The Bhagavata has described in detail the Leelas of Krishna and proclaimed His glory to the world.

In the Krishna Avatar, Krishna not only performed many marvellous deeds, but also taught the Supreme Wisdom to the world. He was one who had transcended the gunas, but, for the sake of regeneration of the world, behaved as if He was influenced by the gunas, and delighted the world by His deeds. Sanjay Sahani (who had spoken earlier) said that whatever Krishna did was for the welfare of the world. Krishna did everything, whatever He spoke or whatever action He did, for the good and well-being of the world. But some people, not understanding this truth owing to their own limitations, attributed wrong motives for some of Krishna's actions. In this they reflected their own feelings.

### **The devotion of the gopikas**

Love (Prema) is nectarine in its sweetness. Love for the Lord (Bhakti) was the highest expression of devotion among the Gopikas (the cowherdesses of Gokulam) because they were saturated with the sweetness of Divine Love. They did not seek liberation or higher knowledge.

Narada coined the phrase, "Param Bhakti" (Supreme Devotion) to describe the devotion of the Gopikas. These supreme devotees regarded the Lord as their companion and most precious treasure. So intense was their devotion that they used to go about as highly intoxicated persons who were unmindful of the world. Leaving their homes, on hearing the music of Krishna's flute, they rushed to the forest in search of Krishna, oblivious to everything. The Gopikas realised that supreme wisdom (Jnana) consisted in experiencing oneness with the Divine and that all other knowledge was only mundane and related to the physical. Krishna was everything for them. In their feeling of oneness with the Divine, they made no distinction between the animate and the inanimate. They saw the Divine in everything. Pothana (author of the Telugu Bhagavatam) has beautifully described the feelings of the Gopikas when they went in search of Krishna in the forest. (Bhagavan recited the poem in which the Gopikas describe Krishna and ask the jasmine creepers to tell them whether Krishna is hiding in any of their bushes). Having tasted the nectar of the devotion to Krishna, the Gopikas would not think of seeking anything else.

Krishna is said to have stolen butter from the houses of the Gopikas. The butter which He stole was the pure, milk-white hearts of the Gopikas. Butter is pure and soft. The hearts of the Gopikas were like butter. (Bhagavan recited poems in which Yashoda tells Krishna about the complaints she had received from the Gopikas against Him and says she will tie Him to a mortar so that He may not go to other houses for stealing their butter). Yashoda did not realise the divinity of Krishna, though even in small things Krishna used to reveal His Divine powers.

### **From Rama to Sathya Sai**

In the Treta Yuga, Rama came as the very embodiment of Truth and Righteousness (Sathya and Dharma). In the Dwapara Yuga, the Lord incarnated as Krishna, the embodiment of Santhi and Prema. Today the Avatar has come as the embodiment of all the four—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

The world cannot so easily understand how the Love Principle works. The Bhagavata has clearly expounded the connection between Samsara (family life) and the world. Family life is concerned with the bringing up of a family, the acquisition of properties, the enjoyment of comforts and other material benefits. Nature provides all that a man needs, air to breathe, land for shelter, water to drink, and food to eat. But man is forgetting how to live in harmony with Nature according to Nature's laws. Man craves for all kinds of artificial comforts. This was the teaching of Suka to Parikshit (in the Bhagavata).

The world is full of egoism and acquisitiveness, lust and hatred. When man tries to utilise Nature to get rid of these bad traits, then he will be able to experience peace, love, and forbearance. Love can be got only through love and by no other means. Hence, spiritual aspirants should develop Divine love. Love is Divine. It seeks no return. Its only aim is to realise God.

### **Protection of dharma**

It may be asked whether it is possible in the contemporary world to practise such love. As declared by Krishna in the Gita: "The Lord incarnates from age to age to protect Dharma."



Dharma. In this context, it should be noted that protection of the body takes priority over the protection of Dharma. It is only when the body is taken care of that Dharma can be protected. This is the rationale of the statement: Health is Wealth.

It must be realised that the protection of the body is solely for protecting Dharma. What is Dharma? It is the harmony of thought, word and deed. This is the mark of true humanness. What kind of man is he whose thoughts, speech and actions are not in accord with each other? Today man must strive for this triple unity.

Dharma cannot be destroyed. But what is happening is the decline in the practice of Dharma. Today, the practice of Dharma is itself true sadhana. For the practice of Dharma, the triple purity—purity of thought, word and deed—is essential.

### **The advent of Krishna**

Embodiments of the Divine! Do not think that celebration of the birth of Krishna relates to what happened some millennia ago in the Dwapara Yuga. Everyone has to cherish the Krishna consciousness in one's heart every moment ceaselessly. Who is Krishna? When was He born? Krishna was born in the month of Shravana, in the dark fortnight (Krishna paksha), on Ashtami day, in a dark room, as a dark child. Shravana means that which gives delight to the ear (Shravanam, bearing). It is significant that among the nine forms of devotion the first place is given to "Shravanam", listening to the glories of the Lord, and the final stage is "Atmanivedanam" (total surrender). Today men tend to listen to all kinds of evil things, but do not lend their ears to hear what is pure and holy. What you should hear (shravana) is all about God and not other trivial gossip. Unfortunately, it is a sign of the Kali age that people are eager to listen to bad tales about others and do not seek to listen to the holy name of the Lord. You are given eyes to seek a vision of the Lord of Kailash. You are endowed with the feet for going to the Lord's temple and not to loiter in alleys and bylanes. All organs and limbs have been given to man for adoring the Lord.

### **What is good?**

Dharma, in essence, means making use of every limb for the sacred purpose for which it is intended. See good; think good; speak good; go to good places; do good deeds. What do we mean by the use of the word "good"? It is not what someone else advises you to do. The Divine is not somewhere outside. He is within you. The consciousness of what is good must arise from within you. That is the voice of Conscience. Act according to the dictates of your Conscience.

### **The lord within**

When the question is asked, "Where is God?" the answer is given (in the Gita sloka): "Aham Vaiswaanaro bhutva praaninaam deham Aasritah; Praana Apaana Samaayuktah Pachaamyannam Chaturvidham." "As Vaishwanara I have entered every living being and I digest all the four kinds of food." The Lord thus declares that He is within everyone as the digesting agent, who supplies nourishment to all parts of the body. God is present in everyone as "Vaishwanara". Therefore, while taking food, you should offer it to the Divine first by reciting the sloka:

*"Brahmaarpanam Brahma Havih,  
Brahmaagnau Brahmanaahutham  
Brahmaiva thena Ganthavyam  
Brahma karma Samaadhinaa"*

("Brahmam is everything: the offering is Brahmam, the sacrificial fire is Brahmam, Brahmam is the goal and the means.")

### **From darkness to light**

Krishna was born during the Krishna paksha, the dark fortnight of the month. The effulgence of the Lord is seen with greater effect when it is dark. In a world of disorder, Krishna was born to establish order. He was born on Ashtami day. Ashtami is associated with troubles and difficulties. When do troubles arise? When Righteousness is forgotten. Krishna's advent signifies the dispelling of darkness, the removal of troubles, banishing of ignorance and teaching mankind the Supreme Wisdom.

Krishna's primary role was that of teacher. He taught the Gita to Arjuna. He told Arjuna: "Be only My instrument!" Krishna thereby declared: "Using you as an instrument I am reforming the whole world." All the teachings of the Divine are related to Dharma and Prema (Divine Love).

The Gopikas prayed to Krishna that He should never leave their hearts in which they had installed Him. Mira also sang in the same strain. "I dived deep into the ocean and found a pearl. Will you let me slip it out of my hand?" (Swami sang the song in Tamil).

Samsara (worldly life) is a vast ocean. Desires are like the waves. Our feelings constitute the depth of the ocean. In this deep there are crocodiles, whales and sharks in the form of attachments and hatred. It is not easy for ordinary beings to cross this ocean. The Gopikas declared that only with the help of the Divine name can people save themselves.

People tend to look upon the devotion of the Gopikas in worldly terms. Their minds never turned towards any sensory objects. They were completely free from sensual desires. All their desires were concentrated on God. They viewed the entire universe as the manifestation of God.

The Gopikas did not concern themselves with the question whether the Divine was attributeless or full of attributes. They preferred to worship the Divine in the form of Krishna and they wanted their forms to merge in the Divine. "Thereby we shall be formless", they declared.

### **The quest for peace**

It is when we forget our form that we can merge in the Formless. The Divine cannot be experienced through Dhyana (meditation) or japa (reciting the Lord's name). This is a delusion. These practices may give momentary peace of mind. To experience permanent joy and the Knowledge of the Spirit you have to develop your Divine nature. For this, the environment also

vibrations. This was the reason why the ancient sages sought the solitude of the forests for their penance in divinely charged atmosphere. They betook themselves to the forests because they felt that the happenings in the villages were not conducive to mental purity. This was a sign of weakness. It is not necessary to go to a forest if you can concentrate on the Divine Atma dwelling in the heart. The forest is remote. Here you have "Forrest" your heart. The key to inner peace is within you and not outside. In the atmosphere of a sacred Divine Presence, you can promote more effectively your quest for peace.

### **Rama and Krishna avatars**

In the understanding of the role of Avatars, the easiest and the sweetest means was revealed by the Krishna Avatar to the largest extent. This does not mean that the other Avatars are irrelevant. Each Avatar is appropriate for the time of its advent. This may be illustrated by a small example. When there is a petty quarrel in the street, a policeman's intervention is enough. When there is a riotous crowd, a Police Inspector may be necessary to deal with it. In an insurgency, the Inspector-General of Police will have to take charge of the situation.

When Dharma was showing signs of decline, Rama appeared to protect Dhaarani (the earth), Dharma Patni (his consort) and Dharma (Righteousness). It was for these threefold purposes that the Rama Avatar took place.

By the time of the Krishna Avatar, the forces of wickedness had grown to greater proportions. Krishna was not concerned much about the earth or the wife. His main concern was with Dharma. When Dharma is firmly established, the earth and the Dharma-Patni are also duly protected.

In this context, Rama is described as "Maya maanusha vigraha" ("Maya in human form"). In the story of Rama, it is related that Rama lamented over the loss of Sita. In Krishna Avatar the picture is different. Women were in distress for the sake of Krishna.

In the Rama Avatar, Rama was provoked to take arms against evil-doers. In Krishna Avatar, Krishna provoked the conflict and fought the evil-doers.

In Rama Avatar, Duty comes first and joy later. In Krishna Avatar, Joy comes first and then duty.

### **Leela-avatar**

Looked at in this way, the difference between the Maya-avatar of Rama and the Leela-avatar of Krishna will be apparent. Krishna was always immersed in bliss. Whether it was a burial ground, or a battlefield or a haven of peace, he remained the same. Krishna was standing between two immense opposing armies and He sang a song. That is the Gita, which means song. Would it be possible for anyone to sing in such a situation? One sings only when one is happy. Krishna, because He was the embodiment of joy, could sing even on the battlefield.

I do not know whether you are aware of Swami's nature. When someone comes to Swami and says that he is suffering from an unbearable stomachache, Swami says: "Anandam, Anandam" ("Happy, happy"). When a woman comes wailing over the loss of her husband, Swami says "Chaalaa santhosham" ("Very happy"). Swami is always in a state of bliss. Happiness is the very nature of the Divine.

What is the use of lamenting over anything? All things are passing clouds. Nothing is lasting. Why, then, bewail over any loss? You should not bother about them. This is the teaching of the Avatar. Don't feel distressed over anything that may happen. Every pain is followed by some pleasure. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. It is on this basis that you should lead your lives.

There is a vast difference between Divine bliss and momentary pleasure. What is called happiness is incidental to a situation and is not permanent. But bliss (Ananda) is different. It is lasting. When you are hungry, you go to the canteen and feel happy after taking food. But that does not last long. Permanent happiness can be got only through devotion to the Divine. Avatars make their advent only to confer Divine bliss on mankind.

The petty difficulties met with in everyday life can be overcome by love. Once you cultivate love, you can overcome any difficulty. Strive for God's grace. But do not regard God as different from you. He is within you. Where there is God, there is victory. That is the inner meaning of the last stanza in the Gita: "Yathra Yogeswarah Krishno yathra Paartho Dhanurdharah Tatra Sri Vijayo Bhutir-Dhruvaa nitir-mathir mama." The esoteric meaning of this sloka is: "The heart in which the Lord of Yoga dwells and where there is the courage and strength represented by Arjuna, there all prosperity and success are assured."

### **THE MEANING OF "KRISHNA"**

We must understand properly the meaning of the term Krishna. The word has three meanings. One is: "Krishyathi iti Krishnah" (The one who cultivates is Krishna). What is it that has to be cultivated? The field of the heart (Hridaya kshetra). Krishna cultivates the field of our hearts by removing the weeds of bad qualities, watering it with love, ploughing it with the use of sadhana, and sowing the seeds of devotion. This is how Krishna cultivates our hearts.

The second meaning of the word is: "Karshathi iti Krishnah." ("The one who attracts is Krishna"). Krishna attracts you by His eyes, His speech, His sports, and by every action of His. By His words, He softens and calms the hearts of even those filled with hatred and makes them rejoice.

Krishna displayed these qualities even as a small child. Once He had entered the house of a Gopika at night, climbed a pillar to get at the butter that was kept in a pot suspended from the ceiling. The Gopika woke up, caught Him in the act and held fast His legs, saying that she would now expose Him before His mother Yashoda. She asked Him what he was doing at the top of the pillar. Krishna, in the most innocent manner, answered that he was searching for the

And as she laughed, she let go Krishna's feet and this gave Him the chance to jump down and make good His escape.

A third meaning of the word Krishna is one who is always blissful ("Kushyathi iti Krishnah"). Krishna was always in a state of bliss.

It was because He had these various qualities, the sage Garga named Him Krishna. The ordinary meaning of the word Krishna is "one who is dark." But people think only of this meaning and forget the deeper and truer meanings of the Lord's name.

The essence of Krishna's life is He proclaimed the Truth to the world, propagated the eternal verities and delighted the world by His Leelas.

When Balaram told Yashoda that he had found Krishna eating mud, Yashoda questioned Him about it. In reply, Krishna said: "Oh mother, am I a child, a miscreant or a madcap to eat mud? See for yourself whether there is any mud in my mouth." And when He opened His mouth, Yashoda was awe-struck to see the fourteen worlds of the Cosmos in that Divine mouth. She could not believe her eyes and exclaimed: "Is this a dream? Or is it the Maya of Vishnu? Is it an illusion produced by someone? Is it true? Am I Yashoda or someone else? I am totally bewildered."

Yashoda had no faith in herself and hence could not recognise Krishna's divinity. Confidence in one's self is the prerequisite for the recognition of Divinity. The reason in Yashoda's case is that she always looked upon Krishna as her son and the maternal attachment clouded her understanding.

Every episode connected with Krishna is a marvel. That was why Vyasa declared that all the stories relating to the avatars of Vishnu are full of wonder and beauty.

### **Experiencing the avatar**

Every Avatar is an amazing phenomenon. Not to recognise the Avatar is equally a matter for amazement. Even more astonishing is the incapacity to experience the presence of the Avatar. Most astonishing of all is to be in the presence of the Lord and feel miserable. To be in the proximity of the Avatar, to move about with the Avatar, to sing and sport with the Avatar and yet fail to understand the truth of the Avatar is indeed a remarkable phenomenon. When the Avatavic principle is understood, you experience real bliss.

When you have faith in the Divine, life becomes a victorious journey.

Swami crowned His discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jail Gopala Krishna Jai!" and two other bhajans.

## **Kshetra and Kshetrajna**

*Dear Students!*

Bhagavan is purer than the sky. The sun, the moon and the stars are the eyes of the Lord. He pervades the entire Cosmos. It is only when you understand the nature of the body, the senses and the Buddhi, which are the instruments of comprehension for man, that you can understand the truth relating to the all pervasive and sacred Atma.

As declared in the Gita, the Cosmos is a combination of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna (the Field and the Knower of the Field). True knowledge consists in the awareness of the relationship between Kshetra and Kshetrajna.

The human body, which is called Kshetra, is a reflection of Prakriti (Nature). All the conscious and inert objects in the Cosmos are immanent in the human body. The Cosmos itself is a reflection of what is within man. It is a "reflection of the Inner Being". It is not enough to recognise the role of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. There is within the body the Kshetrajna, the indwelling Knower, who oversees these agencies. If you understand the Knower (Kshetrajna) in the Kshetra, there will be no need to enquire about the Kshetra (the body, etc.) But till you have that understanding, you have to reckon with the body-mind complex (the Kshetra).

### **Atmajnana**

To know the Kshetrajna you have to acquire Jnana (the Supreme Knowledge). This transcends every other kind of knowledge, which is related to the physical and the phenomenal. No one can understand the Atma through these types of knowledge. You need a diamond to cut a diamond. To understand the Atma, you have to acquire knowledge of the Spirit (Atmajnana). All that you regard as knowledge in the phenomenal world today is only ignorance. Knowledge of the Spirit alone is true knowledge (Jnana). Atma and Jnana are one, though called by different names. True Awareness is Jnana. The knowledge that is gathered by the analysis of physical objects or through the senses is one form of ignorance. It has three elements: What is known, what is to be known and who is the knower. These three are aspects of the mind. Only that is Jnana (true Knowledge) which is known when the mind is eliminated.

All investigations associated with the mind are delusions of various sorts. They are subjective. All that a man does—seeing, hearing, experiencing and doing—are all mental delusions caused by association with the body. The mind cannot keep still even for a moment without thinking about some object or other. Hence, the mind is dependent on the body. The mind experiences all that relates to the world made up of the five elements (Pancha Bhutas)

through the eyes, bears through the ears. The mind has no form. It is Maya. It is Desire. It is Nature. It is Avidya (ignorance). Delusion is its very nature. It is extremely difficult to understand the pure and immutable Atma through an instrument subject to delusions.

### **Atmic experience**

What is true Jnana? When the senses are brought under control by the mind the mind itself ceases to function. It disappears as it were. Then man experiences a profound silence. That stillness resulting from the absence of the mind is true Knowledge. This knowledge cannot be acquired by intellectual ability or mental agility. Nor can it be acquired by following an example. It is *sui generis*. It is not something new to be got. It is like the ashes which cover a burning charcoal or like the moss which covers a sheet of water. The ashes have come from the charcoal. The moss has originated from the water. The cataract that dims the vision of the eye, wherefrom has it come? It has come from the eye itself. When the screen that blinds the vision is removed, the true Self will be seen in its real form.

### **The inner voice**

Jnana (Knowledge of the Self) is not obtainable through books. Nor can preceptors impart it. It is not even given by the Paramatma (the Supreme Self). You are yourself the Paramatma, the Jnana, the Atma. How does this Atma exist in all beings? How is this Jnana present in everyone? When you meditate on this in solitude, a permanent, unchanging sound arises from the mind. All objects in the world are continually subject to change of substance and form. All objects manifest the power of the atom. Every object is composed of atoms. It is the nature of atoms to combine and to separate. But in all human beings there is one unchanging and indivisible divine entity (the Inner Voice). The body undergoes change from infancy to old age, but the Inner Voice remains unchanged. Men experience three different states of consciousness in the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. But the Inner Voice has no change in the gross or subtle states of the body. What is that Voice? It is the divine Inner Voice issuing from the Atma Principle (Atma-tattwa). It is continually declaring: "I", "I", "I", "Aham", "Aham", "Aham". This is the Truth that is subtler than the atom. It is more fundamental than the atom. It is from the "Aham" that the declaration, "So-Ham" ("I am He") has come. When this "Aham" (the "I") identifies itself with the body, it develops "Ahamkara" (egoism). Egoism is a common mundane condition. But "Aham" (the "I") is the word of the Divine. This cannot be realised through scholar ship or dialectics. However great a pundit might be, he would not be able to see an object if he is blind. Equally, with all his scholarship, he would not be able to see an object that is not there even if he has sight. But whether one is a scholar or an ignoramus, a man endowed with eyes will be able to perceive objects. Even a great scholar proficient in all the scriptures will not be able to see objects of the phenomenal world in his dream state. But the man that is awake, whether he is a scholar or not, can see the objects in the world. In the same manner, the power of the Spirit (Atma-shakti) which cannot be readily recognised, will be evident to one who has attained Atmic knowledge through purity of the mind.

If you look at things below the mind, you perceive the phenomenal world. But if you look beyond the mind, you recognise the Atma. All knowledge and experiences are associated with the mind externally. They do not go beyond the mind.

The aspirant who seeks to experience the Atma will not be able to have it by performing worldly actions. The Atma is all-pervading. The Cosmos is permeated by the Atmic Consciousness (Chaitanya). To believe that because you have a body you will be able to experience it is a fancy of the mind. Whether there is a pot or not and whether there is water in it or not, the reflections of the sun can be found everywhere. When there is a pot with water, we can directly see the sun's reflection. But the absence of a pot does not mean that there is no sun or reflection of the sun. Irrespective of whether there is a body or not, whether there is a mind or not, the Atma is present. There is no need for a body or mind to experience the Divine. But till this is properly understood, good care has to be taken of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. They have to be set on the right course and not allowed to go astray. All troubles arise because they take to wrong paths.

### **Divine strength**

It is believed that every man has a free will. This is a mistake. It is also believed that it is through the individual's ideas and efforts that many things are accomplished. This is based on misconceptions regarding man's doership and egoism.

Despite all his prowess in arms and his intelligence, what happened to Karna? Strength derived from the Divine alone is true strength. All else is weakness. To realise the Atma, physical prowess is of no avail. It is only by developing the sense of spiritual oneness that the Atmic Consciousness can be realised. Today the world is plunged in chaos and conflict because this feeling of oneness has been lost.

Man engages himself in strenuous efforts to achieve worldly comforts. But he does not make even a minute fraction of such efforts to meditate on God. How much greater happiness would he enjoy if he were to devote even a few moments to thoughts of God! To experience this Divine bliss, the best means is to cultivate devotion to the Lord. There is no difference between devotion (Bhakti) and Knowledge of the Spirit (Jnana). Through loving devotion, the Lord can be made captive. Devotional Love is itself God. It is permanent. With devotion you can overcome any ordeals in life.

**—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 30-5-1990**



*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

"Aham Atma Gudaakesa sarvabhoothaasaya sthithah" "Oh Arjuna! I am the Atma that dwells in all living beings." "I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all things", declares Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

All that you see in the cosmos—the moving and stationary objects—is a manifestation of the Atma. In the spiritual realm, what you hear at every step is the Atma. What is seen is Atma. What is heard is Atma. What makes you forget is also Atma. That is why Krishna declared to Arjuna: "In this universe there is nothing that is not Atma." What man needs today is to take the resolve to realise the Atma. This is tantamount to realising one's true Self. It is Knowledge of the Self (Atma-jnana).

The first aim of human existence should be to experience Atmic Bliss (Atma-Ananda). Everyone should keep in mind the Atmic Principle. This Atma is called "Eruka". (Awareness). This Awareness produces in every being the sense of "I-ness". It is expressed in the term. "Aham" ("I"). When this "I" identifies itself with the body, it takes the form of "Ahamkara" (I-am-the-Doer, the Ego). This is what is called "Mithya" (delusion). It is not the real "I".

**The two "I'S"**

It is the mind that continually interposes itself against the Atma. Like the cloud, formed out of the water vapour produced by the sun, which hides the sun, the mind, which has arisen from the Atma, covers the Atma. As long as the mind exists, man cannot comprehend the nature of the Atma or realise the Atma. Only the person who is aware of the Atma in all the different states of consciousness can be said to have direct vision of the Atma ("Sakshatkara").

The first sound emanating from the Atma which one hears is "I". It is only after the emergence of "I" that the whole process of creation began. If there is no "I", there is no creation. The terms, "I", "Atma", and "Brahmam" are all synonymous. The "I" not associated with the mind is Atma. The "I" associated with the mind is "mithya-atma" (pseudo-atma). There is only one Atma. That is the real "I".

**The mind and the atma**

Man undertakes a variety of spiritual exercises to realise the One that subsumes the many. In fact, all the endeavours made in quest of the Atma are born of ignorance. The Realised person (Jnani) makes no such endeavours. All the efforts made by man to realise the One are only attempts to satisfy the mind. When what is required is the elimination of the mind for experiencing the One, it is futile to strengthen the mind for this purpose by so-called spiritual sadhanas. If you seek to embark on sadhana, you must first get rid of the "Anatma Bhava" (identification with the body-mind complex.) To experience Atmic bliss, you have to turn your vision towards the Atma. In reality, all efforts made for experiencing Atmic bliss are aberrations

the different religions have declared that there is only One God. These pursuits are products of a deluded mind.

As long as the mind exists, desires will persist. When desires are present, attachments and possessiveness cannot be got rid of. And these sustain the ego. While the ego lasts, the Atma cannot be experienced. Atmic knowledge, Atmic bliss and Atmic vision cannot be had till the Ego is eliminated.

### **From the brahmam to the brahmam**

The mind, the Buddhi, the Chitta and Ahamkara, where did they originate, how do they grow and where do they merge themselves? That is the Brahman, that is the Atma. That being the case, how can you discover your source or your true Self by searching for it elsewhere (than within you)? Such a search is like that of a thief putting on the uniform of a policeman and searching for the thief. To know your own self, why do you need any assistance? There is a story which illustrates the absurdity of such a situation.

Ten ignoramuses who were in a group attempted to cross a river. After crossing the river, they wanted to assure themselves whether all the ten had crossed the river. One man started counting and noted that only nine had crossed the river and started wailing that the tenth man must have been swept away by the river. Each of them counted the others in the same manner, leaving out himself, and found one man missing. A passerby noticed their plight and enquired of them the cause of their distress. They all said that one of the ten in their group had been lost in the river. The intelligent traveller found that in counting each one had left out himself and counted only the remaining nine. Lining them up in a row, he counted all the ten and revealed to them that earlier at each count, the man doing the counting had left himself out.

This indicates that the individual who is not aware of himself cannot understand anything aright. When you are yourself the Atma, if you pray to someone outside, how can you recognise the Atma?

### **The one and the many**

"The One willed to become the many." Hence, you must realise the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. All the myriad forms you see are reflections in a mirror of your own image. You are ignoring the primary form and are concerned about the images. This is the delusion you are afflicted with. Brahman will elude the one caught up in 'bhrama' (delusion).

All the sadhanas you do are of little use for realising the Atma. They may help to tranquilise the mind. But what you have to do is to eliminate the thought process of the mind altogether. Calming the mind is only a palliative. The mind will get agitated again. Only those sadhanas which aim at eliminating the mind will be of use in the Atmic quest.

It is the identification with the body that is causing the ego ("Aham") to flourish and grow. The feeling, "I am the doer", "I am the enjoyer", "I am achieving success", is growing constantly in man. Students! You must realise that victory or defeat is not the result of your actions or sadhanas. Immersed in your egoistic delusion, you are imagining that you are the architects of your fortunes. You can see in the world numerous instances of failure in spite of heroic efforts. You can also see examples of successes achieved through very little effort. Instead of courting failure, relying on your own efforts, and getting dispirited, put your trust in God and offer all your actions to Him. You have to realise that little depends on your efforts alone. You can have proofs of this in your own body. For instance, what efforts are you making to see that your heart beats regularly? How far are you responsible for the breathing process that goes on continually? What is your contribution to the digestive process that goes on within you? Are these the results of human efforts? No. Can you continue to live merely by wishing that you should go on living? Are you able to end your life when you wish it? Are you responsible for your birth? Not at all. When you enquire into this problem, you will realise that it is your sense of doership and enjoyership which is causing all difficulties. All actions done by man today are intended to satisfy the mind. But however much you may try to satisfy the mind, it can never feel contented.

### **Sat-Chit-Ananda**

What is this mind? It is Maya (delusion). It is desire. It is ignorance. It is Prakriti (the phenomenal world). It is "Bhraanti" (aberration). Immersed in this mental aberration, if you wish to realise the Brahman, how is it possible? You are afraid of your own shadow. Your thoughts frighten you. The truth is there is only the One. It is called by different names. It is the Atma. The pundits describe the Supreme as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). This is not correct. He is Sat, He is Chit and He is Ananda. These are not three different qualities of the Divine. He is the embodiment of each of them.

### **Mithya and sathya**

Some people resort to meditation in the belief that there is some power greater than themselves which they must experience. People also undertake arduous exercises to realise some secret, mysterious and marvellous power other than themselves. This is action born of ignorance. As long as you think that there is something higher than yourself, you are steeped in ignorance. There is nothing higher in the world than yourself. But belief in the existence of such a power is a creation of your mind. For example, in a dream you see all kinds of scenes and have various experiences. How far are these real? Only as long as you are in the dream state. When the dream ends, the scenes become unreal. Likewise, as long as you are in a state of mental delusion, the joys and sorrows, the gains and losses you experience are all real. When the delusion is removed, they all become unreal.

Hence, all the phenomenal experiences caused by delusion are "mithya" (real-unreal). Basing your life on this "mithya" you are giving up "Sathya" the Truth. Identifying yourself totally with the body you are encouraging the Ego to grow. If you grasp one simple truth, you will develop a wide vision. There is nothing in the world separate from you. All the diverse objects are images of the One. For all worldly things there is a Karta (a creator), Karma (Causal action) and Kriya

is no Kriya. He is the Doer. He is also the one who gets things done. He is the outcome of what is done. The Atmic principle, which represents the unity of all these three, is the One that pervades the entire Cosmos. It is the universal consciousness. It is impossible for it to be present in some and not in others.

### **The cosmic consciousness**

It is this Cosmic Consciousness that has been presented to the common people as Sat-Chit-Ananda so that they can comprehend its nature. The Vedantins looked upon these three as reflections of each other. These three have also been called "Asti", "Bhaati" and "Priyam" in Vedantic parlance. In fact, all three are one and the same. When one says, "Here is a tumbler", the *Is-ness* is Asti. This is Sat. We are seeing it. The quality of being perceivable is "Bhaati". This is "Chit" (cognisability). "I am enjoying it." This is "Priyam" or "Ananda". "Sat", "Chit" and "Ananda" are one. It is one and the same thing which is, which shines and which gives Ananda. Though there is only One, because of our mental processes, we are seeing It in many forms and names.

Hence "Atma-tattwa" (the true nature of the Atma) is to be experienced by recognising the unity underlying the diversity. The Atma (Spirit) has no form. It is capable of assuming the form of the container which it fills. When air is filled in a balloon, it has the form of the balloon. When it fills a football, it has the form of the football. When it is present in a pneumatic pillow, it has the form of the pillow. Air, thus, has no form but it has one quality, that is, Chaitanya (consciousness).

It is not easy to understand this quality of Chaitanya or Consciousness. When you want to understand the nature of consciousness, you have to understand one part of it, namely, Conscience. Conscience is a Witness. It is also known as Awareness. A witness requires a basis for its functioning. That basis is that of which you are "conscious" in the waking state. There are these three levels of understanding. Being "conscious" (of the objective world), the Conscience and the Consciousness. The first state is related to the senses. Conscience is related to the mind. Consciousness is related to the Atma (the Spirit). These three divisions have been made for the purpose of understanding and grappling with the concerns of daily life. This process may be illustrated by an example.

For instance, a conference of doctors is held in a hall. There can be different specialists present in the hall. But all are described as doctors. Each one may have specialised in one part of the body—the heart, the ear, the brain or other limb. The body is one, but for the purpose of specialisation it is divided into many parts. Likewise, all are embodiments of the Atma. But for the purpose of earning a living, one may be a labourer, or an official or a trader, or a farmer. These differences are based on the occupations pursued by different persons. They are based on the occupations and have no permanent significance.

Similarly, although the Atma is one and the same in everybody, distinctions are made among different persons on the basis of their physical and other characteristics and their relationships.

accident to an aeroplane, one's interest in the fate of individual passengers is increased if one's kith and kin were travelling by that plane. Otherwise one is interested in the accident only out of curiosity. In the same manner, as long as the Atma is not considered as your own, your interest in the Atma is concerned with mere information. Once you know that the Atma is the Self that is present in everyone, the process of transformation takes place.

The Real is only One. But as long as the mind and body remain, it is difficult to experience this oneness. In spite, however, of the difficulty, everyone must strive to discover his true Self.

We have seen how the body is comparable to a chariot, the senses to horses, the mind to the reins and the Buddhi to the charioteer. But besides these there is the master of the chariot, the Atma residing in the body. Hence, in addition to knowing how the body, the senses, the mind and the Buddhi function, you have to regard the understanding of the Atma as the primary goal.

### **Duty as yoga**

Giving up the sense of "I" and "mine", you have to do your duty as a spiritual discipline. "Karthavyam yogamuchyathe." "The performance of one's duty is yoga." When you practise this yoga, you will experience the joy of Atmic bliss. It is the absence of this yoga which is making men sickly (Rogi). When you examine the activities of the mind, with a view to finding out whether they are leading you to bondage or to liberation, you will find that they are only leading you to bondage.

The primary cause for the chaos of divisions, conflicts, disorder and violence in the world today is the absence of the sense of oneness among men. There is urgent need for cultivating the spirit of love which will serve to promote the feeling of oneness.

All education today is a process of proceeding from ignorance to ignorance. If you seek to know where is the Atma, it is the Consciousness (Chaitanya) between one state of consciousness and another. This is not easily understandable by all. There is a state which is between waking and sleep. Few know what this state is. We seem to be in the waking state and then we close the eyes and fall asleep. Only the yogis have observed this phenomenon. That which is conscious between the waking and sleeping states is the Atmic principle. The waking state represents the Rajo guna. Sleep represents the Tamo guna. In between is the Satwa guna—that is the Atmic Consciousness.

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan, on 29-5-1990**

On Christmas Day of 1976, Bhagavan Baba said at Brindavan: "The *scriptures* say, '*Happiness cannot be won through happiness. (Na Sukhaath labhyathe Sukham)*!' Happiness can only be won through hardship. Pleasure is but an interval between two pains. To achieve the Satwic happiness that is positive and permanent, man must perforce take on trials and tribulations, loss and pain".

—(Sathya Sai Speaks XI)

Many of us who have come to Swami suffer from chronic injury or illness. This may be one of the reasons for us to visit Him. Not all are physically cured, even though other radical positive changes in oneself may result from such a visit, not the least of which is receiving a peace of mind that enables one to withstand worsening physical ailments. I have also experienced this, even though I was primarily a spiritual seeker wishing to see the Lord Himself.

Where an increase of suffering is (part of) the motive for one's visit to Prasanthi Nilayam, the non-fulfillment of hopes for a physical cure can lead to further and deeper self-inquiry. Suffering can confer benefits that perfect health may not offer, increasing the urgency of finding and cultivating a maximum of joy and love in oneself and making one hasten to improve one's sadhana. That has happened in my case and, while suffering continues, I have also at times received both temporary relief and lasting partial cures from Swami.

The question "Why must I suffer?" is unavoidable to those invalidated by major injury or chronic illness. The general answers that Bhagavan has given to that question offer various approaches to understanding one's own and others' sufferings. They are guidelines that must however be applied intelligently to the particular individual with much care and circumspection. It is easy both to exempt oneself from responsibility and attribute it to 'accident' or conversely to over speculate on and exaggerate reasons for sufferings from a mistaken sense of guilt and sin.

### **Mystery in suffering**

At a deep level, human suffering is a mystery before which the worldly sciences and most philosophical systems are either silent or without adequate answers. That it is a deep enigma should be clear from the examples of the sufferings of many holy persons from Jesus, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, St. Francis, St. Theresa of Lisieux to the vicarious stigmata of, say, Teresa von Neumann or the illnesses 'taken over' and experienced in the cases of many a canonised saint or of certain great healers. The many and most drastic physical illnesses taken on by our Lord, Sri Sathya Sai Baba should show how little most of us can understand of the manifold nature and hidden workings of sufferings and *karma*.

Of course we have a duty to stay as healthy as possible and to work hard for self-cure when ill. But there is a trap in regarding illness—whether one's own or another's—only negatively as a wholly unacceptable condition. Suffering can be a positive experience in many ways. When debility strikes it can, for example, free one from many practical and other demands of worldly

or purpose of much suffering may indeed lie in this.

In answer to a visitor's question why some people must suffer so much and for so long, Baba replied: "Those who suffer have my grace. Only through suffering will they be persuaded to turn inward and make the inquiry. And without turning inward and making inquiry, they can never escape misery." These words can be a considerable solace!

### **Service to sufferers**

One fruitful consequence of long suffering can be the way it prepares one better to understand others in a similar position, to open for the deep sensitivity to their problems and doubts that comes out of one's own experience. It can enable one to realise, for example, how it is to have a really debilitating illness or injury suddenly alter one's entire life prospects and destroy many long-cherished projects and ambitions, sometimes permanently (or 'for good!'). Sufferers may often do service through their personal understanding of the psychological effect and meanings of a condition which can alter almost any practical and social details of a person's existence.

Helpers of chronic sufferers may themselves have little or no direct experience of the type of problems they would like to help alleviate in another, whatever other knowledge and gifts they may have and wish to share. I feel it is therefore of prime importance to listen to what is or is not wanted when engaging in any sort of service that is therapeutic and certainly not to impose either one's own wishful beliefs or one's moral evaluations on the sufferer. Apart from genuine helpers I have met, I can testify that long-term invalids also experience a surfeit of spurious advice and suggestions, 'helpful' urgings to accept some new method of cure from those who are over-positive about their own opinions and abilities in announcing themselves as 'healers'. Eagerness to treat someone without their having inquired can create undue pressures and awkward dilemmas for those one would help. Therapists partaking in any healing process who are also willing to learn are preferable to the confident directives of an impatient 'expert'.

### **The confusion of guilt**

Much confusion arises around the idea that whatever accident, whatever illness or debility befalls one, one has only oneself to blame. This cannot mean one also necessarily *has to blame* oneself. Self-punishment of any sort that has no clearly positive future-ward benefit can only prolong suffering unnecessarily.

There are those who assert or imply that anyone's physical illnesses or mental sufferings persist only because of the patient's sins, because they will not change themselves or adopt some particular belief etc. Some make such judgements before knowing anything about the individuals concerned.

Thinking that suffering is a sure indicator of defects in a person and that health and worldly progress are the proof of devotion is neither a compassionate nor intelligent approach. By mixing up the meaning of *karma* and *dharma*, one forgets that someone may still be working off the

recollect that there are those who knowingly sacrifice their own welfare and even health for others, for family, friends or society in general. This can occur through debilitating labours, self-deprivation for the sake of others as well as through heroic actions in lifesaving that can cause bodily damage and worse, such as in the case of the firefighters of Chernobyl. Sufferings can thus be 'taken over' in lieu of others in many different ways.

Bhagavan has told us that we cannot know what is in the hearts of others, nor can we judge their present lives nor the karmic reasons for their conditions, nor the purposes for which they face their particular challenges. Discovering the limits and lacks of one's own understanding in recognising that the ways of God are very many and deep is a good start in showing understanding to others.

Much sound evidence already exists to support the teaching that a major illness can result from actions long past, even from previous lives. Experience shows that some illnesses have to be endured without cure for very long periods. Due to muddled ideas of sin and repentance, however, some actually fall into such excessive guilt that they do not feel they have the right to seek medical advice or accept operations. Though what happens is a result of past actions according to the law of *karma*, possibly caused in a previous incarnation, sufferers unable to cure themselves or get healed can gain nothing by defining themselves as sinners and dwelling on their past errors.

### **A Divine example**

Some illnesses appear simply to be a consequence of the risk involved in being embodied in a changing environment. This seems to be the meaning of the accident that Sri Sathya Sai Baba suffered when He fractured His hip and injured His head in 1988. At the first interview He gave after this, while still able only to take a few careful steps, He humorously illustrated how He slipped on the soap in His bathroom. He had told attendants who asked that in that instance it was not suffering taken over on behalf of anyone else.

One may try to interpret that event, say, as a sheer physical mishap that can happen to anyone or a 'purposeful accident' for reassuring similar sufferers. In any case, Bhagavan's disregard of the immense pain to hold the Onam discourse and His selfless rejection of special treatment or self-cure in solidarity with others who have no recourse to such things, all reminds us of the great lessons of suffering in scriptural history. Millions of people who have at one or another time in life had to bear the burdens of their particular incarnations have drawn succour and strength from such valiant examples of voluntary acceptance of suffering.

—*Robert Priddy, Oslo*



It is not easy for the common people to understand what is spirituality and what is meant by freedom of the individual. People should not think that Spirituality means being alone and living in solitude. The aim of Spirituality is to sow the seeds of love in all mankind and enable the buds of Peace to blossom in their minds. If we seek divinity in this exercise, there will be no room for either spirituality or freedom of the individual. ("Spirituality and Freedom of the Individual" was the theme of a debate which preceded Bhagavan's discourse.) Participants in the debate did not recognise the role of the heart. They seemed to think that freedom consists in speaking out whatever they feel.

No one in the world has absolute freedom. Freedom came to be used as a political concept. It was believed that to liberate the country from foreign rule and establish government by the natives of the country constituted freedom. This is neither individual nor Fundamental Freedom. What were done in the name of freedom were really manifestations of egoistic impulses. After the foreign rulers left, we thought the people had won freedom. In what respect did the people acquire freedom? There is no use merely mouthing the word Freedom. Only when unity is achieved will freedom be meaningful. Without unity, to talk about freedom means only freedom in words and not in real life. Freedom should express itself from the heart. Heart here does not refer to the physical heart. "Heart" is not related to any particular place, time or individual or a country. "Hridayam" (heart) refers to that Divine principle which is equally present everywhere, at all times and in all people in every country. This heart has no form. What is regarded as heart in a human body is a transient thing. True freedom consists in the recognition of that Divinity by knowing which all else is known.

### **Knowledge of the self**

"As in the microcosm, so in the macrocosm" (Brahmananda) is a scriptural saying. The microcosm is a part. The macrocosm is the universal. Man today seeks to know many things, but does not know his own true self. In the Upanishads, there is an episode relating to a great pundit, Uddalaka, and his son, Swethakethu. Uddalaka sent his son to another preceptor for studies. Swethakethu studied under the Guru for 12 years and learnt all the different subjects. Puffed up with pride about his vast learning, he came to his father and told him that he had learnt everything. The father asked him: "Dear son! Did you study that by knowing which everything else is known?" The lad's conceit was deflated. Of all forms of conceit, the pride in one's scholarship is the silliest. Uddalaka impressed on Swethakethu that knowledge of the Atma (Brahmajnana) was most essential.

When anybody asks you, "Who are you?" and if you reply, "I don't know", you will be considered a crazy person. How are you better than that person if without finding out who you are, you embark on enquiring into the nature of other things? You have first of all to find out who you really are. If you give your name as Ramayya, you are only disclosing the name given to your body. When you say, "I am Ramayya", there is an entity (the "I ") which is different from

Brahman.

### **The real and mithya**

In the world, there are all kinds of differences, high and low, good and bad, merit and sin, joy and sorrow, truth and falsehood, and the like. But although these differences are apparent, no differences can be seen in the heart. That which did not exist in the beginning and which will not last forever has only a brief illusory existence in the middle. For instance, this silver tumbler has a name and a form. But originally it was just silver and ultimately will remain as silver. The name and form as tumbler are only passing phases. All that is transient and changing is called "Mithya".

"Ekam Sat". "The Real is only One." Only when there is a second entity can you speak about freedom or bondage. Freedom and bondage are creations of the mind. When you are not engaged in spiritual enquiry, the mind gets prominence and is the cause of involvement in matters like freedom and bondage, the worldly and the otherworldly, and other dualistic phenomena.

### **Limits to freedom**

In respect of three situations, man has no freedom: the discharge of duties (kartavyam), actions done under compulsion (nirbandham) and obligatory actions arising out of certain relationships (Sambandham). If a poor man, unable to get food by begging, resorts to stealing, he cannot claim that he is exercising his freedom to appease his hunger. Even if, for his own selfish reasons, he may try to justify the stealing, his conscience will tell him that he is committing wrong. When he acts against his conscience, how can it be an act of freedom? True freedom can come only when one is free from the impulses of the mind. "Swechha" (freedom) is made up of the words: Swa+ichha. "Swa" refers to the Atma. Only when the will of the Atma prevails can there be real freedom. Actions done by the promptings of the mind or the senses cannot be regarded as free actions. There are some actions which are done according to the laws of Nature. Even these are not free actions. Man is also subject to rules and regulations laid down by the appropriate authorities. Human life is carried on between these two types of restrictions. In view of this, no one can claim that he is free to act as he pleases. Only the Divine is free. But this cannot be described as freedom, because the Divine is One.

### **Surrender and samadhi**

Some devotees declare that although they have surrendered themselves totally to Swami, their troubles and difficulties have not ceased. In My view this does not indicate real surrender ("Sharanagati"). If it is true surrender, there is no place for speaking about the continuance of troubles and difficulties. Some others claim that they have experienced moments of "Samadhi" during meditation. What Is Samadhi? In common parlance, in the eyes of worldly people and in the books written by worldly individuals, "Samadhi" may be described in various ways. One may be in a state of trance during meditation. But this cannot be called "Samadhi". It may be an emotional or mystical experience or it may be the result of a fit. It may even be due to weakness. It is not "Samadhi". Samadhi means merging the mind in the Atma. In that state there are no two entities. "Samadhi" is a state of equal mindedness. In that state there are no dualities like joy and

of everything is experienced. As long as differences and distinctions remain, there is no realisation of "Samadhi".

### **Nature of freedom**

As long as the mind is active, no one can be truly free. In the worldly sense, one may claim that "This is my money. I am giving it to him." He may think that he is acting freely. But this is not real freedom. It is an act of goodwill arising out of the Satwic aspect of the mind. The mind is a mixture of all the gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). At various times, different qualities are prominent. If you give a donation in response to the appeal of a man in need, it is a mental reaction to a particular situation and not an exercise of freedom.

A man swinging a stick on the top of his terrace may be free to do so. But he cannot do the same thing on the public road lest he should hit someone who has an equal right to the use of the road. If he swings the stick on the road, either he may be arrested by the police or taken to a mental hospital. What a man does in his own house is not freedom but indulging in satisfaction of his wishes. There is a real distinction between the exercise of freedom and the satisfaction of one's desires. The latter is based on self-interest. Freedom consists in the spontaneous expression of what comes from the heart in respect of any object or any individual, at any time. This is true freedom.

### **The divine potential**

You should not think that men who have achieved eminence or the high intelligence displayed by some persons owe their accomplishments to some external power. The talents have emerged from within themselves. All powers are within you. You have no need to go to someone outside for achieving anything. All that is needed is the external manifestation of the powers within you. The main sadhana you have to do is to control the vagaries of the mind. Krishna told Arjuna that his mastery of archery was not conferred on him by his preceptor, but the preceptor only drew out the abilities that were already in him. No preceptor can enable a disciple to accomplish what is not potentially within him. When you dig a well and find water at a level of 100 feet, the water was already there. You merely found it by removing the earth above it. Likewise, men tend to forget the Divine potentialities in them because of identification with the body.

People talk glibly about Free Will. There is only one seat of Freedom and that is the heart (the spiritual heart). It is permanent and unchanging. As long as man is swayed by the mind, there will be differences and distinctions. These are due to the waywardness of the mind and are not indications of individual freedom.

A student seeking an answer for a certain problem has to adopt the proper procedure for approaching the teacher. He should not regard asking the question and obtaining the answer as an exercise in freedom. It is a part of your duty as a student. A clear distinction should be made between what has to be done as one's duty and what is obligatory in other contexts.

Keeping the Atmic consciousness in the forefront, you may perform any act. You will be acting in freedom. There are no two different types of freedom, individual freedom and spiritual freedom. Spirituality itself is freedom. You convert milk into curds, get butter by churning the curds and get ghee from the butter. The milk has gone through many changes, but it is the same milk in different forms at different stages. In the same way, there are four stages in the realisation of the Divine: Saalokyam (to be in the realm of God), Saarupyam (having the vision of God), Saameeepyam (proximity to God) and Saayujyam (mergence in God). These appear to be different from each other, but are all merely steps in the realisation of oneness with the Divine.

### **Freedom and restraint**

Any talk of freedom for man in this phenomenal world can only refer to an insane or egoistic freedom. It may also be used in respect of certain relationships like a man's attitude to his child or wife. But the exercise of freedom towards them in an authoritarian manner can be described only as a travesty of freedom. It is a sign of foolishness. It is unbecoming of anyone calling himself a human being to behave in such an egoistic manner. Man can raise himself to a higher level only if he gives up such egoistic behaviour. You must recognise that you must accord to others the same amount of freedom which you claim for yourself. Freedom is thus interdependent and cannot be absolute or unrestricted. Your freedom to use the public road is subject to traffic regulations, which you have to observe. If you violate them, you run the risk of action by the police or meeting with an accident.

In whatever way the question of freedom is considered, it will be clear that man is bound from the time of birth. A cow tethered to a post has freedom to move about limited by the length of the rope tied to its neck. A freedom limited in this manner cannot be called freedom. It is not even "limited freedom". It is really a form of restraint.

Today people do not use words in their proper sense. For instance, the term Hridaya (Heart) is used as relating to the physical heart. But this is not the right meaning. "Hridaya" refers to the spiritual heart, which is common to all. It is present everywhere. It has no form. Like sugar in a variety of sweets with different forms, it is present in all beings as one and the same Spirit. All differences are reflections of mental aberrations. The Divine makes no difference between one person and another. All differences of caste or community relate to worldly associations. Even to describe Rama as a Kshatriya, Krishna as a Yadava and Sai Baba as a Kshatriya is a sign of narrow-mindedness. The Divine transcends such distinctions.

### **Universal outlook**

In this vast cosmos, you must develop a universal outlook based on an understanding of the spiritual principle. You cannot aspire for the spiritual from a narrow point of view. All forms of worship and meditation, which are regarded as spiritual exercises, are in fact mental excursions intended to please the mind. God is described as father, mother, brother, friend and so on. But all these are unnecessary epithets if it is recognised that we and God are one. You are in God and God is in you. There is no room for the feeling of duality.

Students! Spirituality essentially means realising oneness with God. God and you are not separate. Once you acquire this conviction there is no need for any kind of spiritual sadhana. This oneness should not be a mere intellectual concept. It should be a living reality. Then you will experience true freedom—the freedom of the Spirit, divorced from any association with the body and the mind. When you experience your inherent divinity, you will be free from sorrows and difficulties.

### **Ways of the Divine**

Students! You may not be aware that the Divine is changeless and unaffected by sorrow. Whether you believe it or not, the truth is I do not know what is grief. Worry is totally alien to me. I am not aware of any difficulties, disparagements or pressures caused by others. You should remain unaffected by what others say or do. When someone comes and tells me, "Swami! I am suffering greatly", I reply, "*chaala santhosham*" ("very happy "). I am always happy. When some one tells me about the death of a near relation, I say the same thing. I am equal in my response to everything. When people lament about their sufferings, I often wonder what suffering means. It does not approach me. People come to Swami with every conceivable kind of problems and views. On one side are those who adore Swami. On the other side there may be those who deride Swami. The two may be like two hillocks with valleys below them. Both the hillocks and the valleys are the same to me. This is the proper spiritual attitude. Occasionally I appear to be displeased with the behaviour of the students. But the anger is only apparent externally. It does not come from inside. In some cases I do not speak to a person for months together. This is the remedy for his malady. This kind of medicine has to be used for curing the disease. What right has anyone to ask why Swami is not talking to him? That is my pleasure.

### **Maladies and remedies**

This may be illustrated by an example. Four patients come to a doctor for treatment. Superficially they all appear to suffer from stomachache. The doctor examines one patient and tells him "There is nothing wrong with you. You will be all right if you give hot water fomentation for the stomach." To another patient, the doctor gives a mixture of soda-bicarb and Magsulph and tells him that if he takes it, his gas trouble will go. To the third man, he says: "I shall give you a purgative. You will be all right after two motions." After examining the fourth man, the doctor declares that he must undergo immediately an operation. Does the doctor bear any ill will towards him? Not at all. His ailment is different. He suffers from appendicitis, which calls for immediate operation.

### **Whose fault is it?**

Likewise, judging from the thoughts and behaviour of different persons, I mete out different types of treatment appropriate for each of them. I do not look at some persons. I do not talk to some others. I turn away from some others. All these are different types of prescriptions. Why am I giving these medicines? I have a certain principle. I attach great value to my words, irrespective of how you regard them. When I notice that some do not respect my words and act

I say I refrain from talking to some persons.

People who complain that Swami does not talk to them, why don't they realise that they have not acted according to Swami's words? Once you realise that your behaviour is responsible for Swami's attitude, you will correct yourself and behave properly in the future. Devotees tend to complain against Swami, but do not recognise their own lapses. There is no need to appeal to Swami to speak to them. When you correct yourself, Swami will talk to you of His own accord. If you pray for rain, all other things like growing crops and reaping the harvest will follow naturally. Separate prayers are not needed for each of these operations. If you implicitly carry out Swami's injunctions, Swami's grace will be obtained immediately.

First of all, impart value to your own words. You are endowed with a pair of eyes, with two ears, but only one tongue. Truth is the life-breath of speech.

The ways of the Divine are not easily comprehended. God will not succumb to abuse or feel elated by praise even if the whole world joins in either blame or adoration. When you have the conviction that the Divine is pure and unsullied, you will have no need to worry about any other thing.

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in the Brindavan Campus on 31-5-90**

### **Man's Search**

*Great Avatar, Lord, Master,  
We strive to reach the goal,  
To reach beyond the portals  
To where the Part is Whole—  
Beyond all thought, all feeling,  
Beyond the stars and sun,  
Beyond the cosmic zero,  
To where all things are one.*

*How many books of wisdom,  
How many teachers speak,  
To bring us husks of learning,  
But never the Heart we seek—  
The Heart where slow Decaying  
Through endless time and pain  
No longer rules our being;  
For we are Gods again.*

*Man's mind tho' racked and reeling  
Still sees itself as All,  
And we are tethered to it,  
Chained in its prison wall,  
Blind prisoners gross and greedy,  
And savage in the fight;  
And all around is darkness;  
How can we know there's light?*

*We know because we have sensed it—  
A radiance rich and rare,  
A flash between the moments,  
'Tween molecules of air.  
Sunlight along the seashore,  
Sunbeams the wet waves kiss,  
Pale into half-lit shadows  
Before that beam of Bliss.*

*Alone we cannot reach it—  
That Home-light beckoning still,  
A glint of golden fingers,  
Above the darkest hill.  
But we shall drink Amrita,  
And eat the Moksha fruit  
When every sound goes silent  
To the pipings of Thy Flute.*

**—Howard Murphet,**  
*(From September 1967 issue of Sanathana Sarathi)*

## **Gifts of Sai**

We long for gifts and things to purchase  
Yet all we need is free.  
Seek God and His Ananda  
Yearn for His Peace to Be.

We crave for more of worldly sweets  
Yet all we need is near  
Pray for the nectar of our Lord  
Imbibe! For SAI is here!

## ***"Death of the Ego" in San Salvador***

When Swami authorised the trip of Dr. Goldstein and Leonardo Gutter to the Sathya Sai Centres in eleven countries in Latin America, the devotees in El Salvador were very happy even though we were number eleven. We decided to hold a public meeting and immediately wrote to Swami for His blessings.

A few days later, two new devotees who knew nothing of the public meeting, asked if they could dance for Swami. This started a chain of events which led to the presentation of the dance titled "The Death of the Ego". Four dancers danced the roles of Ego, Atma, Mind and the boy friend of the Mind. Everything was going smoothly up to two weeks before the event. Then started some difficult circumstances. First, the dancers all got into a big quarrel. The director wanted to quit. But with some careful explanation it was brought to the attention of the dancers that they wanted to present the death of the Ego to Swami and in order to do this their egos must truly be under control. They saw the light and danced beautifully together from that day forward.

Then it was discovered that the National Theatre where the meeting was to be held did not have its air conditioning in working order. The cost of repair was equal to two trips to India. So we decided to organise a fan brigade. Everyone that could, loaned us their electric fans.

A few days before the public meeting, the posters with Swami's picture were delivered and all the devotees helped to post these in strategic places around town. In a school where the EHV programme had been introduced, a devotee teacher placed a poster. To her chagrin a couple of days later the picture of Swami had been defaced by some miscreant. The teacher was upset. At first she asked Swami to punish the culprit, but then she thought, "No, that isn't right." One afternoon after school she was thinking on the problem and praying to Swami for guidance when all of a sudden she started writing. It was not her words that filled the paper. It was an answer to her prayers. This is what she wrote

### **The voice of conscience**

"I Return to You not as the image on a poster that you pretend to destroy. I return to you as the light which you cannot extinguish, as the truth that you cannot destroy. I return to you as the voice of your conscience that you cannot silence, because I am the essence of the universal truth. Do not destroy the negative thoughts that have attached themselves to your mind. Wash the dirt away from your heart so that you can hear my voice. Remove the blindfold that is covering your eyes and you will be able to see Me. I am in you, I'm your Atma, your spirit, your truth, the voice of your conscience. I am your beginning and your end. You cannot destroy Me. You can only achieve your own destruction." The poster was replaced with this message and all the students read it in silence and walked away.



On the day of the public meeting, Dr. Goldstein and Leonardo Gutter were received in the airport's hall of honour and there we sang bhajans. Then after a brief visit to six Sai Centres, the public meeting was held. But what a multitude! The crowds were turned a way, the doors were closed, only those who arrived punctually found seats. The nectar of the talks by Dr. Goldstein and Leonardo Gutter found a place in the heart of each. Then the dancers flew through the auditorium as the drama on the death of the ego unfolded. Swami was watching from His chair in the Presidential box and from His jhoola in the heart of each one present.

—J. B., San Salvador.

*There was a king once, who questioned many a scholar and sage who came to his court, "Which is the best service and which is the best time to render it?" He could not get a satisfying answer from them. One day while pursuing the forces of a rival king, he got separated from his troops, in the thick jungle; he rode a long way, exhausted and hungry, until he reached a hermitage. There was an old monk who received him kindly and offered him a welcome cup of cool water. After a little rest the king asked his host the question that was tormenting his brain "Which is the best service?" The hermit said, "Giving a thirsty man a cup of water." "And, which is the best time to render it?" The answer was, "When he comes far and lonely, looking for some place where he can get it." The act of service is not to be judged according to the cost or publicity it entails; it may be only the offering of a cup of water in the depth of a jungle. But, the need of the recipient, the mood of the person who offers—these decide whether the act is gold or lead.*

—Baba

### **Gokulashtami at Prasanthi Nilayam**

The Prasanthi Mandir premises were tastefully decorated with flags and festoons for the Gokulashtami celebrations this year on August 14th. It was a cool morning and thousands of devotees had gathered for the festival with eager anticipations of having Bhagavan's darshan, blessings and Prasad on the auspicious occasion.

As Bhagavan emerged from the Interview Room, precisely at 7 a.m., the music group and orchestra of the Sathya Sai Institute and the children of the Central School greeted Swami with a melodious recitation of the Krishnaashtakam slokas, beginning with the line: "Vasudeva Sutam Devam", and ending with the refrain in each stanza: "Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum".

This was followed by a well conceived programme of songs in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi rendered by the Institute students to the accompaniment of the Institute orchestra.

second one, also in Telugu, was in praise of Bhagavan as the redeemer of the devotees. A Sanskrit song described Krishna's leelas on the banks of the Jamuna. Another moving Telugu song began with the words, "Jeevamu neede kadaa, Broche bhaaramu neede kadaa" ("Our life is yours; Yours is the burden of protecting us"). The programme was rounded off with a lilting Hindi song. While the songs were going on, Bhagavan went round the Mandir grounds giving darshan to the students and devotees. The orchestral music was followed by regular bhajans and the distribution of prasadam to all the devotees.

At 8 a.m., the grand procession of the cows from the Gokulam, headed by Sai Geetha, caparisoned with glittering drapery and head ornaments, arrived at the Mandir premises to the accompaniment of band music. The cows which had been covered with newly made embroidered, multi-coloured silt; duppattas, were led by batches of students. It was indeed a proud moment for the cows when they were lined up in front of the Mandir and were fed and blessed by Sai Krishna Himself. Swami blessed each of the cows and took Arati standing among the cows.

The cows were taken back in procession to Gokulam. The morning function came to a close with Arati offered to Bhagavan inside the Mandir.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan chose to deliver His Gokulashtami discourse from the Mandir itself, instead of at the Poornachandra Auditorium. This invested the discourse with an appeal all its own.

Bhagavan's discourse was preceded by speeches by Vijaya Krishna (an MBA student) and Sanjay Sahani (Lecturer in Commerce) on Bhagavan's message. (Bhagavan's discourse is published separately.)

In the Avataric career of Bhagavan Baba, October 20, 1940, stand: out as a historic date to be written in letters of gold. It was the day on which a lad, who was still not out of his teens, declared in unforgettable terms: "My Bhaktas are calling Me; I have My work."

The event, which forms a landmark in the life of Bhagavan Baba, is described vividly in Prof. Kasturi's biography of Baba, "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram."

After describing the young Sathya's visit to the Virupaksha temple at Hampi, where He was seen as the presiding deity by those who had gone with Him, Prof. Kasturi writes:

"The story that He was seen as Virupaksha had spread to Hospet town also, long before they reached it. The next day, Thursday, Sathya, as Sai Baba, cured a chronic tuberculosis patient by His touch and made him get up and walk a mile; He 'took' a variety of articles for the devotees and the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. Bhajan and Namasankirtan continued far into the night, for no one was in a mood to stop.

"One could sense that Sathyanarayana was getting more and more reluctant to be bound by routine; He was tugging at the bonds. History was whispering in His ear to break away, and reach out to the four quarters! The period of probation which Sai Baba had allotted to the people around Him was over; He saw that the moment had come to emerge, to be 'always' Sai, for 'everyone.'

### **The annunciation**

"On the 20th day of October, 1940, the day after they all returned from Hampi by special bus, Sathyanarayana started for school as usual. The Excise Inspector of the place, Sri Anjaneyulu, who was very much attached to the little Baba, accompanied Him as far as the school gate and went home, rather reluctantly. He seemed to see a superb halo around the face of Baba that day and he could not take his eyes away from that enchantment. Within a few minutes, Baba too turned back to the house. Standing on the outer doorstep, He cast aside the books He was carrying and called out, "I am no longer your Sathya", "I am Sai." The sister-in-law came from the kitchen and peeped out: she was almost blinded by the splendour of the halo which she saw around Baba's head! She closed her eyes and shrieked.

### **"Maya has gone"**

"Baba addressed her, 'I am going; I don't belong to you; Maya has gone; My Bhaktas are calling Me; I have My work; I can't stay any longer.' And, so saying, He turned and left, in spite of her pleadings. The brother (Seshama Raju) hurried home on hearing this; but, Baba only told him, 'Give up all your efforts to 'cure' Me; I am Sai; I do not consider Myself related to you.' Neighbour Sri Narayana Sastri heard the noise; he listened and realised that it was something serious: he saw the splendour of the 'halo' and fell at Baba's feet. He too heard the Historic Declaration, "Maya has left; I am going; My work is waiting."

"Seshama Raju was non-plussed; he scarce could collect his wits to meet this new situation. A boy, just fourteen, talking of Bhaktas, Work, Maya and the Philosophy of Belonging! He could think of only one plan; Sathya was entrusted to him by the parents and it was therefore his task to inform them; Sathya could leave the house only after they came to Uravakonda.

### **The first bhajan**

"But, Sathya would not step into that building again. He moved out into the garden of the Excise Inspector's Bungalow, and sat on a rock in the midst of the trees. People came into the garden from all directions bringing flowers and fruits; the tope resounded to the voices of hundreds, singing in chorus the lines that Sathya Sai taught them. The first prayer He taught them that day was the CALL, as many still remember.

*Maanasa Majare gurucharanam Dusthara bhavasaagara tharanam*

"Meditate, oh mind, on the Feet of the Guru; they can take you across the difficult sea of Samsara."

"His classmates wept when they heard that Sathya would no longer attend school, that He was much beyond their reach, that His company was hereafter only for those upon whom He would shower His Grace. Many came to the garden with incense and camphor, to worship Him. Some came to sympathise with the family, some to congratulate them. Some came to learn and some, alas, to sneer.

"Three days passed thus in that garden; three days of Bhajan and Namasankirtan. A photographer came with a camera; he wanted Baba to remove a crude stone that was in front of Him but Baba did not pay heed to that prayer. He clicked nevertheless and lo! the stone had become an image of Shirdi Sai Baba! But only in the photograph, not for all those assembled there.

### **The mother's plea**

"One evening while in the midst of the Bhajan, Baba suddenly said, 'O Maya has come!' and pointed to Easwaramma, the mother who had arrived just then in hot haste from Puttaparthi. When the parents pleaded with Him to come home, He retorted, 'Who belongs to whom?' The mother wept and prayed but she could not shake the resolve of the boy. He was constantly repeating the statement, 'It is all Maya.' At last, He asked the mother to serve Him food; when she served a few dishes, He mixed them all up and made the whole lot into a few balls. She handed Him three of these and, swallowing them, He said, 'Yes, now Maya has left. There is no need to worry', and reentered the garden.

### **Return in triumph**

"A few days later, Baba left Uravakonda. The parents were able to persuade Him to make His way to Puttaparthi by assuring Him that they would henceforward abstain from teasing Him with importunities or disturb His task of meeting devotees. Sri Anjaneyulu worshipped His Feet.

a procession with music to the very boundary, and Arati was offered at many places enroute.

"Baba was welcomed at Puttaparthi first into the Karnam's House by Subbamma. For some time, Baba remained in the house of Pedda Venkapa Raju, and later He moved to the residence of Subbaraju, the brother of Easwaramma. But, soon, He shifted to the house of Subbamma, who tended Him with love and affection and welcomed all the Bhaktas into her spacious house; she spared no effort to make their stay happy and fruitful."

### **The message spreads**

That was the beginning of Bhagavan's mission, which during the past fifty years has spanned every continent on the globe and has reached millions of devotees in almost every country.

There has been nothing equal to this in the annals of mankind: a young boy from an obscure village in South India being adored as Avatar of the Divine in his own lifetime and proclaiming His universal message in the authentic accents of the Divine.

It will require many volumes to describe all the achievements of Bhagavan Baba in the past half a century, what transformation He has effected in the lives of millions of men, women and children of all climes and faiths, and what His all embracing mission holds out for humanity in the decades to come.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, in a recent lecture in Bombay, envisaged the further unfoldment of Bhagavan Baba's mission in the following terms.

"The most mature period of Baba, which began five or ten years ago, will continue for another three decades and transform a number of distinguished individuals and the common run of mankind from several parts of the world. We can expect that a decisive change will come about during this period. A secure foundation is being laid for the change.

"Baba's role is that of regenerating man, and particularly the common man, all over the world. He uses the whole armoury of His gifts for the transformation. He is the enchanting Bhajan singer. His fascinating talks marked by simple style and homely metaphors are nourishing like mother's milk to the common human mind.

"Miracles are His visiting cards, presented to strangers as if to say, 'Look, here I am!' He is also a great physician and a healer of incurable diseases, counsellor giving invaluable advice as a family patriarch setting all domestic disputes at rest. He is a great organiser of festivals, which are enjoyed by the crowds, with unique pomp and gaiety. A cure or a talisman, a miracle or a ring, bring the common man closer to Baba, than a talk or a discourse; To have seen a miracle like that is enough for a life-time of conviction and rapture. A change of this kind happens to intellectuals as well as common individuals.

if we wish to find out the most perfect likeness to Him, His roop or form, it will be found in prema or love. This is His most precious and most characteristic gift to humanity."

### **Momentous decades**

The detailed story of Bhagavan's activities since the great Day of Annunciation has been told at length by Prof. Kasturi in the four volumes of "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram", in his own Autobiography, "Loving God", in various books written by Indian and foreign writers during the past few decades, and in the pages of "Sanathana Sarathi" over the past thirty years and more. No Avatar's life has been so crowded with events or so fully recorded as that of Bhagavan Baba.

For the benefit of devotees who might not be familiar with this massive literature, a bare chronicle of the major events in Bhagavan's life during the past half a century is presented here.

Almost the first thing Bhagavan did after His return to Puttaparthi was to convince the doubters, including His father, Pedda Venkapa Raju, about His divinity by giving to them a vision of the Sai Samadhi at Shirdi. Miracles of various kinds were daily events. As devotees started pouring in, the need for a prayer hall was felt. It was built in 1945 and came to be known as the "Paatha Mandir" (the Old Temple), later converted into a Kalyana Mandap as a memorial to Pedda Venkapa Raju. It was in the old Mandir that Bhagavan composed many bhajans and taught them to the devotees. Sai bhajans have now become for devotees the first step in the spiritual ascent.

By the end of the forties, the number of devotees coming to Bhagavan had grown so large that the old Mandir was totally inadequate. On November 23, 1950, Bhagavan inaugurated the beautiful new Mandir at the foothills on the fringe of Puttaparthi, naming it Prasanthi Nilayam—the Abode of Supreme Peace!

What began as a Mandir, embodying in its inner sanctum Bhagavan's message of the unity of all faiths, has now expanded into an ever-growing township, with residential accommodation for several hundreds of persons, with a fine canteen, a well-equipped hospital, a vast educational complex and many amenities for an ever-increasing stream of devotees from every part of the world.

The fifties witnessed a further expansion in the Upadeshic role of Bhagavan as the Divine Sadguru—the Supreme World Teacher for humanity as a whole. On Vijayadashami day in 1953, Swami announced during a discourse from the jhoola "I have been all these days giving individual advice like packages available in shops handed over the counter to individuals who desire them or demand them. This speech today (Swami was only 27 then) is a new experience for you. It is not new for me. I have given advice to large gatherings before, though not in this Appearance, for the task of re-educating man persists, whatever the place or the times."

To enable Bhagavan's message to reach devotees scattered in different parts of India and outside, Bhagavan launched a new monthly journal appropriately named "Sanathana Sarathi" (The

nectarine teachings flowed month after month in the series of "Vahinis" starting with *Prema Vahini*. These were later brought out in book form and have been translated into almost all the Indian languages and several foreign languages. (Started as a bilingual monthly, Telugu and English, the journal was later brought out in separate Telugu and English editions.)

The discourses by Pundits during Dasara led to the setting up of the All India Academy of Vedic Scholars for Promotion of Peace (Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha). The Assembly of Women devotees during Dasara for the ceremonial worship of the Mother became later the Mahila Vibhag with global ramifications devoted to service activities among women and children. The groups of enthusiastic devotees, who decorated the Nilayam with garlands, flags and festoons and cooked and served the meals on the day when thousands of poor people were fed, and continuously nourished the gardens around the Nilayam and the trees planted on the hills, expanded into the Sathya Sai Seva Dal, which has today become the right arm of the Sai World Organisation.

Swami marked out one whole day during the Dasara festival as Children's Day—when they played games, sang bhajans and enacted plays. That day blossomed into the Bal Vikas movement, which has instilled devotion, discipline and dedication into thousands of children, and into the universally welcomed programme of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values. Swami raised the Upper Primary School at Bukkapatnam, which He had attended as a boy, into a High School. His deep interest in education was later to express itself in the establishment of many High Schools and Colleges for Women and Men, culminating in the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Besides the ten-day long Dasara Festival, and the celebration by the devotees of Swami's Birthday, thousands of devotees, aspirants and seekers were drawn to Prasanthi Nilayam on Mahasivaratri when they were rewarded and fascinated by the vision during Bhajans of the emergence of one or more Linga idols of Siva from Siva Sai Himself. On Vaikuntha Ekadasi, dedicated to the worship of Vishnu, every year, in the evening during bhajan cupfuls of nectarine drink of the Gods flowed from Swami's palm and fingers. Every person was given a spoonful by Swami Himself. (Both these expressions of Bhagavan's benediction have not been continued for many years.)

Notable events during the Sixties were Bhagavan's memorable visit to the Badrinath Temple in 1961, the holding of the First All-India Conference of Sai Organisations at Madras in 1967 and the inauguration of Dharmakshetra in Bombay on 12-6-1968, when the First World Conference of Sai Organisations was held in that city. The Conference was attended by more than 5000 delegates from over 40 countries.

In the following month, Bhagavan inaugurated the Women's College at Anantapur, followed by the Men's College at Brindavan in 1969.

momentum and achieved global dimensions. June 1972 saw the first of a series of Annual Summer Courses on Indian Culture and Spirituality for students chosen from all parts of India.

The Sixth All-India Conference, which met at Rajahmundry in January 1974, streamlined the varied service-oriented Sadhanas of the Sai Organisation and prepared devotees for a big forward step. The Bal Vikas movement benefited most. Training courses for the Gurus and Rallies of child pupils were held all over the country. May 6 was declared as Easwaramma Day for the children. On Vijayadashami day in 1974, Bhagavan inaugurated the magnificent Poornachandra Auditorium, a unique engineering achievement in a remote village like Puttaparthi.

The 50th Birthday of Swami (23-11-75) was celebrated as the Golden Jubilee of the Advent of the Avatar. A 50-foot high Commemoration Pillar representing the Concord of World Faiths was installed by Swami at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus.

The World Council of the Sathya Sai Organisation struck upon a brilliant idea for integrating the far-flung groups of devotees into one close-knit Sai family. At 6 p.m. on a Saturday in November, devotees begin a twenty-four hour (Akhand) Bhajan Session, wherever they are, so that the Adoration rising from a million hearts showers delight and promotes unity while circling the globe.

The Third World Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam (19-21, November 1980) brought 12,500 delegates representing millions of devotees from countries as far apart as Hawaii and Argentina, Iceland and New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa. The Sai Message—"There is only one Religion, the Religion of Love; There is only one God, He is omnipresent; There is only one Caste, the caste of Humanity; There is only one language, the language of the Heart"—was the curative balm the millions needed most.

### **On to the eighties**

The Eighties were marked by an impressive growth in the educational programme of Bhagavan Baba.

On the 23rd day of January, 1981, an Institute was inaugurated at Bombay by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for the training of Teachers for Education in Human Values (EHV). Swami guided a group of educationists to prepare universally acceptable guidebooks, for teachers of children between the ages of 5 and 15, to teach the values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-Violence with overall emphasis on love as the essence of every one of them.

A new era in higher education in India was initiated by Bhagavan when He decided to set up a university at Prasanthi Nilayam with campuses at Brindavan (Whitefield), Anantapur (Women's College) and the college at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Institute was inaugurated by Mr. Justice Chandrachud on 22nd November, 1981, during the Birthday Festival. The educational programme combines academic excellence with spiritual discipline. The imposing edifice on Vidyagiri, which serves as the Administrative building of the Institute, stands out as a beacon



guide.

The inauguration of "Sivam" at Hyderabad, of "Sundaram" at Madras as the Centres of the Sai Era induced an expansion of Sai consciousness in the regions around. Swami visited North, Central and Western India in 1982 and aroused in the hearts of millions the dormant longings for the journey to Godliness and God. At Brindavan, the new architectural marvel, "Trayee Brindavan", replaced the old bungalow in which Swami used to stay for many years.

As a prelude to the historic sixtieth Birthday celebrations in 1985, which synchronised with the Fourth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations, a World Rally of Bal Vikas children was held at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1983 and another World Rally of Sai Seva Dal workers was held in 1984. The 1985 Birthday celebrations were memorable in many ways—not only for the magnitude of the number of devotees who attended and the magnificence of the varied programmes presented in the Hill View Stadium, but, above all, for the clear and ringing terms in which Bhagavan reiterated His Avataric role and gave the clarion call to devotees everywhere to spread the message of Love, Unity, Truth, Righteousness and Selfless Service. Bhagavan opened the new Space Theatre, which is one of the most up to-date of its kind in the world.

The events of the past five years are too recent to need recapitulation. These years have been packed with immense activity and achievement. The Sathya Sai Institute has continued to grow and expand, with new departments of Education, Business Administration and Computer sciences. Books on Bhagavan, as well as translations of Bhagavan's books (the Vahini series and others) have been brought out in many languages—Italian, French, Spanish, Greek, German, Danish, and Japanese. Sai centres, study circles and bhajan groups have come up in a hundred countries. There are Spanish and Japanese editions of "Sanathana Sarathi".

During the birthday week in 1987, Bhagavan inaugurated the Kasturi Reading Room, as a memorial to a great devotee, who had rendered distinguished service to Bhagavan, and who merged in the Lord in August 1987.

Prasanthi Nilayam has become a unique spiritual centre, attracting devotees and earnest aspirants from all walks of life and from every continent. Unlike the island of lotus-eaters, where "all things always seemed the same", Prasanthi Nilayam is continually changing, vibrant with activity and, withal, maintaining its serenity and Divine peace. Everywhere in the Nilayam area there is something new and beautiful coming up all the time.

The stage is set for the sixty-fifth birthday celebrations in 1990 during which the Fifth World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations will be held. An air-strip is being got ready to enable overseas visitors to reach Prasanthi Nilayam within an hour of landing at Bangalore. Elaborate arrangements are being made for the lakhs of people who are expected to attend the celebrations. Millions all over the world are eagerly looking forward to Bhagavan's message on the occasion, which will mark another great step in the epochal global mission of Bhagavan Baba.

## **Morals Make the Man and the Nation**

The Divine is present in the mountains, in all high places, and in the noble thoughts that inspire human beings. The Divine is present in forests, in the peace that prevails in quiet streets, in the cool breeze that blows and the pure air that you breathe. In every village where there is a sacred atmosphere and harmony prevails among the people, the Divine is present. In the cities, God is present in the beautiful edifices, in the amenities enjoyed by the citizens and in the enlightened lives led by the people. The omnipresence of the Divine was proclaimed by Mallamma in Karnataka in inspiring verses. She declared in one song: "The lotus lends beauty to the pond. Houses lend charm to villages. The waves confer beauty on the ocean. The moon beautifies the sky." Wherever there is beauty the Divine is present. That is why the Upanishads described the Divine as "Sathyam (Truth), Sivam (Auspicious) and Sundaram (Beauty)." For human beings, it is humanness that confers beauty on them.

The most essential requisite in any society is humanness (Manavatwam); whatever one's scholarship or scientific knowledge or position, he has to develop human qualities. To the extent these qualities are developed, to that extent the society, the state and the nation will progress. Where human qualities are absent the society ceases to be civilised. And the nation itself forfeits its place of honour.

It is only morality and integrity which entitle human beings to be respected. Students have to cherish human qualities. Only by adhering to the spiritual path can human qualities be promoted. They will not flourish in other conditions. A seed will sprout and grow into a plant only if you sow it in proper soil and water it. It will not grow in a tin can; it will only rot.

### **Morality and integrity**

Morality and integrity can grow only from the human mind. Morality is the basis for all human qualities. Good behaviour is based on one's morals. Morality elevates man to the highest stage. Bharat has been the teacher for all nations in upholding the greatness of morality based on spirituality. Morality and integrity are the true and enduring abodes of the Divine. What the nation needs today is morality. Morality must be regarded as a fundamental requisite at all places at all times.

A great General said that whether in war or in any difficult situation, one should not give up moral principles. Gladstone, who was Prime Minister during Queen Victoria's reign, always adhered to morality in all situations. The people had more regard for him than even for the Queen.

self-control is competent to exercise authority over others. How can one who is too weak to control himself be able to control others? There must be unity in word and deed. Only then can one achieve great things.

### **Need for sense-control**

Today there is little accord between words and actions. Truth prevails when words are matched by deeds. The mind is in harmony when words and actions are in unison. Students should bear in mind the nation's honour, well-being and progress and lead exemplary lives. Students today have no conception of sense-control. In Vedantic parlance, control of the senses is termed "Samyama". "Samyama" is a quality which is unique for man. By giving a free rein to the senses and leading a libertine's life, man is forfeiting his divinity. The Sanskrit term for sense-control is "Dama" One who has cultivated "Dama" is called a "Daanta". The world needs today men who have control over their senses and not men who preach metaphysics. All Vedanta is now confined to words. Cleverness In speech and ostentation in behaviour have increased, while good conduct has been on the decline, with the result that men have lost the joy of living.

Every student must become a "Daanto" (one who has control over his senses). Students have developed ostentatious habits even before embarking on their studies. They have no conception of humility. They are not aware of how they should conduct themselves before elders. For this they are not to blame. Their parents and teachers have not instilled and encouraged in them these qualities.

Students today are interested in small talk and trivial gossip. They treat spirituality with levity. It is because these tendencies are continually growing that students have no idea of what is proper education. They should not regard education as only a means to earning a living. They should look upon education as the basis for the good life.

### **Education and wealth**

It is doubtless necessary to seek a job for one's livelihood. But they should not regard jobs and earning of money as the be-all and end-all of life. Even in a job, one should try to uphold morality and integrity and set an example to others. Looking at the world today, it would seem that education is for the purpose of practising fraud on the people, making money through bribes and other immoral and unrighteous ways without regard for truth. Certainly this is not the purpose of education. Its aim is the acquisition of knowledge. The true values of education have been lost owing to excessive concern for making money. There is nothing wrong with money or education. Everything depends on how it is acquired or utilised.

Students! You have to exhale as much air as you breathe in. This is inescapable. If you do not exhale, the lungs will burst. Likewise, while you have to acquire education and earn wealth, you must utilise both in a righteous way. The education you have received must be given back to society for promoting public well-being. Equally what is earned should be given back to society. Unless this is done, your education and wealth are utterly worthless. What has been got from the community should be given back to the community. That is true seva (service). This

more. Life is reduced to a one-way traffic. This is not proper. What is earned should be utilised properly and shared with others. This is the way to ennoble life. In swimming, you have to push the water back so that you may move forward. Likewise, renouncing material things is the way to spiritual progress. But, what you have to renounce is not wealth alone. You have to get rid of all your bad qualities. That alone is true sacrifice. Giving up hearth and home is not a big sacrifice. It is the giving up of all vices that is true renunciation. That alone can result in the blossoming of the human personality.

Students! For a man to behave like a human being is itself a great task. Nothing is so degrading as for a man to behave like an animal. Man is being battered today by the six notorious enemies: lust, anger, infatuation, greed, pride and envy. When all actions are dedicated to God, the Divine will protect you always.

### **The educational foundation**

It was in this spirit of complete dedication that the poet Pothana began the writing of his Bhagavatam (in Telugu). The Bhagavatam deals with the union of the Paramatma (the Supreme Spirit) and the Jivatma (the individual spirit). Beginning with devotion to God (Bhakti), one gradually acquires Jnana (the Supreme Wisdom) and reaches the stage of Vairagya (complete detachment). The Truth is discovered only through detachment. And the Truth leads to Mukti (liberation).

The educational process is the foundation for life. Students are described as Brahmacharis. On the foundation of the life of a Brahmachari the walls of Grihastha (family life) are raised. Over the walls, there is the roof of Vanaprastha (the life of a renunciant). Unless the foundation is well and firmly laid, the entire edifice will collapse. Hence, students (who are in the Brahmachari stage) must cultivate good qualities which will serve as protective shields in life. Without such qualities there will be no peace in life.

### **Material strength v. divine strength**

People should realise that they are born in society, grow in society and live in society. Today most people are content to think only about themselves and their families and are indifferent to their obligations to society. As a result, they lose peace and happiness. Even devotees are more concerned about their personal interests and give secondary place to God. Consequently they are unable to experience real bliss. They lead purposeless and meaningless lives.

The Kauravas are an example of persons who sought worldly gains and power, forgetting God. Although they had immense wealth, what happened to them in the end? They had many valiant heroes and preceptors fighting on their side. But all their material resources, their intellectual abilities and their armed might were of no avail. The Pandavas relied on the strength of the Divine and the power of righteousness.

The Bhagavad Gita has clearly explained that the Divine helps those who adhere to Dharma. The Pandavas relied on God for everything. Hence they were crowned with success. No doubt

Pandavas placed God first, the world next and the "I" last. Hence they were successful. The Kauravas placed "I" (the ego) first, the world next and God last. Hence, they lost everything! Students! Give a back seat to the ego. Our history is full of instances of persons who set an example in sacrificing the ego.

### **Humility**

It may be natural for warm-blooded youth to be filled with egoistic pride. Students! Regard humility and discipline as the insignia of true education. There is a well-known Telugu saying: "Education confers humility. Through humility one acquires competence. Competence gives the capacity to earn wealth. Through wealth God will be realised." You can see how humility leads you to God. If out of egoistic pride, you are indifferent to the Divine and Dharma, you will not have these sacred thoughts. Make the best use of the body, the time and the opportunities given to you. Study well and make use of your knowledge for the benefit of society. There is no value in the mere acquisition of degrees. Only arrogance grows with the increase in academic knowledge. There is a corresponding decline in your spiritual potential. If spirituality grows, egoism will decline. It is because men have forgotten their Divine heritage that they behave worse than wild beasts.

Material wealth is not the summum bonum of life. Power, pelf and position have no permanence. Egoism is man's worst enemy. It has no real foundation. It is because of this foolish pride that man is not realising his true identity.

### **The change within**

Despite all the religious practices that many are wont to adopt, there is little change in their mental attitudes. Changes in external behaviour have little meaning. It is the mind that must change. Altering the apparel means nothing. Your qualities (gunas) must change. Students will be the leaders of tomorrow. If you reform yourselves, the nation can be changed. The future of the country depends on you. If you adhere to morality and integrity, the country will become an ideal to the world.

Bharat has been known from the earliest times for its glorious culture. You must all strive to restore Bharat's greatness as the cultural and spiritual leader of humanity. Bharat gave to the world the supreme message of its Upanishads and epics by its own example of harmonious and righteous living. Because these sacred ways of life have been neglected today, no one is able to recognise the greatness of Indian culture.

Students! Bear in mind three things: Bharatiyas have always been votaries of Truth and Righteousness. Justice has been their watchword. Students must ceaselessly endeavour to adhere to Truth, Righteousness, morality and integrity. Live up to the Vedic injunction: "Speak the Truth. Follow Dharma."

Try to put into practice the teachings you have learnt during these fifteen days and thereby make your lives meaningful. You must always love your Motherland. There is nothing wrong in anyone loving his country. But he should not have any antipathy towards any other country. "In the sacred land of Bharat, tolerance has been the most precious treasure. Of all forms of spiritual discipline, the most difficult penance is adherence to Truth and Right Conduct." This has been the basic credo of the sacred land of Bharat. Forgetting this blessed heritage, Bharatiyas are going after exotic practices and ways of living. Students! You have a supreme duty to protect and nourish the culture of Bharat. Pray for the welfare of all nations and peoples. Have a wide all-embracing vision. Give up all narrow ideas.

### **Love of God**

Above all, whatever anyone may say or do, you should not give up your devotion to God. Without the love of God, this cosmos is an empty void. Love is God: God is Love. Develop this Divine Love. Cherish it in your hearts at all times and in all situations. Do not give it up, whatever troubles or difficulties you may be faced with. That Love will be with you, in you and beside you and protect you. Don't blame God if difficulties confront you. Regard even those difficulties as gifts from God intended for your good. Life is a succession of good and bad. If you take in your stride these ups and downs of life with firm faith in God, the Divine will take good care of you. Always remember the Lord's name.

*—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in Brindavan on 2-6-1990*

### **Kerala's Devotion**

I have visited Bhagavan Baba many times, but this was my first opportunity to witness the celebration of Onam. This festival was celebrated at Prasanthi on September 3, 1990, by the Kerala devotees who were responsible for the preparation and execution of the entire festival. They provided guest speakers, decorations, singing, music, and two cultural programmes, one at darshan in the morning and the major programme at the Poornachandra Hall in the evening.

Bhagavan Baba has told us that, "if you make a mistake at Prasanthi, the whole world will know about it." This is true because people from all parts of the globe are visiting Baba. The reverse is also true. If you do good deeds, the whole world will also observe your dharma. As a foreigner, I was deeply touched by the behaviour of Kerala devotees and all their children participating in the programmes.

Baba praised them for their love and devotion to Him. He said, "This is a grand festival celebration in Kerala and these devotees left their homes, travelled a great distance, suffered the inconvenience of the sheds to share their festival with Swami."

for darshan I was surprised at the beautiful decorations. When Swami gave darshan, discipline reigned. The devotees sat quietly and reverently even though they also want His personal attention. I particularly observed the children. They too, sat like the adults.

I am not talking about 500 devotees but over 5000. I have never witnessed a vast number of people attending darshan who as a group acted as one. They all served Baba with obedience to His ashram rules.

The cultural programme was sponsored by the children of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Sai Baba school in Kerala. Their performance showed an excellence of the professional as they recited, sang, danced, and acted. Their colourful costumes were outstanding.

Many times during this programme, I reflected on the dedication and love of the accomplished devotees, young and old, that contributed to the day's events. So many hours of selfless service spent in the organization, preparation, and performance of rehearsals, decorations, and costumes.

The joy, happiness, and pleasure of Kerala's celebration shone in Baba's Sparkling Eyes, Smiling Face, Praising Words and Loving Gestures.

—**Rita Bruce, Prasanthi Nilayam**

### **How the Lord Sees and Hears**

*"How often did you lose faith in God?  
Or chide Him for not granting your desires?  
How often did you silently meditate  
On the supreme Lord and the supreme Goal of Life?  
How often did you shed tears of real Love?  
How often did you bow your head in devotion?  
And fold your hands in prayerful surrender  
And complete dedication to His Lotus Feet?"*

This quotation was displayed on the notice board of our school, the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, on 1st Jan. 1990. All of us read it and pondered over it.

This took me back to the days when I was a new student here, and homesickness came over me at any instant. My first year here had been in the VI standard. On my birthday, I was taken for the Birthday celebrations, but that morning I was in my most sorrowful mood, missing home.

words to which I was so entirely new: "Happiness is union with God."

That incident set me thinking, though I have known Swami for many years. As the years passed, I grew, not merely physically but mentally. When we were in the 9th standard, it was impossible to dream of a girls' section for the XI and XII standards. Anyway that was our wish and it did happen to everybody's surprise.

In the 10th standard, we had to appear for the Central Board examinations. It was a difficult year and by the end we were exhausted and also very nervous. We had gone to get Padanamaskar from Swami when some of us cried and some asked Him to talk to us. He just kept saying "Be happy, I'll help you." "Good Batch." By way of further consolation He even gave us pens, not one, but two for each, and a whole lot of blessings. And, by His grace, we did come out in flying colours that year.

On the holy occasion of Vijayadashami, after two years, when we were in the 12th standard, as Swami was sprinkling the holy water on all, most of us, my classmates and myself, did not get a single drop. It was disappointing and we were all in tears, wondering whether we were not fit for the blessed water. But Bhagavan always compensates in His own way. On Janmashtami day, as we waited eagerly for the feeding of the cows, Swami came along and broke the coconuts one by one. The water from the coconut fell in such a way that all of us, the earlier unfortunate ones, got our share of Swami's benediction.

Another instance of Swami's love was on the 21st of February when we went to get Padanamaskar for the school examinations that were to be held on the same day as our prize distribution. We sat in lines as usual and prayed. I was telling the girl next to me how I had read a few lines that impressed me—

"He that formed the eye, would He not see?  
He that planted the ear, would He not hear?"

We talked for a while on this and then sat again quietly to pray. Swami came over and asked why we had come. We said "Swami! The Exam." Our Headmistress went on to tell Swami that the examinations and the Prize distribution clashed. As soon as He heard that, He said: "I know, I can see, I'm not dumb and deaf." He meant that He could see our agony. He also thus showed that our little talk had reached His ears, confirming the truth of those lines. He did chase our tears and was like a rainbow in the storm of our lives. What more would one want?

The Lord has guided me through the years and guarded me as the eyelids guard the eyes. The years spent in Prasanthi Nilayam remain ever green in my memory. A little prayer to my Lord: "That I want Thee, only Thee, let my heart repeat without end."

—*Geetanjali Gokarn*



*The Sun is teaching us that when one is oneself, there will be no exhaustion or elation, no disgust or pride. The task of Surya is not something imposed from outside and taken up under compulsion. That is why it is performed systematically and smoothly. He is also exhorting mankind to use the time that He creates and allots, fully and fruitfully; not merely for living comfortably and safely, but for living a moral and elevating life, worthy of the destiny that is man's. Now you can realise why the Gita was first taught by the Lord to the Sun. He is the great Karmayogi, the great Nishkama Karma Yogi.*

—Baba

ONAM SANDESH

## Devotion and Self-Sacrifice

*The world has had many great souls who sacrificed their lives for Truth;  
Even now there are many who have given their lives for the good of others,  
There are many who have not desired worldly pleasures even in their dreams;  
But there are few who seek to know why this body has been given.  
It has been given so that man may realise his true Self.  
Heaven does not exist in some realm of the gods.  
It is in the world of human beings.  
With good qualities if one conducts himself righteously  
Why seek heaven? This itself will be Heaven*

### Embodiments of Divine Love!

Men make various attempts to understand everything in the world. But no one makes any effort to understand himself. An enormous amount of time is spent on understanding other things, but man cannot find the time to know himself. Whatever one's scholarship, intelligence or position, he cannot have peace of mind and happiness if he does not know his real Self.

Narada, who had mastered the sixty four sciences and arts, could not secure the supreme bliss that comes from peace of mind. Troubled by this lack of peace (Asanthi) Narada approached the sage Sanatkumara and asked him what was the cause of his condition. Sanatkumara asked Narada what were his accomplishments. Narada told the sage that he was proficient in all the Vedas and Vedangas and had mastered the sixty four different sciences including the training of elephants and the rearing of cows. Laughing within himself, Sanatkumara asked: "Are these your only accomplishments? Oh Narada, without knowing who you are, what is the use of knowing all other things?"

### Brahma and Narada

Narada was no ordinary person. In His incarnation as Vamana, the dwarfish young Brahmin lad, Vishnu, came to the Emperor Bali and asked from him the gift of three feet of land as

the whole earth by one step and the entire sky by another step. When Brahma recognised the sacred and puissant form assumed by Lord Vishnu, he wished to wash the feet of the Lord. To wash the foot of the Lord which was high up in the sky, a great amount of water was needed. To get that water, Brahma resolved in his mind how to go about it. At that very moment an individual appeared on the earth. Because he was the result of a thought in Brahma's mind, he is known as "Brahma-manasa putra" (Brahma's mind-born son). He had come to provide water. Because he brought water, he got the name "Narada" (the one who provided water).

Narada was thus born during the time of Emperor Bali. Despite the fact that he was the mind-born son of Brahma himself, he had no peace of mind.

What was the cause of Narada's loss of peace? Narada used ceaselessly to chant the name of Vishnu. He had no worldly desires of any kind. Brahma, who had created Narada for the purpose of propagation of devotion in the world and promoting good qualities among mankind, urged Narada to get married. Narada asked: "I am perpetually in a state of bliss chanting the name of Hari. What need is there for me to get into this bondage? Revered father! I am ready to carry out any of your injunctions but I cannot agree to get involved in the bondage of family life." How is it possible for Brahma to attain the status of "Pitamaha" (grandfather) if the son refuses to obey the father's command and agree to marriage?

### **The medicine and the diet**

The human predicament is similar to this situation. Men claim that God is everything for them but they are not ready to abide by God's injunctions. And that accounts for their lack of peace. For a man who is immersed in worldly life, the chanting of God's name is undoubtedly a good medicine. But along with the medicine he has to adhere to the prescribed diet regulations (called "Pathyam"). God's injunctions are the diet rules. Today's man, if he takes the medicine, he ignores the diet regulations. If he adheres to the prescribed diet, he ignores the medicine. And that is why man is afflicted with the disease of peacelessness. In this context, God is the medicine and God's command is the prescribed diet. Devotion to God without observing the Divine injunctions destroys peace of mind.

If Narada, despite his chanting of the Lord's name, suffered from lack of peace, it was because of a curse pronounced by Brahma. Brahma declared: "As you are not obeying my command, I declare that henceforth you shall have no peace."

Sanatkumara, therefore, advised Narada: "As long as you have not known who really you are, you cannot get real peace, despite all your scholarship and all your pious actions."

### **"Know your true self"**

Man embarks on various kinds of sadhanas to achieve liberation (Mukti).

*Seeking liberation, even if man worships three crores of gods,  
He will not get it as long as he does not know who he is.*

Sanatkumara told Narada: "All the scriptures you study will enable you to earn a livelihood, but will not confer peace or liberation. They may secure for you name and fame, power and pelf, but not liberation (Mukti)."

The scriptures are like a dense jungle of words. These words are capable of different interpretations. It is not easy to determine definitely which are the correct meanings. A man who has lost his way in a forest cannot easily reach his destination. Merely by conning the scriptures the heart cannot be purified. (In this connection, Bhagavan sang the opening stanza of "Bhaja Govindam.") Worship of Govinda is the only way to save one's self at the time of death, when verbal scholarship will be of no avail.

### **Tripti and tyaga**

In ancient times, people used to revere elders, purify their hearts by getting rid of selfishness, seek the guidance and blessings of saintly teachers and put into practice their teachings. With the passage of time over the centuries men tended to grow more and more selfish and self-centred. Men steeped in selfish pursuits could find no time or occasion for revering elders. Even if by chance they happened to meet some wise elders, they paid no heed to the advice of the elders. The result is that men today have lost mental peace, though they have progressed in many fields. How can there be any happiness without peace?

Today there is no limit to human desires. For the disease of insatiable desires, the remedy is contentment (tripti). Without contentment man can have no happiness. Along with contentment the spirit of sacrifice (Tyaga) has to be developed. What we are witnessing today is a limitless growth of wants without any concern for reducing them.

### **Sankara's warning**

This growth of desires was described by Adi Sankara as "trishna" (thirst). Drinking water quenches thirst for a time, but the thirst arises again. Likewise as long as life lasts, the thirst (for material pleasures) lasts, though it may be quenched from time to time. This thirst is a strong kind of fetters. Its strength does not diminish, but grows from day to day. Iron chains will rust in course of time but the chains of desire grow stronger every day. Therefore, Sankara declared: "The desire for more and more wealth is dangerous. Cultivate the good sense to give up your desires. Wealth is the result of past deeds. Therefore be content with what you have." (Swami recited a Telugu poem). The Vedas have taught that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not through rituals, progeny or wealth. Great men who have made supreme sacrifices and taught to mankind sacrifice (tyaga) itself as yoga have been born in Bharat time and again over many yugas (aeons).

### **Bali and Sukracharya**

Although his preceptor Sukracharya appealed to Bali repeatedly not to make the promised gift of land to Vamana, the Emperor declared he was determined to make the gift. Sukracharya

have ventured to offer a gift to him. What an ignoramus you are! How foolish of you!"

Rejoicing at the guru's rebuke, Emperor Bali said: "Guruji! The seeker of the gift is Lord Narayana. When the hand that blesses the universe, the hand that holds out the promise of freedom from fear to everyone, the hand that bears the Sri Chakra in its palm, is stretched out towards me with the appeal ("Dehi") for a gift, what greater good fortune can I have? The hand that seeks is underneath and my hand, that of the giver, is above it. How fortunate I am! When I am blessed in this fashion, you are coming in my way by your plea. I am not prepared to obey you." Saying this, Emperor Bali went ahead with the gift.

Which man can have such a sacred and precious opportunity? There are indeed several kinds of gifts which are commended: gift of land, of gold, of food, of houses, clothes and so on. It is not any of these which Bali offered as gift. He offered himself as gift. He did not give any material gifts. He gave himself completely. This is true "Arpitam" (offering to the Divine). By this offering, Vishnu and Emperor Bali became one.

### **Sacrifice: true and false**

Samartha Ramdas and Saint Tulsidas have declared that whoever comes in the way, whether he is the preceptor, father, mother, or anybody else, when a sacred offering is to be made to God, he should not be obeyed come what may.

While making the offering, Emperor Bali said: "Oh Lord! I am offering to you the heart which you gave to me. I offer to you all my wealth, my kith and kin and everything else. Protect me, who has surrendered to you."

It is because such supremely self-sacrificing, great men have existed in Bharat from times immemorial, that Bharat has shone as a Tyaga Bhumi (the Land of Sacrifice), Yoga Bhumi (the Land of Yoga) and Karma Bhumi (the Land of Sacred deeds). Today sacrifice and charity have become a fashionable pastime. It has also been turned into a business. If a trivial donation is made, it must be blazoned in the press! In the old days, the great souls and rulers who gave away kingdoms and all their possessions, indulged in no fanfare, but experienced the bliss of giving in their hearts. Those great souls totally ignored those who came in the way of their acts of sacrifice.

### **Examples of Mira and Karna**

After her marriage with Rana Kumarabhoja, Mira was given many facilities by the Rana for her worship of Krishna. Unfortunately, the Rana was killed in battle when Babar invaded his kingdom. Mira was left helpless. Her brother-in-law, Rathnasimha, ascended the throne. He harassed Mira in many ways. He hid snakes in the clothes sent to her. He mixed poison in the milk or water given to her. The people, incensed at the cruelties inflicted on Mira, rose against Rathnasimha and killed him. His younger brother, Vikramsimha, succeeded him to the throne. He placed every conceivable obstacle in the way of Mira visiting her Krishna Mandir. She was denied all help. In this situation, Mira sent a long letter to Tulsidas. She asked: "What is my

family, or merge in my Lord who is the breath of my life?" Tulsidas sent her the following reply: "Mira! Whoever comes between the devotee and God—whether he is the father, the mother, friend, husband or wife, or guru—should be given up. God is the eternal protector before birth and after death. To realise the eternal and ever present Lord, one should be prepared to ignore the objections of transient persona." Thereupon Mira decided to give up everything and went forth, singing bhajans all the way, to the abode of the Lord (in Dwaraka).

Many heroic men and women have been born in Bharat in the past who have been prepared, for the sake of God, to give up father, mother, husband, wife, or all their possessions. Take the example of Karna. He was one who had been blessed by the Sun-God. Even as Bali went ahead with his gift to Vamana despite the strong plea of his preceptor, Shukracharya, Karna discarded the warnings of the Sun-God and parted with his ear ornaments and his armour (to Indra).

### **Tanaji's heroism**

Even ordinary people in Bharat are filled with the spirit of sacrifice. Here is the example of Tanaji. All was set for his wedding. He was seated on the ceremonial seat. News came that invaders had entered the country. He got up in his sacred yellow wedding dress. He went straight to the battlefield, vanquished the enemy and lost his life in the battle.

It is only when the life of Bali is seen from the perspective of sacrifice for the Lord that its full meaning will be apparent. It should not be regarded simply as an instance of a gift being made to Vishnu when He came in the form of Vamana.

### **Welcome God's Tests**

Hiranyakasipu was the avowed enemy of Hari. His son Prahlada was a devotee of Hari. Prahlada's son Virochana was a wicked person. Bali was the son of Virochana. Bali was the very reverse of his father. Prahlada and Bali were great devotees of the Lord. It is such devotees who have to face severe ordeals. Those who are not devotees do not go through such tests. You may think that this is a welcome prospect. But it is only the one who is tested that secures promotion. The sooner a boy completes various examinations, the sooner he goes up in studies. The boy who does not sit for any examination stays put in the same class. It is those who get through tests, who rise to great heights. Hence, you must welcome tests as aids to advancement.

Emperor Bali was prepared to make any sacrifice to attain God. He was a lover of his subjects. During his reign, the people experienced no hardships. Bali considered the welfare of his subjects as his own well-being. There were no beggars in his realm. Kerala was a land of prosperity, flowing with milk and honey. Even today Kerala is endowed with Nature's bounty. But unfortunately, forgetting the legacy of the ancient sages and rulers, people have gone astray in later times.

### **Keralites' devotion**

When Bali was about to leave the earth, he gave a pledge to the people, who were in deep distress, that once a year he would appear before them and bless them. This day of Bali's

people wear new clothes, prepare feasts and after offering the food to God, partake of it, remembering the great sacrifice of Emperor Bali.

Onam means that which is new. It may refer to new clothes, new thoughts, or new actions. Old clothes and old ideas have to be cast off. Good thoughts have to be developed. This is the sacred festival observed every year by the people of Kerala. It is a supremely sacred day for them. When thousands of Keralites celebrate this festival here, far away from their hearths and homes, it should be noted that they are the only people from any region who are celebrating their traditional festival here in this manner. People from no other state in India do such a thing. It is their great good fortune that they observe this sacred day here in this manner. It is a fine example of devotion. What a supreme mark of devotion is this when they celebrate their festival here away from homes! If they had stayed in their homes, they would be preparing a variety of sweet dishes and varied eatables using coconuts and bananas. The fact that they have denied themselves all these and gladly subjected themselves to various inconveniences here, living in sheds, bears testimony to their deep devotion to Swami.

Hoping that the people of Kerala will ceaselessly develop their devotion and sanctify the entire State of Kerala by their exemplary life, I bless all of them and bring my discourse to a close.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*".)

**—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Poornachandra Auditorium on 3-9-1990**

### **Hindi edition of "Sanathana Sarathi"**

The publisher of the Hindi edition of "Sanathana Sarathi" (published from 12, Aurangzeb Lane, New Delhi-110011) writes to say that copies of stray back numbers of the Hindi journal from 1979 onwards, as well as complete sets of the journal for years from 1983 to 1988 are available. Those interested in securing these back numbers may contact the Hindi "Sanathana Sarathi" subscription stall at Prasanthi Nilayam during the birthday celebrations in November.

*WHAT BHAGAVAN MEANS TO ME:*

### **Blowing the Trumpet for God**

What Swami means to me is still a Divine and unfolding epic. I know that Swami is always with me for He has told me so. Yet, I feel the innocence and shyness of a beginner in His presence.

Baba allowed me to perform a concert with Vemu Mukunda and his Indian musicians at one Summer Course session. At the climax of my main solo, Baba sitting in the center of the stage, rose to His Feet and holding out His arm with palm down, while the audience cheered, materialized a beautiful jewelled necklace, paused, then made it larger to accommodate my neck size, which swells when I play. With the crowd still applauding, Swami garlanded me with this necklace. As He did so He smiled, close into my eyes, and said, whilst holding before me the gold medallion hanging on the necklace, "On this I give you Krishna because He played a wind instrument."

We both laughed. The audience was thrilled. I was ecstatic. Someone in white asked, "Discourse, Swami?" I heard Swami's voice say, "Already had discourse." And taking my hand, He led me to the front of the stage, and following His direction I bowed to the audience. Then Baba, being the perfect master of ceremonies, held out His other hand for Vemu Mukunda to join us for a final bow. This was my first experience with Swami. It was fun, joy, mystery, excitement and sweetness too. That is what Baba meant to me that first day—and still does, plus much more.

On my concert tours for many years now, always Swami's picture and puja materials are in my dressing room, besides another puja set and pictures in my hotel room. I do a short meditation and pray to Swami before each performance regardless of where I am in the world and in my mind I always dedicate my performance to Him. On the stage there are times when I call Baba by touching the Krishna on my necklace. It gives me strength and enhances my confidence. During an important performance, where one is often surrounded by excitement, anxiety and tensions of backstage, by tuning into Swami I can clear the clutter from the mind and turn on the joy and creativity. If Swami is always with me how could I be nervous? Nervousness is created by the mind—so, better to give the mind to Swami and just play.

Since 1978 Swami has been a part of my actions. When things go right I thank Swami for His grace. When things are difficult I pray to Swami to direct my actions to correct the situation-be it my fault or the fault of others. In my personal life as well as career I bring all of my problems to Swami.

During an interview, my wife was having a conversation with Swami about meditation. After He had lovingly and patiently answered her questions, I asked Swami about "my meditation". He interrupted me with a sweet playful laugh, pointed to me and said, holding His thumb and forefinger about half an inch apart—"For you—VERY SHORT!"

### **Western music for institute students**

The summer before the 60th Birthday, Swami said to me, on the verandah of the Mandir, "So much of western music is so beautiful, would you speak to the students about your music at the hostel for half an hour twice a week while you are here?" I was delighted and after talking to them and seeing their enthusiasm to learn to read and play western instrumental music, I soon received Baba's permission and support to teach the students with the available instruments here.

(Music) Educators" and soon after it for the "National Association of Music Merchants". During the last four years various companies and individuals from these two organisations have donated to the S.S.S.B. Institute of Higher Learning many brass and electronic and wood wind instruments plus marching drums, orchestra drum-set, cymbals, electronic guitars and piano plus computer programs that teach fingering techniques, music reading, care of instruments and other important learning materials. So now we are having a wonderful time during this August of 1990 with all of this modern equipment.

I cannot describe what a joy it is to teach such talented, well-mannered, intelligent students who are totally devoted to Bhagavan Baba and eager to come at 6.00 a.m. to learn marches and use the computer. They practise into the night while still maintaining their high academic levels because they are so earnestly looking forward to playing for Baba (when they are ready).

I have tried to write what Swami means to me, but really there are no words to fully describe one's relationship with Bhagavan Baba. Every time I come to Prasanthi Nilayam, I take back into the world a little more of Baba. Recently I read in "Sanathana Sarathi" one of Baba's instructions

"BE HAPPY—BE HAPPY! ALL WILL BE HAPPY!"

—*Maynard Ferguson*

(or "TRUMPET" as Swami always chooses to call me.)

*You might say that the Karma of previous births has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of Grace can save man from that. Evidently, someone has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from Karma like that. When a severe pain torments you, the doctor gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine; the pain is not felt, though you go through it.*

—**Baba**

## **Bhagavan on the Sai Avatar**

*To the thousands of devotees from all parts of India and many overseas countries, who had gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam in September despite the announcement that the usual Dasara celebrations and Veda Purusha Jnana Saptah Yajna would not be held this year, Bhagavan's thrilling discourse on the Sai Avatar on Sept. 28th, the Janmadinam of Sri Shirdi Baba in 1835, was blissfully rewarding and a welcome benediction.*

*In the place of His usual Dasara Sandesh, Bhagavan announced that He was going to reveal many unknown facts about the advent of the Sai Avatar in the village of Pathri in the former Nizam's Dominions, about His early years and some of His miracles in Shirdi. After relating the*



*explained that the threefold purposes of the Sai Avatar, in the former and present incarnations, as well as in the advent yet to come, are to demonstrate the powers of the Divine, to awaken consciousness of the Divinity in each human being, and to teach mankind the ways of realising oneness with the Divine.*

*The details of Bhagavan's discourse will be published in the November Issue.*

*—Editor*

### **Golden Orb**

*Five decades of golden era,  
half a century of sunshine,  
of pouring out of love and bliss,  
of joy, and of happiness,  
of manifestation  
of the formless SELF,  
of advent  
of A VA TAR,  
of EPOCH of history yet not known,  
of glory of GOD, of silent revolution,  
of journey of man to divinity;*

*HIS ever-present existence  
spreading shining light,  
bringing the world in one embrace,  
with love and bliss in inner space;*

*A BEGINNING  
that started in a little spot,  
in a language that a few would know,  
but sprouting in the hearts of all,  
who visited, admired and adored  
the Abode of the Supreme SELF,  
the Temple of Peace, of quiescence,  
They carried back  
peace and joy  
to their homes and beyond;  
and the TIDINGS reached  
the hearts of those,  
who knew HIM not, or preferred  
to avoid*

*The golden era that began  
with the GOLDEN ORB  
will never end  
for that is the mission  
of the Supreme SELF.*

*—C. H. Shah, Boston*

## **Bhagavan in Brindavan**

A day after the Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagavan left for Brindavan on September 4th.

Besides giving darshan to devotees in the Sai Ram Mandap in the mornings, Bhagavan allowed the students and staff of the Brindavan campus and a few devotees to assemble in "Trayee Brindavan" for bhajans and occasional discourses in the evenings.

On September 9th, after the Principal, Sri Anil Kumar, had spoken, Swami, in response to his special request, gave a delightful discourse on the significance of Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam and the lesson of the supreme sacrifice made by Emperor Bali in defiance of his preceptor's warning.

On several days, Bhagavan called some students to speak on their experiences and their understanding of various aspects of Bhagavan's message. One evening, three students spoke on science and spirituality. On September 12th, Swami gave a moving account of Jayadeva's life and the total devotion of Jayadeva and his wife, Padmavati, to Lord Krishna.

Addressing the students specifically on September 16th, Swami emphasised that discipline and devotion should go together so that they may find proper expression in the discharge of duty.

**- N**

*SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN:*

*GURUDEV VANI*

## **Love God and Motherland**

*Dear Students!*

The world we live in is transient and impermanent. All objects in it, all relationships and possessions, are of a temporary nature. What, then, is enduring and lasting? Dharma (Righteousness) and reputation (Keerti), these two are permanent. All that you see in the phenomenal world, living and inanimate, is swallowed up by the tide of Time. "What is seen, perishes" ("Yaddrisyam Tannasyathi"). The eye that sees as well as the world that is seen are both transient. Physical eyes are not given to human beings alone. Birds, beasts and insects have eyes. What is the unique distinction of man? He alone is endowed with the eye of wisdom. If he does not develop it, he is no better than animals and insects.

Human life is precious and should be used for acquiring knowledge of the Atma. The physical eyes can see the external world, but are of no use for recognising the subtle presence of Divinity. The physical eyes cannot see themselves. Nor can a man see his own eyes except through a reflecting medium. When the eyes are not able to see even the gross body, how can they help man to recognise the subtle mind? When they cannot notice the mind, how can they recognise the Atma, which is extremely subtler than the mind? Physical eyes are useful only for seeing the phenomenal world. Every man needs to develop the inner Vision of Wisdom to experience the Atma. Jnananetra (the Eye of Wisdom), Divyanetra (the Divine sight) or Atmanetra (the Spiritual eye) all mean one and the same thing. It is only when you feel that the Cosmos is permeated by the Divine that the Cosmos will appear to you as a manifestation of the Divine. What you see is a reflection of your inner feelings. Nature assumes the colour of your vision. When you convert your vision into a vision of spiritual wisdom (Jnanamaya drishti), then the Creation becomes the embodiment of Cosmic Consciousness (Brahmamaya).

Whatever the colour of the glasses through which your physical eyes see the world, the whole of Nature appears in that colour. All that is seen is subject to change. The unchanging Brahman is the basis for the changing forms. It is when the divine basis of the Cosmos is recognised that the mystery of the universe can be easily understood.

It is the mind that is responsible for the failure to understand the world properly. The mind is externally oriented. Life is wasted in the pursuit of worldly objects. Not for this has the human birth been conferred on man. Man takes birth for the realisation of the Divine. You must try to have a vision of the Divine and be in communion with the Divine. This alone is true religion. Man must realise God, feel God, see God, talk to God, this is Realisation. This is Religion.

### **The Divine Seed**

Earlier Anil Kumar spoke about Botany. We seek the flowers and fruits that grow on trees. But these derive their sustenance from the unseen roots of the tree. It is only when the roots are nourished, that you can get the fruits and flowers. You have to provide water and manure for the roots and not for the flowers and fruits.

For the tree of this Cosmos, the Divine Atma is the root. This is the purport of the statement in the Gita: "I am the seed of all living beings." How is God the seed and how does He become

sprouts, grows into a plant and bears numerous fruits in each of which there is a seed. Out of one seed have come numerous fruits with seeds within them. The seeds in the fruits belong to the same variety as the original seed. Now look at the world. For this world, the seed is the Atma. The world is one huge tree. In it the different countries are branches. Each branch carries many fruits in the form of living beings. In each of these beings, the Atma exists as the seed. Hence in every individual the Divine exists in the form of Atma. "Eko vasi sarvabhutaantaraatma" (The One dwells in all beings as the Inner Spirit).

Students today are not interested in acquiring knowledge of these subtle mysteries. They seek to specialise in some subject or other to earn a living. They make no effort to understand the basic truth about life itself.

### **Renunciation and immortality**

The primary mantra of the Vedas is that immortality can be achieved only by renunciation.. What has to be renounced is that which causes bondage, namely, the identification with the body. When the delusion of body consciousness goes, liberation is obtained. Disinterestedness in the body, devotion to God, these two will serve to free man from bondage and lead him to liberation. Regard all that is associated with the body as mere instruments to be cast off after they have been properly used.

Students! You have to realise your true strength and potentialities. Take, for instance, an elephant. It is a very powerful animal. But a small man with a goad is able to control it. The bee can bore a hole through any hard object. But when it gets into a lotus, it gets bound and perishes. It is unaware of its own strength. Man has bliss and divinity within him, but makes no effort to realise them. Men are like the musk-deer, which has the musk in its own navel, but searches for the source of its fragrant smell everywhere. When it is exhausted by the search and discovers that the musk is in its navel, it laments over its folly.

### **Spiritual bliss**

Man behaves in the same way. He has within him, Nithyananda (perennial bliss), Brahmananda (Divine bliss) and Atmananda (bliss of the Spirit). They are verily his nature and form. But, being caught up in external worldly pleasures, he fails to realise this truth. He is unable to make the search or experience the bliss. His Atma is always indicating the various paths to the experiencing of spiritual bliss, which is untainted by grief. When the source of this bliss is within you, why are you caught up in worldly concerns which are the cause of sorrow?

From ancient times, the Sages of Bharat realised the evanescence of wealth and power in the material world and sought that which was enduring and unchanging. How many kings and emperors have come and gone? Did any of them take his kingdom with him? Does anyone even remember their names? When one leaves the world, only two things accompany him: his good and bad deeds. Therefore engage yourselves only in good actions. You will enjoy the fruits of those actions. As you sow, so shall you reap.

Students! Do not ignore this basic truth: Sometime or other in the future you will have to reap the consequences of your actions. If you sow the seeds of thistles or fruit-bearing trees, the plants will be according to the seeds. Bharatīyas had firm belief in this Law of Action and Reaction. Therefore, in whatever you do, consider well whether it is right or wrong and whether it is in harmony with your divine nature. Then, your actions will be pure and untainted. You will be free from attachment and disappointment and will be devoted to the Spirit.

What is the use of all your education and the degrees acquired by you? Is it for getting a job and earning money by hook or crook? You are endowed with two hands. If you work hard with both hands, you can not only satisfy your needs, but also render help to others. Perform good and pure acts. Lead an exemplary life. Be helpful to others. Dedicate your life to the uplift of humanity.

### **Subhash Bose's patriotism**

What kind of existence will you have if you do not revere the Motherland as your mother? While Subhash Bose was studying in the Calcutta University, there was an English professor, who used to speak disparagingly about India and Indians. Subhash Bose, who was intensely patriotic, could not bear listening to such denigratory remarks about the Motherland. He was patient for a while, but when the professor continued in the same strain, he got up, jumped over three desks, caught the Englishman by the neck and beat him with sandals. Bose declared, "I can bear anything, but I cannot bear my Motherland being abused and ridiculed. It does not matter what happens to me, but I must defend my country's honour."

The students who watched the incident were stunned. The English professor cried out: "Help me! Help me!" News of the incident reached the authorities, who held an emergency meeting and rusticated Subhash Bose for five years. Subhash was determined to dedicate his entire life to the service of the Motherland. As Subhash could not continue his studies in Calcutta, his father sent him to London. But even there Subhash cherished his love for the Motherland. He was determined to finish his studies and return to India to serve the Motherland. He studied hard and passed the I. C. S. examination. He returned to India and plunged into national politics. "I owe my food and everything else to my country. I must be grateful to the nation by serving it." This was his firm resolve.

Here is his example. You students should realise what you owe to your educational institutions for your status and position in life and be ever grateful to them. This is the pledge you should take. This is true sacrifice. Giving up selfishness, developing faith in the Divine, you must realise the Supreme.

### **Precept and practice**

Students! Remember that great scriptures of the different religions—the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Granth Saheb or others—have not been given for mere ritualistic reading. They are intended to serve as guides for action. Of what avail is mere recitation of slokas or writing learned articles? There are persons who recite the Gita everyday and know by heart all

of no use. It is not enough to be human in form; you have to be human in your conduct. The world will benefit only from those who behave like human beings.

Whatever official titles you may receive, they are not equal to the Vedic title, "Children of Immortality" ("Amrutasya Putraah"). Students! Do not hanker after positions and name. Develop love of the Motherland, love of God and love of Dharma. There is no greater religion than Truth. Truth and Righteousness (Sathya and Dharma) are inseparable twins. Try to put into practice at least a fraction of what you have learnt. Only then you will have a glimpse of Bliss. Verily you are embodiments of bliss. You have recourse to various means like acquiring wealth, getting married rearing children, and so on, to secure happiness. The means vary, but the goal is one, namely, Ananda (bliss). Do not discuss the merits of other faiths or draw comparisons between them. The basic teachings of all faiths are the same. The basic truth of all faith is the same. When you develop this kind of equal-mindedness, the divinity in you will manifest itself in due course.

**—From Bhagavan's discourse at the Summer Course in the Brindavan Campus on 1-6-90**

The large numbers of youthful overseas devotees flowing through the gates of Prasanthi Nilayam are a global aspect of the Sai phenomenon that deserves investigation. These adolescents are facing the challenges of maturing in a world of uncertainty rocked by unrelenting waves of turbulence and shifting social morals. What circumstances propelled them to Baba and what happened to them when they returned to their countries? Did they experience an inner transformation? How has Baba and His teachings affected them in their daily lives?

During July and August this year a substantial number of young persons between the ages of eleven and twenty were interviewed besides some of the parents of the youngsters. They were all eager to talk about their experiences with Swami and were most articulate and inspiring. The only difficulty completing this article was the necessity of selecting a small number to be included.

### **Haunted by fear**

David is twelve years old and his home is in southern California, U.S.A. He speaks very quietly and earnestly as he relates how Sai Baba relieved him of an all-pervasive mortal fear that had been causing him severe anxiety and depression.

"I had this fear I was going to be killed by a murderer who was killing people in our area. I felt he was following me and would suddenly jump out of a shadow. I was constantly afraid. I was staying with my grandmother because my parents were in Prasanthi Nilayam. So, I did not know what to do about it. Even after the killer was caught I still had this fear. I felt death could come from anywhere, suddenly, at any time. Then it became more general than the fear of dying. I was always anxious and fearful without any reason. It was like a horrible dark cloud surrounding me. When my parents came back home I told them about this. My Mom and Dad talked a lot about it with me and it was some help. But this dark fear held on to me. I was never happy. They suggested I pray to Baba and ask for His help."

David's father was present as his son related how this mortal fear had developed and began to consume his son. He explained how David was usually bright and cheerful. After returning home from India they were dismayed to find him so sullen and apprehensive. Much as both parents tried to console their son, no amount of sympathy and understanding would bring him relief. They felt their most immediate action should be to turn to Baba for guidance and solace.

### **Baba to the rescue**

David then resumed his account:

"I said to Baba, I can't handle this on my own. I know you love me and will help me. Take this Fear away from me and help me get rid of it." Whenever I felt this Fear holding me I would tell Baba to protect me. Sometimes I would see Baba out of the corner of my eye. There would be a flash of His hair and bright orange robe and when I turned in the direction where I saw Him

would surround me. Then that black cloud would vanish for a while. I had an altar for Baba and I would place butter and milk on it. A few times they would disappear. I knew Baba had accepted my offering. Then, I began to feel in my heart Baba would accept anything I offered Him so I gave everything over to Baba's Hands, everything. I became happier and happier. Baba had taken the Fear from me, crumpled it up, and threw it away. Now, I just let Baba work through me. Swami has even helped me with reports in school. Sometimes I get behind in the work and a report is due the next day. I knew there was no way I could get it done. I just prayed to help me write it. Then, I just let Him do it through me. The times I have asked Baba to help me I received top marks. But He did it!

### **Spiritual friends**

"I used to lose friends because of Baba. They would come over and see Baba's pictures. Then they would want to know who is this guy with the orange gown and afro-hair? No matter how I tried to explain I could not make them understand. They would say 'I don't think I'll be your friend because I think you are crazy!' But now Baba is giving me friends who are spiritual. When I introduce them to Baba they like Him and want to know more. They think it is me who is telling them. But, really, it is Swami speaking and He makes them my friends and His devotees. Sometimes even their parents become devotees and we all go to Bal Vikas together. I am becoming more and more fearless. I know Baba is everywhere. He is pouring Love through me and I am loving everything and everybody."

David was asked if meeting Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam had changed his attitude about Him.

"I used to think that Baba was just for me... that He was mine. Now, I can see with all of these thousands of people here and how He knows everybody and speaks to so many people during darshan that Swami is for everybody."

### **"I am with you"**

Fernando of Argentina is fourteen years old. He has curly brown hair and soft compassionate eyes. He seldom talked with others while waiting for darshan and bhajans. He would sit quietly by himself and meditate. He is very composed and speaks with quiet assurance.

How old were you when you first came to see Baba?

"I was eight years old. My mother had been a devotee for 3 ½ years when she took me with her on my first trip. This is our fourth time here."

Were you at all surprised when you saw Baba? Did you feel something special happen?

"I was very happy. I danced around a lot! But there were no surprises for me. My mother had told me Baba was God when I was four years old. When I came here I already knew Baba was God. Nothing He could do would surprise me."



Baba when you could be so near Him?

"I like the interviews because Baba is so different. During darshan He is serious and His actions seem so human. But in the interview room He is so loving and concerned. He materializes many different objects for people and they are so happy. Then Baba is happy because they are happy. He knows everything. When I leave the interview room I have greater faith."

How do you follow Baba's Teachings? Is there one Teaching that is your favourite?

"I like when Baba says, 'Why fear when I am here?' Baba tells me all the time 'I am with you and you are with Me. I will always help you.' I feel it is important for me to always keep Him in my mind. Then there are no distractions. I pray to Baba all the time. He is inside my heart and I hear Him. When I do not know what to do I ask Him and Baba always tells me and I follow what He says. I read Baba's books for inspiration. But He guides me personally. In my home country Baba is always helping me."

### **Discovering Baba**

Mathys of Holland is twenty years old. When he speaks his tall frame becomes taut, his brilliant blue eyes flash with enthusiasm and his hands slice through space as he stresses his statements.

What sparked your spiritual interests?

"I was very religious when I was young. When I went to intermediate school I learned about Darwinism which scientifically demonstrates that man evolved from lower life forms. This created a great conflict in me because of my religious schooling which had taught me man was created directly by God. I felt compelled to find out how Man and Creation came about and what was their relationship. A schoolteacher knew of my interests. He knew Hebrew quite well and revealed to me profound Biblical secrets. I realized that the deep spiritual truths are not obvious. They are hidden and one has to search and dig for them."

How did you discover Baba?

"My mother saw the book, *Holy Man and the Psychiatrist* at a neighbour's home and borrowed it. She asked me to read it. I was ready for the book because I had already read about Yoga and Indian Masters. I believed in miracles and I wanted to get into a Master-disciple relationship. I was even ready to go to the Himalayas. After I read the book, I immediately accepted Baba as God, the Avatar. But I had no hope of becoming a devotee of His because He already had so many thousands of devotees and I was looking for a close relationship. A major turning point in becoming a devotee was clutching *Holy Man and the Psychiatrist* and feeling Love and Protection flowing into my hands."

### **“So enchanting”**

"I felt that even if I saw Sai Baba from three kilometers away I would be happy. When I actually saw Swami I felt nothing. He was just going to His room during the Arati. It was so quick. As I went to darshans and bhajans I fell in love with Him. I found His behaviour so beautifully human; the way He would smile, tilt His Head, the way He moved His fingers, He was so enchanting. I also found His Ways mystifying. Sometimes I would become so depressed during bhajans in the Mandir. Then, during the last few minutes all the bad feelings would be washed out and there would be just joy,

What Teaching of Baba's were you first attracted to and how have you applied it in your life?

"Do not get swelled when praised or shrink when criticized. Just keep equanimity. This teaching is like a medicine. It untied me to others because I was always seeking praise. When praise came I swelled up and when rebuked I was miserable. Even the praise hurt because it destroyed tenderness in the heart."

"I became very attached to Swami. Before coming to the ashram I worshipped the Unmanifest and swelled with pride because of the strength I was getting. My goal in sadhana was to become a siddha."

"When I came back home I felt deep longing for Baba. I felt humble because I was very aware of my faults. Now, my sadhana is dedicated to Baba with no hope for reward."

### **"Gave me self-confidence"**

Was this trip different than your first?

"This trip is extremely different. On my first trip, Swami gave me an interview and said beautiful things about me. Baba gave me the self-confidence to study physics even though it will be most difficult for me."

"This time he called the Dutch group in twice and both times He sent me off the veranda while letting the others in. If I did not really believe Baba loves me I would be crushed. Now, He really expects me to work harder on myself. Even though I may not get another interview on my next trip, it does not matter. I am coming back as soon as I can."

After interviewing numerous young overseas devotees one cannot but be impressed with their sincerity, conviction and fervent desire to live by Swami's Teachings. Consequently, they are not tortured by self-doubt and express no fear about their future as is so typical of others in their age group. Yet, this should not be surprising. It is all due to the all-encompassing Grace of Sai.

**—Andrew Rymer, Prasanthi Nilayam**

*You are living now, in the dark in ignorance. The knowledge that you are the Divine Spark, encased in the sheaths of bliss, intelligence, feelings, sensations and organic substances—this knowledge is the Light. You must light your own lamp. You cannot walk in the light of another's lamp. You cannot exist on the money in the purse of another. Have your own money; then alone are you free. Earn knowledge, yourself. Even knowing it is not enough; you must experience it. The well has water; but, that is not enough. It must be brought up in the bucket and used to wash and to quench thirst.*

**—Baba**

**HAZRAT MEHDI AND BABA:**

### **Truth of a Prophecy**

*O Mankind; there hath come  
To you a direction from your Lord  
And a healing for (the Disease)  
In your hearts, and for those  
Who believe, a Guidance  
And a Mercy.*

*(The Quran: X-57)*

This magnificent utterance not only relates to the immediate context in which it was said, but refers to a situation that may arise at anytime. Its wisdom, like all scriptural knowledge, comprehends infinity.

It is with these thoughts that the writer of this article ventures to put in black and white that which the soul has received as a gift of Truth. When over a decade ago doubts assailed the mind, this author was led to the Fountain of Truth and the injunction reverberated clearly "You do not even know your own religion, how can you know ME?" With these words Baba guided me to an intense study of Sufism, the holy Quran and Islam. Therefore, what is conveyed through these words is undoubtedly His gift. It has come, like all other lessons in spirituality, in the form of a book. Later it has been checked and verified through inquiry from centres of Islamic Studies.

Muslims all over the world believe in the advent of a great leader and a guide. They all know him as MEHDI (Master). The Prophet, Hazrat Mohammad, had indicated that Hazrat Mehdi will appear for the welfare of muslims<sup>1</sup> in the last decades of the fourteenth century Hijri (this century

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<sup>1</sup> ('Muslim' in the Quranic language means a Believer, and is different from Mohammedan, the follower of the holy Prophet.)

practice will be ignored, and men's hearts will turn to the worship of the world and its glamour, "the other Gods" of Quranic language. The prophecy goes on to postulate that Hazrat Mehdi will restore the Truth and "Islam"<sup>2</sup> will be the religion of the entire world.

### **The Prophecy**

The signs regarding the time and the person of Hazrat Mehdi, more than 150 in number, were related by the holy Prophet to Hazrat Ali, the fourth Khalif and repository of Sufi secrets. These signs became a guarded treasure of the Imams, descendants of Hazrat Ali, and formed a part of the Shi'a Tradition of the Prophetic sayings. In the 17th century A.D., the well known scholar, Md. Baqir bin Md. Taqi-Al Majlisi-Al Isfahani (1627-1698) collected them in his voluminous book, *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, written in Arabic. The two Persian translations that contained the Prophetic sayings about Hazrat Mehdi are *Khas-ul-Anwar* and *Bihar-ul-Anwar* (part Dwazdhum).

A few of these selected sayings of the Prophet of Islam are listed here. It is left to the reader to recognise who the great Master is as seen by the holy Prophet in a vision, and described by him fourteen hundred years ago.

The Master, commonly known as Hazrat Mehdi, will be seen by those who will search for him. (page 240) (All subsequent references in this article are to the Persian translation of *Bihar-ul-Anwar*). Imam Mohammad Baqir suggests that only "those who know the real meaning of `I' will believe in Hazrat Mehdi." The holy Prophet called him as "Abu Abdullah", (Father of the seekers of God). Much has been said about the name Father of Humanity in *Bihar-ul-Anwar*. He is also addressed as Saheb-Asr (Master of Time), Walli-Allah (Friend of God), Khalifat-ullah (God's Vicegerent), "for surely he will follow the code of Moses, Joseph, Jesus and Mohammad." (page 330).

### **The Insignia of Hazrat Mehdi**

Other signs as stated In Mohammad Baqir's work are: Many Mohammedans will not know about His advent for a long time. That Holy Spirit will wear two garments, one inner and the other outer (p. 239). The Robe, Orange in colour, will be of such a shape that the contours of His back will be seen clearly (p. 292, 777). His dress, Orange in colour, will spread Light among the people (p. 145). His dress will be of Light (229).

His hair, thick and dark, will reach His shoulders (25). His eyebrows are joined in the centre (242). His other features are: Broad and clear forehead (263). Straight nose with a dip in the beginning; a mole on the cheek, reminding of Hazrat Moss, bright as a star; teeth with a parting in the two front ones (243); Black eyes (777); Average height, compared with the Jewish height (239). The colour of the face is described variously as shining like a gold-bronze coin; so bright

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<sup>2</sup> (Islam=is the primeval religion, practised by Semitic prophets, and is equivalent to Sanathana Dharma, as pointed out by Syed Hassan Nsr in his book. *LIVING SUFISM*, page 115.)

compassion, dignified, exalted (239).

### **Attributes and Qualities**

*His attitude* to everyone will be brotherly, as if He knows them well (314).

He will love all Prophets and Saints; and whatever He wants will be done. He will overcome all opposition (242).

His devotees will find protection (342). People will find Him heavenly bliss personified (341).

He will be a shelter for the helpless and the rejected (235).

He will distribute A'b-e-Tuhur Kausr (spirituality) to people in the morning and evening (343). (The reference is to Baba's daily Darshans.)

Divine Light will be manifested from Him (252).

He will not bring a new religion (6). (Baba has stressed often that He is not preaching a new religion.)

All knowledge and essence of all religions will bloom in His heart like a new garden (238).

He will fill the earth with peace. He will be a friend and an adviser (287). He will show the *Straight Path* (352).

### **The world scenario**

The world situation is summed up in a number of striking images, describing aptly the situation at present. The majority of mankind will be like animals, devoid of discrimination (349). Evil, bad habits will be common order of the day. There will be earthquakes and men will die without any reason. They will consider His advent as a sport and a rumour but it will be the Truth. (909- Hazrat Imam Gazali).

Hazrat Mehdi will free people from slavery, remove the lies from their minds, (287); destroy satans and cure insanity (329).

Around the place where He will live signs of prosperity will be visible in heaven and on earth (294).

Men will crowd like clouds where He will live and fall like rains (389).

He will not live in Mecca (240); His reign will begin from the east and His banner will go round the world (306).

He will have the collective wisdom of all Prophets (115).

The Prophet of Islam then, turning to the invisible crowds to come in the future, addressed: "O, ye Muslims, know this that He whose birth is hidden from you is your Master. HE IS MEHDI." (292)

To this writer these words undoubtedly revealed the Truth that SAI BABA IS NONE OTHER THAN HAZRAT MEHDI. It requires faith to accept Truth and indeed Allah shows a Straight Path to those whom He wants for He is all-knowing and wise.

—Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin

AVATAR VANI:

### **The Day That Wrought the Great Change**

*"The name of Prasanthi Nilayam has spread to all parts of the globe. People from all countries are coming here. Prasanthi Nilayam has become a mini-world. What has been accomplished here in fifty years could not have been achieved in five hundred years. The Supreme power of attracting so many from all parts of the world can only belong to the Divine", declared Bhagavan Baba, in the course of a thrilling discourse on October 20th at the Prasanthi Mandir.*

*It was a historic day in many respects. It marked the golden jubilee of Bhagavan's Avataric Annunciation at Uravakonda after He gave up home and school to embark on His mission of spiritual ministering to mil/ions of devotees. A prodigious gathering was present in the Mandir and outside to have darshan of Bhagavan, receive His blessings and get spiritually recharged by His message on that auspicious occasion.*

The day was made all the more memorable by the unique way in which devotees from all over Andhra Pradesh came in their hundreds with lighted lamps and pictures of Bhagavan to offer their homage to the Divine Sadguru who had lit the lamps of devotion and love of God in their hearts. The presentation of lamps was combined with an impressive rally of Bal Vikas children who danced and sang before Bhagavan in the morning. Bhagavan, who watched the rally from His chair near the Ganesha image in the Mandir compound, was deeply moved by the Shraddha and devotion of the children and the deep and sincere love for Bhagavan among the devotees from every part of Andhra Pradesh.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan made a welcome change in the choice of a place from which to deliver His memorable discourse on a unique occasion. Instead of speaking from within the Mandir, He chose the centre of the outer verandah, directly under the balcony, from where He could have a full view of the enormous gathering in front of Him (right up to the Gopuram gate) and all around Him. The face of every devotee glowed with love and adoration as Bhagavan

the uniqueness of the Sathya Sai Avatar.

### **Bhagavan's discourse**

Bhagavan began with a reference to the all-pervading power of Time (kala) in the determination of human affairs and went on to refer to the Jyotis (lamps) that had been brought to Prasanthi Mandir by the devotees from Andhra Pradesh. He said:

There is nothing greater or more magnificent than Light (Jyoti). No other object has the power of light. Light alone has the power to dispel darkness. Light has yet another power. Light (or flame) always moves upwards. Even if you keep a lamp in a pit, the light will only spread upwards. The two important characteristics of light are to dispel darkness and go upwards.

### **Role of God**

However, if the light has to shine without intermission (Akhand Jyoti) it needs a proper basis. First of all, the light (lamp) needs a container. There must be a wick (to light the flame). There must be oil in the wick and in the container. These three are not enough to make the light burn. A match-stick is needed to light the lamp. Can you make a light burn merely with a container, a wick and oil? Can you make jewels if you have only gold and gems? Can you have a garland with a needle, thread and flowers alone? You need someone to make the garland out of them. You need a goldsmith to make the jewels from gold and gems. Similarly, there is need for some one to light the lamp, even when you have the other four materials. He is God. It is when you seek God-realisation that human nature is transformed into divinity.

### **Light the lamp of love**

Embodiments of Divine Love! Regard your heart as the container (of the lamp). Your mind is the wick. Your devotion is the oil. Detachment (Vairagya) is the match-box. Love is the flame that shines when the lamp is lit. Without this light of Love, man is submerged in the darkness of ignorance. Hence, Love is fundamental for every being. That was why the Gopikas appealed to Krishna to light the lamp of love in their hearts by playing on His divine flute.

Today man should plant the seeds of love in his heart. Love is God. No quarter should be given to attachments and hatreds. Men should cultivate purity and harmony in thought, word and deed.

### **The Historic Day in Uravakonda**

It was the 20th of October (1940) a Monday. This is what I declared on that day:

Know I am verily Sai

Give up your attachments and attempts ;

The old relationships are at an end.

When I made this declaration, the families of Thammiraju, Hanumantha Rao, Bhojaraju and Seshamaraju, all with one voice declared themselves against my leaving (the home).

This happened at Uravakonda. When the awareness of the human body and of the presence of the Divine exits in one, a certain amount of dispassion and renunciation is required to manifest this state of mind.

### **Municipal Chairman's Adoration**

While I was in Uravakonda, the Municipal Chairman of Bellary, Ramaraju, came to see Swami, who was then familiarly called "Raju". Seeing Swami, he told Seshamaraju: "We shall take this boy to Bellary and keep him with us during the holidays." He added: "Seshamaraju! You are regarding this lad as an ordinary boy. That is not so. The effulgence on his face and his purity have moved my heart. There is a Divine effulgence within him. Do not be deluded. You may also come with him and stay with us."

From there, the Municipal Chairman took us to Hampi. Do not consider what I am going to say now as something boastful or fanciful or exaggerated. The entire party went into the Virupaksha temple. If I had said I would not come with them into the temple, others might feel angry or offended. I said I was having stomachache and did not wish to go into the temple. All the members of the party including Thammiraju, went in. They were about 50 or 60 persons. Ramaraju was thinking only of God and nothing else. He entreated me repeatedly to come with him. I was a very small boy then. He held both my hands and pleaded, "Please, please, come." But seeing my firm resolve, he did not press me further.

### **Raju as Virupaksha**

Inside the temple, Arati was being offered to the deity, but Virupaksha was not there! Only Raju was in the sanctum! Seshamaraju got angry. He felt that having refused to enter the temple, Raju had somehow got in and stood in the sanctum. This, he felt, was gross sacrilege. He could not contain his anger. But Ramaraju did not think in that manner. He felt that "Raju is Virupaksha and Virupaksha is Raju."

Seshamaraju came out of the temple and found me sitting under a tree. He was always very suspicious. He sent someone inside to find out whether Raju was there, while he himself stayed outside to keep a watch over Raju under the tree. Raju was inside the temple as well as under the tree! Seshamaraju felt very happy internally, but he did not speak to me about it, treating it as a unique experience for himself.

### **A gold collar pin for Raju**

Then they brought me to Bellary. While staying there for a few days, the Municipal Chairman introduced me to various officers, speaking highly about me. I was not addressed as "Swami" in those days, but only as "Raju". Some of the officers seemed to feel that the Chairman was making much of a small boy like me and even tried to make fun of it. Before bringing me to



even now. You can imagine how much shorter I was then. In those days, that is, fifty years ago, it was fashionable for young boys to have a pin for the shirt collar. The collar pin was a status symbol and a mark of affluence. The Municipal Chairman was wondering what else to give me besides the clothes. He went to a goldsmith and got a gold collar pin made for me in one hour. Pinning it on my shirt, he said: "Raju! You should be remembering me whenever you wear this pin."

### **Pin lost: maya goes**

We returned to Uravakonda by bus. Two days later the school reopened. I was going to school. On the way, the collar pin fell from the shirt. (It could not be found). Then I sang a song. The loss of the collar pin freed me from attachment (to worldly things:)

October 20th was a Monday

Returning from Hampi Baba was going to school.  
The collar pin was lost and could not be found.  
That day was the day of Transformation.

The loss of the pin was the cause of a big change.

The link with worldly ties have gone  
The pilgrimage to Hampi also served its purpose  
Freedom from Maya was attained.

That day I left the home. Attachment to worldly objects is a kind of Maya (illusion). When these objects are given up, there is freedom from Maya.

### **Anjaneyulu's devotion**

The same day I went to the Excise Inspector Anjaneyulu's bungalow. He was one of those who on seeing Swami felt a kind of spiritual urge. His house was on the way to my house. He used to prepare some edibles and wait, together with his wife, for my arrival. They would send their children inside lest they should form some impressions about the parents. As soon as I entered the house, both of them would hold my feet. I used to tell them often: "Sir, you are an elder. You should not touch my feet." He would reply: "Raju, we may appear elders in terms of the body. But in terms of wisdom, we are very small. You are verily Krishna himself." They used to describe me like this. They would do it in great privacy, lest others should scoff at them.

### **Commotion in school**

On that October 20th, I did not go to the school. In the school I used to lead the prayers every day. There was a platform with a few steps. In the prayer there was a song which ran as follows:

"Aharaha thava gahvaana pracharita shuni thava Udaara Vaani

Even In those days there was the recognition of the oneness of all religions. Some of the teachers used to wonder how this boy was propagating the unity of all religions.

As I did not go to school that day, there was a commotion in the school, with everyone asking, "Where is Raju?" No boy was present at prayer-time. All the boys rushed to Anjaneyulu's house. I did not see any of them. I was just sitting on a rock. The boys were discussing among themselves: "Some change has come over Raju. What has happened to him? Could something have occurred in his home to upset him after his return from Hampi."

### **Shirdi Baba in Photograph**

I declared then: "If you want to know who I am take a photograph of me." When the photo was taken, the picture of Shirdi Sai Baba was in front of me. At that time no one knew who Sai Baba was. In the gathering here today, Anjanayya is present. He is now the Chairman of the Sathya Sai Organisation in Anantapur district. He knows about that photo.

I told the boys to go to the school and start the prayer.

Meanwhile, Seshamaraju sent a telegram to Puttaparthi regarding the events in Uravakonda. The parents came hurriedly to Uravakonda to take me away to Puttaparthi. At that time, there was no bus service even upto Bukkapatnam. Buses plied only upto Penukonda. From there, people had to go by bullock cart.

All the boys declared that they also wanted to go with Raju.

### **Tragedy of two friends**

At that time, a tragic incident occurred. In the school, three students used to sit together in each desk. In the desk where Swami sat, he had on one side the Sheristadar's son and on the other the Revenue Inspector's son. Both of them were fairly well to do. By their continuous association with me in the class, their hearts had been transformed. The day I left the school, both of them suffered a grievous mental shock. They cried, "Raju! Raju" in great anguish. When they saw me boarding the bus, the Sheristadar's son lost his mind and fell into a well. "I cannot live without Raju" were his last words. The other boy was always wailing, "Raju! Raju" and would not take any food or drink. This state of mental imbalance is "Unmatha," a spiritual phenomenon. Many people think that this condition is related to the giving up of worldly objects.

In view of the tragic end of these two boys, their classroom in the school was locked up. Even today there is the desk, which has been named "Sathya Sai Baba Desk".

### **The Headmaster's Devotion**

There was a Headmaster named Lakshmipathi (in the Uravakonda school). He used to summon me to his office as, soon as I came to the school. This kind of feeling does not come to everyone. Only those who have been blessed by their good deeds in previous lives have such

chair. He would sit on the floor and start massaging my feet. Innocently, I would tell him often: "Sir, you should not do such a thing." Lakshmipathi used to say: "You don't know these things. I know them. There is a great shakti (power) in you."

In this manner, many things used to happen in Uravakonda in those days.

### **The Change in Uravakonda**

October 20 (1940) is the day that wrought a great transformation in Uravakonda. There was a remarkable change in all the students there. I shall give you a small example to illustrate what an amount of affection and love they had for me. The day after I left, another boy went up to the platform in the school for prayer. He started to pray, but broke down in tears. He remembered Swami and could not continue. When he started crying, everyone in the hall began to cry. The prayer turned into a lamentation. The headmaster said: "There is no need for a prayer. The cry itself is the prayer." From that day, the prayer room was locked up and was later converted into a sacred showroom.

The students of those days were full of purity. They were not prone to indulge in criticisms and speculations like students of today. Cleverness and intellectual abilities have increased among students today but good qualities have been on the decline. In those days, cleverness was less but goodness was greater.

### **The Miracle at Puttaparthi**

The lights that have been lit to celebrate a memorable event is a symbol of how the Andhra people have imbibed and are spreading the message of Sai. Embodiments of Divine Love I Do not think that Shin is said to flatter you. Consider it as a declaration of truth.

What has been accomplished at Prasanthi Nilayam in the past fifty years could not have been achieved even in five hundred years (cheers). Although many avatars have done great things, no avatar has achieved the stupendous things done here in fifty years. All this has been accomplished by this single hand. A splendid university has been established here. A planetarium has been set up. In a small village like this, even an aerodrome is being constructed. The name of Prasanthi Nilayam has spread to all parts of the globe. The whole world exists in miniature in Prasanthi Nilayam. People from all countries are gathering here: Prasanthi Nilayam is now a mini-world. You are going to witness many more things by November 23.

### **The Attraction of the Divine**

Will people from other countries come here even if they are invited? But no invitations or promotional literature have been sent to anyone. I am even advising many who wish to come not to do so. This supreme power of attracting so many from all parts of the world can only belong to the Divine (cheers). The fragrance emanating from a Bower spreads all over. Does the flower invite the bee? No. But the bee rushes to the flower of its own accord to taste the nectarine honey in it. Does a bee ever go to a plastic flower? Where is Argentina? It is almost at one end of the globe. In Argentina bhajans are being held in every home (cheers). In Panama, some

Government." These officers were arrested and kept in a mental asylum on the ground that they had gone crazy. All the military officers were able to convert the nurses and doctors in the hospital to Sai devotees. It is not easy to do this. Such changes can be effected only by a change of heart.

### **Not Bombs but Devotion**

Embodiments of Love! If you have been able to carry these lamps, from house to house, it is not the result of something external. The light has come from your hearts. Hence, more than lighting the lamps outside, develop the Jyoti within you and purify your hearts. All Sathya Sai Organisations should be permeated with love. No room should be given to divisive forces. Differences of caste and creed should be totally eschewed. Character alone should be the hall-mark of one's community. Love should become an article of faith. Morality determines the nature of a community. The answer to the question, "To which community do you belong?" should be: "I belong to the community of the moral." If anyone asks for your religion, declare: "Love is my religion." Develop devotion to God on this basis. Devotion alone protects the entire world and nothing else. No government, no bombs, no tanks can save the world. Devotees alone are the protectors of the world. Developing devotion, having the well-being of the world in view, participate in Nagarsankirtan (going round one's village or town performing bhajans.)

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajans: "*Bhajana binaa*", "*Prema muditha*" and "*Subrahmanyam*". The vast gathering all around the Mandir and beyond joined in chorus in the bhajans. When Bhagavan was offered Arati, the entire western sky was a blaze of golden glory and it seemed as if the Sun-god himself was offering Arati to Bhagavan that glorious and memorable evening.)

**AVATAR VANI:**

### **Revelations about the Sai Avatar**

*At the tip of the tongue dwells the Goddess of Prosperity;  
There dwell friends and kinsmen;  
Bondage is wrought by the tip of the tongue;  
Death waits verily at the tip of the tongue.*

*Embodiments of Divine Love!*

All the wealth that man acquires is got through speech. Man's friendships and relations are established through speech. Man forges fetters through speech. In the last reckoning, even death overtakes man through speech.

circumstances, one should be on guard in the use of words. Purity in speech is ensured only by the company of the good.

*"Can the mind concentrate on the contemplation of God without good qualities and good thoughts? Can a house be built without brick and mortar?"* (Swami recited a Telugu poem).

Not men alone, but all living beings are enveloped by the six enemies (Desire, anger, infatuation, greed, pride and envy). Of the six, the primary ones are desire (Kama) and anger (Krodha). Although Kama and Krodha figure in two different form, Krodha (anger) is derived from Kama (desire). Even greed, infatuation, pride and envy are the outcome of desire. The six enemies are derivations of the first one, namely, Kama (desire).

Desire arouses expectations (Apeksha). These expectations relate to the senses. When the expectations are not realised, disappointment turns into anger. The anger gives rise to mental aberrations (Sammoha). These aberrations lead to the loss of memory (of what is right and wrong). With the loss of memory, the intellect gets destroyed. When the intellect is destroyed, everything is lost. Thus, Kama (sensual desire) is the root cause of all ruin, infamy and sorrow. Hence it is essential to control desires and lead a life of self-restraint.

### **The Advent at Pathri**

Today I do not intend to speak on Navaratri or Sivaratri. I propose today to reveal what has not been known to anyone hitherto.

In the former Nizam's dominions, there was a remote village called Pathri. In that village there were a couple named Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma. They were grieving over the lack of children. In answer to their prayers, a son was born on September 28, 1835. Today is the anniversary of that day. That child was Sai Baba.

As Gangabhavadya had developed a feeling of total detachment and renunciation, he decided to repair to a forest regardless of the child. Devagiriamma, who looked upon her husband as God, decided to follow the husband leaving the child.

### **Early Years**

There was in the same village a Sufi fakir. As he was also childless, he took charge of this child and brought him up in his home. The boy stayed in the Fakir's home for four years (1835 to 1839). The Fakir passed away in the tide of time. The Fakir's wife, who had lavished great affection on the child, was grief-stricken. To add to her worries, the boy was behaving in a troublesome manner. In those days, Hindu-Muslim differences in that area were growing alarmingly. There was considerable bitterness between members of the two communities. What the boy used to do was to visit a Hindu temple and sing songs in praise of Allah. "Mein Allah hoon!" ("I am God"). "Allah Malik hai!" ("Allah is the Supreme Lord"). He used to declaim in this manner in the temple. The Hindus used to chastise the boy in various ways for his misbehaviour. Nor was that all. He would enter a mosque and declare: "Rama is God", "Siva is

mosque was a puzzle to the public. Members belonging to both the communities went to the Fakir's wife and complained about the boy's behaviour. Unable to deal with this situation the Fakir's wife handed over the boy to a high-souled, pious scholar named Venkusa, who was living near her house. The boy stayed in Venkusa's ashram for 12 years from 1839 to 1851. Venkusa was extremely fond of the boy. In every matter, he used to give priority to the young Baba's views. Seeing this, in course of time, members of the ashram developed envy towards the boy.

### **Arrival at Shirdi**

One night in 1851, the boy left the ashram. He reached Shirdi, a very small village at the time. He stayed there for barely two months and then went about wandering from place to place. After strolling for many years, he reached a place called Dhoopkheda. When he was residing there, the marriage of Chandu Patel's brother's son was celebrated there. Baba joined the marriage party and reached Shirdi again. That was in the year 1858. From that day, till 1918, he did not move out of Shirdi. He remained there for 60 years.

While at Shirdi, Baba used to converse with those coming to him, give advice to them regarding their problems and offer courage and solace to them with regard to their troubles. In this manner, Baba's activities came to be known all over the country.

At that time there was in the Maharashtra area, a Deputy Collector and Settlement Officer by name H. V. Sathe (Hari Vinayak Sathe). He was grief stricken over the passing of his wife. Prof. G. G. Narke, a friend of Sathe, came to his house and advised Sathe that there was no purpose in grieving over his loss and that it was advisable for him to have a change of place to get over his sorrow. He suggested that it was good to have the darshan of some saint and persuaded him to come to Shirdi.

### **Sathe Meets Baba**

Sathe was quite an extraordinary person. On reaching Shirdi, he and Narke had darshan of Baba. On several occasions, looking at Sathe, Baba used to laugh, sing and make strange gestures. Doubts arose in Sathe's mind whether Baba was a real sage or an eccentric person. No one mentioned anything about Sathe to Baba. Sathe and Narke merely went to see Baba and sat in his presence. Baba told Sathe: "Don't worry about anything. Bodies are like water bubbles. Don't develop any attachment to the body. Develop your attachment to the Indwelling Spirit (Dehi). Worries are passing clouds. They happen to every individual. Have courage. Protect your child." The last remark had reference to the fact that Sathe's wife had died after giving birth to a child. Even Narke had not heard about the survival of this child. On hearing Baba's words Sathe realised that Baba was not a crazy person but one who was a 'Trikaala Jnani' (who knew the past, the present and the future). Sathe, who had intended to stay for a short while just to have darshan of Baba, prolonged his stay by two more days.

amenities at Shirdi for those coming to Baba. The place where he provided residential accommodation for visitors is "Sathe Wada". Sathe was the first to set up apartments at Shirdi.

### **Buildings at Shirdi**

While serving in this manner, Bathe went again to Shirdi after he began to feel whether there was any purpose in his continuing to earn income and accumulate wealth. On seeing Sathe, Baba smilingly said: "You appear to be losing interest in your job. You are wondering how to dispose of the wealth you have acquired. Why give it to anyone? Use it for a good cause. Build a 'Koti' in Shirdi." Sathe told Baba: "Swami! I am not a millionaire. How can I build a mansion here?" Baba replied: "Go on doing as much as you can. Why fear when I am here?" Baba encouraged Sathe in this manner.

In due course, Sathe's maternal uncle, Kelkar, settled down in Shirdi. Sathe used to send funds from Poona and his uncle used to carry on the constructions in Shirdi.

In this way, Baba used Sathe as his instrument. He regarded Sathe as his right hand in regard to all matters. Because Baba was keeping Sathe close to him and relying on him for everything, the residents of Shirdi grew jealous towards him. "Many are content to do nothing themselves, but they cannot bear seeing others do things and will carry tales against them." (A Telugu poem) Several persons used to come to Baba and tell stories against Sathe. What is the appropriate name for such tale-bearers? They should be called "enemies of beggars" (namely, barking dogs), declared Baba.

### **A Judge for a Judge**

At Shirdi, Baba used to do two notable things. One was to receive money from whoever came to him. He used to ask for "Dakshina" (cash offering). He did not ask for large sums. It was two rupees or five rupees. He would receive the money and give it away immediately in their presence. He kept nothing with himself.

One day a man by name Pradhan came to Baba. He had intended to offer twenty rupees to Baba. In those days, there were no currency notes. Everything was in silver coins; not like the alloy coins of today. In those days every rupee contained one full tola of silver. Pradhan thought that instead of offering so many silver coins, it would be better to offer one gold sovereign to Baba. Baba turned the sovereign this way and that and remarked: "How is it I have not seen such a coin before?" A person near Baba said: "It is a gold coin." Baba then observed: "I don't want this. Give me the money in rupees." He asked how much the sovereign was worth. At that time it was worth fifteen rupees. Getting back the sovereign, Pradhan gave fifteen rupees to Baba. Immediately Baba remarked: "Pradhan! You have to give me five more rupees!" Pradhan was a judge at the time. Pradhan as well as persons around him wondered why Baba was demanding five more rupees when a sovereign was worth only fifteen Rupees.

Noticing Pradhan's hesitation, Baba told him: "First hand over the five rupees and then think about it." Pradhan gave the five rupees. Then Baba observed: "When you set out from your

only fifteen. So I was entitled to ask for five more." When Pradhan heard these words, he was stupefied. He admitted that Sai Baba was a good judge.

In this manner, Baba was in the habit of collecting money from those who came to him and to give it away to the needy.

### **Sai—the guru**

One day, he summoned Kelkar and told him, "Today is Guru Poornima. Perform Guru Puja to me." No one there knew the meaning of Guru Puja. Kelkar asked Baba what Guru Puja meant. Baba asked: "Who do you think is a guru? It is not the pontiffs of Maths who are gurus. Nor are sanyasins (renunciants) gurus; God alone is the Guru (Preceptor)." "Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam Kevalam Jnaanmurthim Dwandwaathitham" ("He Is Supreme Bliss, the giver of Divine happiness, the embodiment of the Highest Advaitic Knowledge and one who transcends all dualities. He is Supreme Divine Preceptor"), He is Brahma, He is Vishnu, He is Maheshwara, He is the Supreme Absolute. Salutations to that Supreme Guru. The true guru is one who combines the three forms of the Trinity, the gods who preside over creation, protection and dissolution. Thus God alone is the real Guru" declared Baba. On hearing this, Kelkar asked "Should I worship Brahma, Vishnu or Rudra?" Baba declared in a voice of assumed anger: "Eh Shaitan! Here I am! Offer worship to Me!" Thereby Baba made known that He was Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. All those present felt that Baba was the Divine incarnate.

### **Sathe Leaves Shirdi**

As the days passed, the residents of Shirdi developed hatred towards Sathe because he was collecting all the offerings to Baba in a hundi to use the money for building a Mandir. Just at that time, a silver chariot with silver horses, which was in Sathe's keeping, was stolen by some thieves. Sathe was the principal trustee. The people of Shirdi suspected Sathe of complicity in the theft. One day one of the residents planned to strike with an axe Sathe on the way. Getting wind of this, his maternal uncle called Sathe and urged him to leave immediately as it was too dangerous for him to stay there. He told Sathe that he could worship Baba wherever he might be. Reluctantly Sathe left Shirdi.

Baba used to ask for Sathe ceaselessly. But Sathe was not there. Baba appeared to be in great distress. Sathe was near and dear to Baba. The devotees felt that Baba was sorely affected by the absence of Sathe.

### **Baba and Shyam**

About this time, the parents of Shyam came to Shirdi with the two-year old child. Shyam's father had just retired from service and decided to settle down in Shirdi. The boy's name was Mohan Shyam. The parents called him Mohan, while Baba called him "Shyam". The boy was put to school at Shirdi and in due course he completed his studies and received training as a teacher. He was appointed as a teacher at Shirdi. The school adjoined Baba's room. During the day, Shyam would be teaching at school. There was a ventilator in the wall separating Baba's room and the classroom. Shyam used to watch Baba at nights through the ventilator. He used to



curious things. Baba used to sleep on an eighteen-inch-wide plank suspended from the ceiling. Shyam was apprehensive that Baba might fall off from his lofty but narrow perch during sleep.

### **Concern for Devotees**

Once he mustered courage to ask Baba while massaging his feet: "Swami! You don't seem to sleep at all at nights. You are laughing to yourself or talking. What is the secret of all this?" "You simpleton! Do you imagine you are the only person about whom I am concerned in this world? There are numerous persons who are praying to me. I am speaking to all of them," replied Baba. "When I turn my finger, I am turning their minds. When I move my lips, I am talking to them. When I laugh, I am amused at their follies. These are the things I am doing for my devotees, dear child." Shyam prayed to Baba: "Swami! My classes don't take up much of my time. Let me stay with you during the rest of the time and serve you."

At that time there was a woman called Laxmibai who used to cook the food for Baba. Shyam used to go to her and assist her in the preparation of jowar rotis. Baba had a great liking for brinjals. Shyam went to Laxmibai to learn how to prepare brinjal dishes. Shyam went on serving Baba in this way and he alone knew the joy he derived from such service.

### **Feigned Anger**

Baba often used to fly into a temper. This was only an outward appearance. Sometimes he used to throw a stick at someone ten feet away. Shyam once asked him: "Swami! You are hurling the stick at the man in such a rage. Supposing something happened to him and he died, will you not get a bad name?" Baba replied sharply: "Shaitan! You keep quiet. That fellow's life is in my hands. He will die only if I permit him. You better mind your business. Why are you bothered about others? That man will come to his senses only if he sees me in this manner. If I am indulgent they will try to ride the high horse." Thus, in this way, Baba used to discipline people by threats and harsh words. "It is only with this aim in view I am displaying anger and not for any other purpose." This secret was revealed by Baba only to Shyam and none else. Baba's life is really a saga of love and nothing else.

Keeping Shyam near him and allowing him to serve him, Baba spent many years. One day, Baba called Pradhan and asked him to construct a small tank. Pradhan was thus the first to be involved in the building of a Samadhi for Baba.

### **The Samadhi**

It was the year 1918. Pradhan's wife, who was living in her native village, had a dream in which Baba appeared to have passed away. Pradhan was in Shirdi. On waking up, Pradhan's wife started crying over the passing of Baba in her dream. At that moment she heard a voice in the house declaring: "Don't say that Baba has died. Say that Baba is in a state of Samadhi." "Samadhi" means equal mindedness. "Life and death are alike. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss are the same. Hence, there is no such thing as death for Baba"—this was what the voice declared. When she was trying to find out wherefrom this voice came, she received a message from her husband conveying the news of the passing of Baba. That occurred on Vijayadashami

body. Although this year Vijayadashami falls on September 29, in the year of Baba's Samadhi the date was different.

### **Sai's advent: the mystery**

On account of the passage of time and circumstances, no one knew the exact dates of Baba's birth and passing. In this context, the mystery relating to Baba's birth should be noted. One devotee wrote a poem (Sanskrit) in which he offered his "salutations to the One born in Pathri, who lived in Dwarakamayi and who was the protector of devotees."

When Gangabhavadya and Devagiriamma were living in Pathri village, they were worshippers of Ishwara and Parvati. They had no offspring for a long time. They intensified their prayers. Gangabhavadya used to ply boats near the village for a living. One night, when it was raining heavily, Gangabhavadya left his house to take care of the boats, telling his wife that he would not be returning in the night. After the husband had left, having an early meal, Devagiriamma took her food and went to bed. At 9 p.m. there was a knock at the door. Devagiriamma opened the door, expecting the likely return of her husband. A very old man entered the house. He pleaded: "It is very cold outside. Please permit me, mother, to stay inside." As a pious woman, she allowed him to stay in the inside verandah and went in after bolting the inner door. A little while later, there was a knock on the inner door. She opened the door. The old man said: "I am feeling hungry; give me some food." Finding that there was no food, the woman mixed some flour with curds and gave it to him. There was again another knock after some time. When she opened the door, the old man said: "My legs are aching. Mother, will you massage them?" Devagiriamma went inside, sat in the prayer room and prayed: "Oh Mother! Why are you testing me like this? What should I do? Should I serve him or refuse?" Going out of the house by the backdoor she went in search of someone who could be engaged to render this service. No one was available. Again there was a knock by the old man. At the same time a woman knocked at the backdoor. She said: "It appears you came to my house and sought some feminine help. I was away at the time. Please let me know what service I should render." Feeling happy that Goddess Parvati herself had sent the woman in response to her prayers, Devagiriamma sent the newcomer to the verandah for serving the old man and closed the door. The old man and the new woman were none other than Parameshwara and Parvati, the divine couple. Parameshwara told Parvati: "Fulfill the cherished desires of this lady." Parvati told Easwara: "You are the Supreme. Please shower your grace on her yourself." Easwara said: "I came to test her. You came in answer to her prayers. Hence you must bless her." There was a knock on the door again. This time Devagiriamma promptly opened the door, because of the presence of another woman there. Parvati and Parameshwara appeared before her in their divine form. Unable to contain her joy, Devagiriamma fell at their feet. Parvati then blessed her: "I grant you a son to maintain the lineage and a daughter for kanyakadana (a girl to be offered in marriage)." Then she fell at the feet of Easwara. Easwara said: "I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I shall take birth as your third child." When Devagiriamma got up, the Divine couple were not there. Feeling ecstatic over this experience, Devagiriamma was eagerly expecting the return of her husband in the morning to relate to him the whole story.

had happened the previous night. The husband said: "Devagiri! What is all this fanciful tale! It is all a dream. Parvati and Parameshwara appearing before you and giving darshan! It is pure fantasy!" Gangabhavadya dismissed the whole episode as incredible and fanciful.

### **The Birth of Sai**

But, as the years passed, Devagiramma became enceinte and a son was born. A year later a daughter was born. Gangabhavadya was convinced that the birth of the two children was the result of the blessing conferred by Parvati and Parameshwara. He told his wife: "You had the good fortune (to be blessed by the Divine couple). I did not have that luck." When Devagiramma conceived again, Gangabhavadya began to feel an urge to give up hearth and home and go in search of the Divine couple. He announced to his wife that he was leaving for the forest to do penance. The devoted wife that she was, Devagiramma decided to follow him, though she was in the ninth month of her pregnancy. After proceeding some distance, she developed labour pains. She was delivered of a boy. Wrapping the babe in a piece of cloth, she left the child by the roadside and followed her husband.

Because of this circumstance, no one knew who the parents of the child were. The Fakir who found the child brought him home and took care of him. Baba's life-story is known only from the time of his arrival in Shirdi.

### **Devotees and Disciples**

In 1917, Baba once called Abdul Baba, Nana Chandorkar, Mhalsapathi, Das Ganu and others and started asking each of them: "Do you know who you are?" Each of them replied: "I am your shishya (disciple)." Baba said: "Nonsense! Don't use that term any longer. I have no disciples in this world. I have countless devotees. You do not recognise the distinction between a disciple and a devotee. Anyone can be a devotee. But that is not the case with the disciple. A disciple is one who carries out implicitly the commands of the guru (the preceptor). The mark of the shishya is total devotion to the preceptor. Only the man who says, 'I have none in the world other than the preceptor,' is a disciple. How far have you respected my injunctions? How are you entitled to claim that you are my disciples? Only the one who follows me like my shadow can claim to be my disciple. The devotee is one who prays to the Lord wherever he may be. Hence, there is a big difference between a disciple and a devotee. The disciple and the preceptor are like two bodies with one spirit. The disciple should have no sense of separateness from the preceptor. He should feel, 'I and you are one.' There are no such disciples to be found in the world. There are millions of devotees, but no disciples."

### **Baba and Shyam**

On hearing this, Shyam was in deep pain. He felt within himself: "Apart from serving at your feet, I have no other concern." Baba then went into another room and called Shyam inside. "In this entire world, for me you are the only disciple. All others are only devotees." At that moment, Shyam fell at the feet of Baba, and cried out, "You alone, you alone" (are my refuge) and breathed his last.

Shyam passed away he shed three drops of tears. The devotees present there said: "Swami! Why do you feel so grieved? All are in your hands." Baba replied: "Dear boys! I am not grieving at all. Almost all his sins had been wiped out already. By the three tear drops I shed, the remaining sins (of Shyam) have been washed away."

All that Baba said or did was for the good of the devotees alone.

Towards the end, Abdul Baba came to Baba. Baba told him: "I shall appear again and give you darshan." "When will that be?" asked Abdul. Baba told him: "It will be after eight years."

"The first advent of Sai was in Maharashtra. The second advent will be in Madras," Baba said. It should be noted that when this form (Sathya Sai) made its advent, Andhra Pradesh was part of Madras Presidency.

### **Advent of Sathya Sai**

When he was asked, in what form the next advent would take place, Shirdi Baba told Abdul Baba alone: "I will give darshan in the name of Sathya for upholding Truth." That is the present advent. (Applause).

The two bodies are different, but the Divinity is one. The first advent was for revealing Divinity. The second advent is to awaken the Divinity (in human beings). The next advent is for propagating Divinity. The three Sais are: Shirdi Sai, Sathya Sai and Prema Sai (cheers).

The reason for relating all this is that today happens to be the birthday of Shirdi Baba (September 28, 1835). Baba attained Samadhi in 1918. Bodies are transient. These vestures are assumed only for the sake of devotees. Unless the Divine comes with a form, no one can develop faith in the Formless. The Divine in human form is the preparation for comprehending the Formless Absolute.

The truth about God cannot be understood by anyone. He is infinitely vast. He is minuter than the atom. No one can know what is the macrocosm and what is the microcosm. Because of this mystery, one devotee sang

*Can any one unravel your mystery, oh Krishna!  
You are vaster than the vastest;  
You are subtler than the atom.  
All the countless beings in the world  
Cannot grasp your baffling mystery  
How can anyone know your infinite Cosmic form, Oh Krishna!*

Nor is that all.

*Among the great thieves, you are the greatest,*

The ordinary thieves take away wealth and riches. But this extraordinary Divine thief steals the hearts of people. Hence, when God is described as "Chitha Chora" (the stealer of hearts) or "Badaa Chitha Chora" (the greatest stealer of hearts), the appellation is not derogatory but delightful.

If you call anyone, "You thief!" he will get angry. But when you sing "Chitha chora Yashoda ke Bal" ("Oh thief of hearts, Yashoda's darling everyone rejoices. The "chitha chora" confers delight on those whose hearts he steals. But the "Vitha Chora" ("the one who robs you of your wealth") causes you misery. The mundane thieves take away your wealth. But the Lord steals your hearts. It is not easy, therefore, for anyone to understand the ways of the Lord. When one cannot understand the ways of the Divine, it is best to keep silent and at least refrain from indulging in grievous misinterpretation. Seek, therefore, to understand the ways of God and through devotion and worship strive to experience the Divine.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi nahi*" in which the entire gathering joined.)

**From Bhagavan's discourse at the Prasanthi Mandir, on 28-9-1990**

*THE WAYS OF THE AVATAR:*

### **How Bhagavan's Grace Works**

Fifty years ago, Bhagavan, who was then a 14-year old lad, declared that He is Sai Baba, and that He had come at the call of His devotees. Little did the world realise then that the Avatar has descended on the earth for the sake of humanity. Bhagavan assured His devotees in an earlier Avatar that He would incarnate from time to time to protect the righteous and punish the wicked. But the Lord in the present Avatar has come, not armed with Shankha, Chakra and Gadha, the most lethal weapons of the Lord, but with only one weapon that hurts none, that is, the weapon of 'love', which is more powerful than any weapon. He declared that in this age, when most men have taken to unrighteous paths, there is no question of destroying them, but that He will reform them through love and love alone.

Sanathana Dharma is the foundation, and the five basic Human Values, namely, Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa, are the pillars on which the edifice of 'Sai Religion' rests. Sai religion, if the term religion in its literal sense of binding man-to-God is accepted, is the essence of all faiths and religions including those of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Sai considers that constant practice of these values is more essential than blind faith in a bunch of doctrines.

themselves is 'Seva'. Seva is the most rewarding form of austerity and the most satisfying. By serving the needy with all humility, the ever-growing ego in a man is burnt away.

Bhagavan is showing the path as to how education should be imparted. He lays emphasis on education blended with spirituality. Education must foster and promote the precious wealth of moral strength and spiritual knowledge and purify the inner impulses of man.

Swami says that the very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes one free from diseases. The body and mind are closely inter-related. Swami points out to doctors that, even more than the drugs they prescribe, the sweet, soft words they speak and the love and sympathy they evince towards their patients can be more effective in curing ailments.

### **Grateful for God's Grace**

The hospital is for those who have faith in drugs and doctors. But what can drugs and doctors do without the Grace of God? The world is a huge hospital and the people are the patients. Some are writhing with pain of envy, some are bloated with pride, some are losing sleep with hate, some have become blind through miserliness, some are struck down by selfishness and every one has some illness or the other. Most of us have experienced Bhagavan's grace and our physical, mental or spiritual problems have been removed. He removes our sufferings so that we are physically in a position to work for the good of society. Those of us who have received the Grace of Bhagavan should not forget this and rest content with our own well-being; we should not forget our duty to society.

Bhagavan's Grace is showered on some, like a downpour of rain that comes without asking. Some have to engage themselves in continuous Sadhana and win Swami's Grace, like digging a well or a channel to obtain water. Persons belonging to the first category, who are the beneficiaries of His Grace without asking for it, owe a debt of gratitude to the Divine which can be redeemed only by engaging themselves in service to society throughout their lives.

I belong to the first category of persons, who received Baba's Grace without any Sadhana. When I was a lad of nine years, I was struck with infantile paralysis and both my legs got paralysed. I was treated for six months without any result. We were ultimately told that it was incurable. We lost all hopes of recovery. Some kind-hearted person told us to pray to Baba and we did so. The response was immediate and the same night, I could get up and start walking. Thus, by Swami's Grace, a life condemned to a permanent disability, was turned into something which could be fruitful and be of service to society.

### **The only saviour**

When the world is on the brink of disaster, where violence is the order of the day and terrorism has become the means to achieve the desired ends, the only Saviour of humanity from this calamity is Bhagavan. Millions of His devotees spread all over the world have realised that the Avatar has descended on the earth to save humanity. We can rest assured that the mission of the Avatar will be fulfilled and the world will be saved from the present disaster. We, the humble

Bhagavan.

—*Justice J. Eswara Prasad,*  
Judge, Andhra Pradesh High Court, Hyderabad

## **Prasanthi Nilayam Becomes Jyoti Nilayam**

Coming events, it is said, cast their shadows before. In the divine precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam, it is the reverse. Coming events here cast their lights before.

Prasanthi Nilayam and all the buildings in the complex have received a facelift on the eve of the coming sixty-fifth birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Wherever one's eyes are cast, there is something new. All buildings have been painted anew in three colours. The Mandir looks glorious with its coat of fresh paint and its gleaming gopurams.

But more than all these is the fact that the whole Nilayam is bathed in brilliant light at night. The new illuminations for the Mandir and all the streets within the Nilayam complex have completely transformed Prasanthi Nilayam into a Jyoti Nilayam. The new lamps, with their brilliant big round domes, appear like so many little moons beckoning the devotees to illumine their minds during their stay in Prasanthi Nilayam in the presence of Bhagavan.

The decorative aspect is perhaps the least of the varied activities that have been going on at Prasanthi Nilayam since last April. A whole series of new multi-storeyed apartments have been coming up at a rate that would normally be impossible, having regard to the logistics of building construction in the country. Engineers and workmen have been racing against time to get over 250 apartments ready well before the birthday.

### **Giant statue of Hanuman**

Engineers and sculptors have been at work on a giant 65-foot statue of Hanuman on the top of Vidyagiri, overlooking the Hill View Stadium. The imposing statue will not only be an artistic marvel, but an inspiring figure for millions of devotees who will be seeking the blessings of Bhagavan. The giant statue represents Hanuman carrying the Sanjiva hill, which is considered the abode of every kind of life-restoring herb. When during the battle between Lakshmana and Indrajit, Lakshmana had been rendered unconscious and was believed to be almost dead, Hanuman was sent to the Himalayas to bring some herbal plants from the Sanjiva hill. To avoid wasting time on the search for the life-restoring herbs, Hanuman lifted the entire Sanjiva hill itself and took it to Lanka. Bhagavan Baba has repeatedly held out Hanuman as the supreme exemplar of devotion through absolute dedicated service to the Lord. The Hanuman statue on the top of Vidyagiri, which will dominate the surrounding country for miles around, will be a

realisation.

Bhagavan has initiated many other improvements to make Vidyagiri a holy hill, the very sight of which will have a cleansing and inspiring effect on the devotees. The figure of Ganga on the head of Siva will throw a jet of water, which by its continuous flow will animate as it were the serene figure of Siva in yogic pose. Besides the figure of Siva, there are the inspiring statues of Jesus and Zoroaster on the eastern side of the Hill, while the charming figure of Krishna playing on the flute stands on a separate pedestal at the south-eastern end of the Stadium.

The galleries adjacent to the Santhi Vedika and on Vidyagiri have been extended to accommodate more devotees.

### **Spiritual museum**

The greatest attraction in November will be the new Spiritual Museum close to the imposing Administrative building. With its three striking gopurams and its four floors, containing various exhibits relating to all the different faiths, from the Vedic times to the present, the Museum will be a unique symbol of human unity, embracing people of all faiths and climes, and expressing in the most impressive form the supreme message of Bhagavan Baba-the divine unity of all mankind.

At the more mundane level, the infrastructure of facilities and amenities for the lakhs of devotees who are expected to participate in the Birthday Celebrations and the Fifth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, is being enlarged and improved in various directions.

About five kilometres from Prasanthi Nilayam an aerodrome is getting ready for the use of Vayudoot aircraft. A three kilometre bypass road will divert all the traffic to and from Prasanthi Nilayam, avoiding the narrow and tortuous lanes of Brahmanapalli.

A new bus terminal, with its architecture in harmony with the sacred architecture of Prasanthi Nilayam, was opened by Bhagavan on October 17. The Chief Minister, Dr. M. Channa Reddy, and other Ministers were present at the function. The spacious bus stand will be a boon to the thousands of bus passengers coming to the Nilayam.

The Nilayam canteen is being geared up to cope with the requirements of several lakhs of devotees who will be staying for a week during the birthday celebrations. A very large area is being got ready for the temporary accommodation of devotees. Water supply and toilet facilities are being expanded as much as possible.

Compared to what devotees had to experience twenty years ago, when they had to make do with whatever accommodation or food they could get, the facilities this time will be incomparably more satisfying. But even so, a considerable amount of discipline, self-restraint, forbearance and mutual consideration will be needed on the part of the devotee: to ensure that the



## Baba—the Divine Sadguru

Bhagavan Baba has a myriad facets. While His innumerable miracles and marvellous cures of incurable diseases have figured prominently in the accounts of devotees and in the growing number of books on Baba, the epoch-making role of Bhagavan as a synthesiser of all creeds and faiths and as the unifier of mankind on a spiritual basis has not received the attention it deserves.

Shortly after World War I, Sri Aurobindo wrote a book on "The Ideal of Human Unity." He emphasised in it that "Fraternity"—one of the three ideals proclaimed in the French Revolution—is not a political or asocial ideal but a spiritual ideal. We can feel ourselves as brothers only if we believe in the concept that we are the children of one God. The western world, in its obsession with the socio-politico-economic ideals of liberty and equality, totally ignored the ideal of fraternity. With the result that most of the French revolutionaries ended their lives on the guillotine and the nation-states that came into existence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were perpetually at war with each other.

The ideal of human unity still eludes us despite the vast array of international organisations that have come into existence since the end of World War II, with the United Nations at their apex.

It is against this background of a long and despairing striving for human unity that Bhagavan Baba's Avataric mission should be viewed.

It is supremely significant that the refrain of the last verse in the Arati prayer for Bhagavan hails Him as "Sadgurudeva"—the Divine Teacher of the Supreme Truth. All other attributes ascribed to Bhagavan relate to His divine puissance. But the true significance of His advent consists not merely in the manifestation of His supra-human powers, but in His role as the Divine Guru who has come to awaken in erring and groping mortals the truth about their essential divinity.

When, in the Arathi song, we say: "Jai! Sadgurudeva!" (Victory to the Divine Teacher of the Supreme Reality!) What is the victory we wish for Him? There is nothing He wants from any one. He seeks no earthly dominion or power. What then is the victory that will please Him? It is mankind's response to His Divine epochal mission that will rejoice Him. By painful evolution through millennia, mankind has emerged from the animal to the human. The next step in evolution is for mankind in the mass to discover its divinity—which has hitherto been confined to a few resolute and dedicated individuals. Never before in the annals of man has there been such a

Presence by persons in different part: of the world, through inexplicable incidents and happenings. If streams of Chinese, Europeans, Americans, Africans and Asians continually pour into Prasanthi Nilayam for "darshan, sparshan and sambhashan" (seeing, touching and speaking to Baba) the common impulse that is animating all of them is a spiritual quest—the hunger to experience God as a personal reality.

This is the greatest "miracle" of Bhagavan—that He has awakened in millions of people belonging to different faiths, races and nations an awareness of the living reality of God as the Supreme Power permeating and sustaining the universe. When that awareness leads, through Sadhana and Abhyasa, to a godly way of life among mankind, that will be the victory of Bhagavan's mission.

This year is the Golden Jubilee of the great Annunciation by Baba of the purpose of His advent. On October 20, 1940, He threw away His books, left His elder brother's home and declared: "My devotees are calling Me." That was the beginning of a Divine ministry, which has gathered momentum over the past fifty years and is transforming the lives of millions of people all over the world. No other messiah, prophet or world teacher, or even Avatar (in Indian terms) has accomplished what Baba has done in His own life-time, with no organised fanfare or publicity.

The most remarkable feature of Bhagavan Baba's teaching is that, while it is based on the immemorial message of the Vedic sages, it is presented in a form that appeals to the modern mind. Scientists "who came to scoff, remained to pray." It is significant that a very large number of Bhagavan's devotees are doctors—whose profession it is to deal with problems of life and death. The fact that so many intelligent doctors are convinced that there is a basic Reality beyond the physical, the biological and the material and that this spiritual Reality is fundamental to human existence is of supreme significance. When a scientific and technological world, which is intoxicated by the spirit of power (over the material environment), begins to realise the power of the Spirit, that will be the beginning of the greatest revolution in the history of mankind. This is the spiritual revolution to which Bhagavan beckons all humanity.

—"*Bharadwaja*"

*An education which does not instill in the students human values and develop in them the qualities of selflessness, absence of ego, unostentatiousness and true love is utterly worthless, observed Bhagavan Baba, Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in His address to the Ninth Convocation of the Institute held in the magnificent Hill View Stadium on November 22, 1990.*

*The President of India, Sri R. Venkataraman, was the Chief Guest and delivered the Convocation Address.*

*In the course of His discourse, which dealt with all the major problems of education in the country, Bhagavan Baba said*

*Students! Embodiments of Love! Teachers and Patrons of Education!*

Education lends beauty to man. Education is man's most precious wealth. It confers happiness and renown on man. It is the teacher of teachers. When a man travels abroad, education stands by him like a kinsman. Education is adored by rulers, not wealth. One without education is an animal.

Degrees alone do not signify education. Education that is confined to the physical sciences is a travesty of true education. Together with knowledge of the natural sciences, one has to acquire humility, discipline and a good character. Everyone should recognise this sacred character of education.

The student of today is concerned with acquiring wealth, strength and position, but not good qualities. Education is meant to enable one to acquire what are good qualities. Every student should take note of this. Education is not intended merely to stuff the brain with information. It has to transform the heart and make it pure. This sacred truth has been forgotten.

Formidable problems have cropped up in educational institutions today. Educational institutions, which should serve to promote wholesome and progressive tendencies among the citizens, are going in the wrong way. The discipline that should prevail in them has deteriorated. The sacred feelings that should inspire educational establishments have disappeared. Reverence and respect are not to be seen. Money has been elevated to the primary place. This means that in institutions in which Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge, should reign supreme, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, has been installed. Knowledge that should be acquired by the heart is being garnered by money. This is a great threat to society. It is only when a student is filled with sacred thoughts that he will be able to serve society properly and make himself a better human being. The country will prosper only when those occupying the seats of power understand these problems properly.

implications of the five values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. These five terms are like the five life-breaths for a man. Not only that. They are also the five basic elements (Panchabbutas). Without these values, humanness will be destroyed. All other accomplishments are worthless without these values. For the mansion of Sanathana Dharma, these values are the walls supporting the edifice.

### **Nine Qualities**

The student today has to cultivate in this Kali age nine gem-like qualities: the spirit of sacrifice, humility, the spirit of selfless service to society, friendliness, discipline, adherence to truth, love, nonviolence and faith in God. The boys and girls who have these qualities alone will be the nation's treasure of virtue and ensure its future.

Dear students! Without these sacred qualities, all education is valueless. Does literacy or degree constitute education? Without wisdom and virtue can one be termed an educated person? True education is that which fosters the sense of oneness, draws out one's divine qualities and promotes the blossoming of human personality. The eternal verities are being given the go-by. Man is getting alienated from Nature. Good practices are giving place to bad habits. Education is reaching its nadir.

### **Matter and Energy**

Man should be prepared to make any amount of effort in the pursuit of knowledge. Education today is concerned with worldly comforts, but it should seek to promote, in addition to worldly knowledge, concern for spiritual development. Education has two important characteristics. One is exposition of facts relating to any subject. The other is the unfoldment of the individual's personality. The first is concerned with matter. The second is with energy. Education is a combination of the two. It is a combination of worldly and spiritual knowledge. Education cannot be confined to stuffing the head. It has to melt the heart, refine it and turn it Godwards. It is not enough to make a man of the student. He has to be transformed into an ideal human being. He must be made compassionate. Every effort should be made to utilise education for the purpose of divinising man.

### **Four Hall-Marks**

Man should stand out as a seeker of truth. The student should practise the truths he has learnt and use them for the good of society. Citizens may be interested in students' problems, but students should not get involved in the citizens' politics. Students should aspire to promote the nation's well-being, its security and happiness. Selflessness, absence of egoism, unostentatiousness and true love should be the hall-marks of a true student. A student's life should radiate light all around. "Vidya" means light. It is to make this illumination available to the world that students should pursue education. Students should desire to enjoy the bliss derived from education (Vidya) and not the pleasures of worldly objects (Vishaya). Students should aim at being masters of their senses and not their servants.

expound new theories. But he should really try to find out what he has accomplished as a human being. Without the cultivation of human values, all explorations and speculations are of no use.

### **Triple Failure**

Today the educational system, not only in India but in all countries, has taken the wrong turn. No single person is responsible for this situation. Parents have failed to bring up their children properly. The nation's leaders do not set them a good example. Even teachers have failed in their responsibilities. When we have exemplary parents, exemplary leaders and ideal teachers, students will be ideal students. Students, who are selfless, pure hearted and innocent by nature, are being dragged into politics, their minds are getting filled with bitterness and hatred and their hearts are getting polluted. Students in no circumstance should get into politics. After completing your studies, if you take up a job or start a business, you may take to politics. In entering politics, you must do so to serve the nation and promote its welfare and integrity.

### **The Remedy**

Students today lack the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. The authorities feel that education is progressing in the country. There are more educational institutions and more students seem to be receiving education. But no one seems to bother whether they are really getting educated at all. Mere increase in the number of educational institutions is not enough. We must look at the quality of education. Standards have to be raised. There are many reasons for deterioration in educational standards. Only when education is treated as an autonomous and independent undertaking can the problem of standards be properly dealt with. Educational policies are changed with every change in the Education Ministry at the Centre or in the States (cheers). Frequent changes in educational policy are responsible for the fall in educational standards. Changes in the Ministry or the personnel at the top should not affect the core of education. It is essential to separate education and place it under the control of experienced and dedicated educationists. Without this basic change, whatever may be done to increase educational institutions is a waste of money.

What is the progress that has been achieved in education? Crores are being spent on education. What is the return for all this expenditure? There is a general decline in character and students have no respect for teachers; gratitude is at a discount. This is the "progress" that is witnessed today.

How can the nation progress? Everything depends on the young students of today. Education is not confined to school or college. It is a process that goes on all through one's life. Students! Develop pure thoughts and see that you do not cause any difficulties to your fellow-students. Strive to please your parents. Gratitude is the foremost quality in a student. Show your gratitude to your parents to whom you owe everything in your life.

### **Love the Motherland**

Students! Human life is very precious and in it the days of youth are even more precious. Every student must cultivate humility and reverence. He must understand the state of the

engineers or doctors, to apply for jobs abroad as soon as they get their degrees. Serve your Motherland first. Earn honour and respect here. Take a pledge to serve your Motherland. Some people imagine that they can pursue their higher studies abroad. But what happens is that after going there, they forget even their parents. What is the use of such ungrateful persons going abroad? The students alone are not to blame for this. The Government is also responsible. The Government should realise that our students are being spoilt by being sent abroad and should restrict the number of passports issued to them (cheers). Are there not facilities for higher studies within India? Is there not enough science and technology here? The students claim that they are acquiring special knowledge. But all that they learn is pride and ostentation. Sri Rama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself." You must love your mother, whether she is beautiful or otherwise.

Students! Realise the greatness of Bharat. There is no need to disparage other countries. Only be prepared to sacrifice everything for your Motherland. Students today have no patriotic feelings. They only love themselves (their bodies). Deha (the body) and Desha (the country) are intimately related to each other. Recognise the unity of the two.

### **Greatness of Bharat**

Realise at the outset the greatness of Bharatiya culture. It is an ideal to the world. It confers spiritual bliss (Atma-Aanandam). Without recognising this, all your education is worth nothing. You are acquiring book knowledge, but are not putting into practice what you have learnt. It is most essential to practise unity in thought, word and deed—which is the mark of all great people. Recognising the all-embracing character of Bharatiya culture—which covers every aspect of life from the spiritual to the physical—you have to live up to its message. Develop the spirit of love in your hearts.

### **Duty to the alma mater**

Students! Wherever you may go remember your Institute and behave in a manner befitting its alumni. That is the gratitude you can show to the Institute. We do not ask from you anything. Our only desire is that you should become ideal students. Only then will your studies here be justified and you will be making your lives worthwhile. Eschew selfishness. Only the spirit of sacrifice can confer immortality. Help ever, hurt never.

There is something wrong with our system of examinations and promotions. An examinee is "passed" if he gets 30 percent marks in a subject. This is improper. If a man is entrusted with a hundred tasks and if he fails in 70 of them, is he to be recognised as having performed well? A few mistakes may be excused, but if one commits 70 mistakes does he deserve to be passed? This is wrong. Even with regard to the 30 percent pass marks there appear to be various manipulations. All kinds of "grace marks" are given. Why, then, should the student study at all? It is because of such practices that educational institutions have lost all credibility. What can you make of students who "pass" in this manner? What kind of national leaders will they be? Hence it is essential to reform the examination system and raise educational standards and performance. There should be no room for compromises and relaxations in the educational field

at every stage. Students should be properly corrected and encouraged to study well. A teacher is one who teaches what is good and wholesome for the student. A real student is one who respects the teacher. In days of yore, the most pure and sacred relations existed between preceptors and pupils. Today, the talk is all about freedom. But freedom should be within limits. The end of wisdom is freedom. The end of culture is perfection. The end of education is character. The end of knowledge is Love. (cheers) Freedom today has degenerated into disrespect and irreverence with the result that students are getting conceited.

Dear students! I wish that you should go out into the world as ideal students and serve the nation well. Securing degrees is not enough. You have to make your knowledge available to others. This is the purpose of education. Remember God, love the nation and experience bliss. This should be your aim.

The President of India, Sri Venkataraman, addressed you today and spoke about the sages and saints of India. You must pay heed to the words of elders and try to live up to them to the extent you can. Eschew all differences of caste, creed and nationality and cultivate oneness of spirit. All are one: be alike to everyone. Realise the divinity within you and recognise that it is in one and all.

(After Bhagavan's discourse, the Institute Band played the National Anthem and Bhagavan and others left the stadium in a procession.)

(A fuller report of the proceedings of the Convocation, including the speech of the Vice-Chancellor and the Convocation address of the President will appear in our January issue. Ed.)

**JANMADINA SANDESH:**

### **“Restore the Glory of Bharat”**

*Giving an illuminating spiritual meaning to the term "Bharat", Bhagavan Baba, in His inspiring discourse in the vast Hill View Stadium on November 23, called upon Bharatiyas to realise the immemorial greatness of Bharat as the spiritual preceptor of mankind and restore its pristine glory by living up to the teachings of its great sages and heroes.*

For the lakhs of devotees from all parts of the world gathered in the crowded amphitheatre, the entire celebration was an unforgettable experience. The entire atmosphere was surcharged with "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram". Everything around was redolent with holiness, from the exquisite Santhi Vedika, from where Bhagavan delivered His discourse, to Vidyagiri, with its imposing 65-foot figure of Hanuman carrying the Sanjiva hill, the inspiring colourful figures of Venugopala, Siva in His yogic pose, Zoroaster proclaiming his great message, Jesus, the very picture of compassion, and the magnificent educational and spiritual edifices all around.

celebrations, conferred His benediction on the lakhs of devotees, who had come from far and near, to have His darshan and listen to His nectarine discourses.

The entire gathering was thrilled when Bhagavan arrived at the Stadium in His gleaming motorised chariot. His arrival was heralded by the firing of shots in adoration, which echoed from all the hills, and by the sudden cascading of water from the top of Vidyagiri to the statue of Siva. It was symbolic of the descent of Ganga from the heavens on to the head of Siva in response to the prayer of Bhagiratha, the famous ancestor of Sri Rama. Bhagavan's arrival was greeted by the chanting of Vedic hymns and the playing of the band by the students of the Sathya Sai Institute.

After getting down from the chariot and waving His *abhayahastha* to the vast concourse of devotees, Bhagavan went up the Santhi Vedita. Swami Karunyananda, the centenarian devotee of Bhagavan, offered a rose to Swami as a mark of homage to Him on His birthday.

Sri K. R. Prasad, Member of the Central Trust, spoke on the unique significance of the Sai advent at the present critical stage in the world's history and looked forward to great global transformation in the years ahead.

Bhagavan then delivered His divine discourse.

### **Bhagavan's Discourse**

#### *Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

From the most ancient times Bharatiyas considered Truth as God, loved it, fostered it and protected it and thereby achieved divinity. Bharatiyas were devoted to Truth, wedded to Dharma (Righteousness) and esteemed morality in society as the foremost duty. Today because people have forgotten Truth and Righteousness they are unable to solve national problems or end communal differences. We have the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west and both merge in the Indian Ocean. Likewise, Bharat exemplifies the combination of worldly prosperity and spiritual progress. Bharat is the country, where the unity of the Jiva (the individual Spirit) and the Brahman (the Cosmic Spirit) was established.

When we refer to Bharat, the term is not related to any particular individual, country or circumstance. Although many different derivative meanings have been given to the term by different authorities, these are only their individual interpretations. According to some Puranas, the name Bharat was given to this country because it was ruled by a King called Jada Bharata. Another explanation is that the same is derived from that of Bharata, son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, who ruled over the country. Some others may explain that the name is attributed to India because Sri Rama's brother, Bharata, enthroned the sacred sandals of Rama and administered the country.



Bharata was given that name, and prior to the naming of Dushyanta's son and Rama's brother. It is obvious that the name Bharat existed from immemorial times.

### **All are Bharatiyas**

The Goddess Saraswathi is described as Saraswati, Bhagavati and Bharati. Saraswati means the Goddess of Speech ("Vaakdevata"). Hence every man born with the gift of speech is a Bharata. The name is not associated with any particular individual or country. The term Bharat is applicable to the entire human family. "Bha" refers to the Principle represented by Divine Knowledge. "Self-knowledge" is "Bha". "Bharatas" are those who take delight in Self-knowledge. Hence everyone who shines by his own self-luminous power is a Bharata.

The word is also derived from a root which means that a Bharatiya is one who is skilled in warfare ("Sangramam"). What does "Sangramam" mean? It means conquest of the opposing forces confronting him by his divine spiritual power. "Balam Bharam Bhavathi Bibbartheh" are the words used in Nirukta. "Balam" refers to "Brahma-balam" (the Atmic strength), "Thejo-balam" (the strength of inner light), "Shastra-balam" (the strength derived from knowledge of the scriptures). Bharata is one who has these triple kinds of strength. The Sruti (Veda) defines "Bala" (strength) as yajna. It follows that Bharatiya is one who has acquired strength by the performance of sacrifices (yajnas). Hence Bharatiya is one who acquired divine strength by the power of the Spirit ("Atma-balam"). So, whoever one may be, whatever one's country, he has to acquire this strength of the Spirit.

### **Greatness of Bharat**

Bharat (India) is a naturally well endowed country. It is the primary source of all morality, spirituality and worldly wisdom. It is a land of plenty ("Annapoorna"). To regard such a sacred land as a poor country is a mental aberration. We are not a destitute nation. It is a richly endowed country. If this had not been a wealthy country, why did the Mughals, the Europeans and others invade this country? Though we have been well endowed, we have not been able to safeguard our riches. What is the reason? It is because the people have lacked unity.

Freedom has been won, but unity has not been achieved. It is because there is no unity, Bharat is subject to all kinds of calamities. Ghazni Mahmud invaded the Punjab and took away from the country 700 maunds of gold as plunder. In Nagarakota there was a hall thirty yards by fifteen yards entirely built of gold. The entire hall was taken away by the invaders.

In spite of being born in such a land of wealth, it is a pity that people do not take pride in their country. Wherever you turn, you see only rampant selfishness ("swartham"). Embodiments of Divine, Love ! Eschew selfishness. Promote unity. Enjoy the bliss of harmony.

It is high time you realised what a sacred country Bharat is. In this holy land, nothing is lacking. "What cannot be found in Bharat cannot be found elsewhere" is an ancient saying. In spite of these multifarious endowments, this country is being regarded as poor and backward.

Atmic bliss. We can experience Brahman only when we can get rid of *bhrama* (delusion).

### **Get Rid of Weakness**

When everything is available within Bharat, why go abegging to other countries? Everything has originated from Bharat. Hence, having taken birth in Bharat, strive to promote the glory of Bharat. Every devotee should take a pledge to protect and promote the greatness of Bharat. Like an elephant that does not know its own strength, Bharatiyas are unaware of their power. Despite their myriad capacities, they are behaving as weaklings like an elephant before its mahout. You have to get rid of this weakness.

Bharat has produced many great sages and saints who have taught profound truths. It is a land of heroes who fought for the freedom of the country. It has been the leader in the knowledge of various arts and sciences, in music and literature. It is most unfortunate that many born in this sacred land are unaware of its unique greatness. Love of the mother is a nectarine quality. What a pity that love of the Motherland should be absent!

You must love the Motherland. Resolve to dedicate your lives to the service of the Motherland. Unity is the primary requisite. People celebrate the birthdays of our great ones, but few care to follow their teachings. There is nothing great about celebrating birthdays. Every effort must be made to understand their teachings and act upto them.

Develop the quality of love. Fill your entire life with love. This was the prayer which the Gopikas addressed to Krishna in the former yuga. A life without love is utterly barren. Man is the embodiment of love. Love has to be directed towards what is true. Such love is man's life-breath.

### **Love and Serve**

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Esteeming love as the essence of divinity, you have to engage yourselves in loving service to society. You have to restore the glory of Bharat. Bharat has been in the past the preceptor for all nations. All other people are coming to Bharat to acquire peace and enlightenment. In this situation, it is a great misfortune that Bharatiyas themselves are not conscious of their greatness. Bharatiya history reflects the achievements of Bharat in the realms of the physical, the mental, the spiritual and all other aspects of life. We have to fill our hearts with this heritage.

Today we are dedicating our lives to material and worldly comforts. Of what avail are all these appurtenances? We have to realise the Atmic principle which is the source of enduring bliss. All the knowledge that is acquired, all the positions one may get are of no use if there is no love in the heart. The acquisition of good qualities is more essential than the pursuit of knowledge.

Why is it that so many lakhs of people have gathered here today? There must be some compelling reason for it. You must be seeking something which you have not found in your native place. There would be no need for you to incur all this expenditure if you could find what you wanted in your own place. Here there is Divine Love. It is this powerful magnet of Divine Love which has been attracting all the iron filings in the form of human beings. Not a single invitation was sent to anyone. No one was asked to come. What has drawn all people here is the power of Divine Love, the bonds uniting hearts. At the root of all this is purity. Where there is purity, there love grows. When purity and love come together, there is bliss (Ananda), Whatever work we do, whatever sacrifices we perform, they are not of much use in the absence of love. In yoga practice, some types of breath control are adopted. The Kundalini yoga is also practised. All this is a form of business. In the breathing exercises, inhalation is described as 'Purakam', exhalation as 'Rechakam' and holding the breath as 'Kumbhakam'. These do not constitute the means to achieve yogic power. To breathe in all that is good is 'Purakam'. To give up all that is bad is 'Rechakam'. To retain in the heart what is good is 'Kumbhakam'. Everyone is qualified to practise this kind of yoga. This divine type of yoga should be practised by every human being. This is the primary goal of every Bharatiya.

This Puttaparthi is a small hamlet. How has this village attained this eminent state? Each one can find the answer for himself. This should not be considered as a yoga or a great piece of good fortune or a lucky accident. It is due to the power of thought. Every sacred thought has the power to find fulfillment. This is why Vedanta declared: "Yadbhaavam tadbhavati". ("As one thinks, that he becomes.") Hence, every man should develop good thoughts. Thereby he gets entitled to the right kind of fruits.

### **The Devotees' Penance**

Embodiments of Divine Love! Although in this Prasanthi Nilayam adequate facilities and conveniences were not available, and many who were used to various amenities had gathered here, you have submitted yourselves to a kind of yoga by which you have adjusted yourselves to all the inconveniences. You should regard this experience as a sadhana (spiritual exercise). Enjoying all comforts cannot constitute sadhana. It is through difficulties that you experience happiness. Happiness cannot be realised without going through trouble. Such difficulties must be regarded as a form of penance. Easy life cannot become a penance. The fact that so many lakhs of people have gathered here, putting up with many difficulties and Inconvenience, is striking testimony to their sense of unity.

### **Karmayogi Joga Rao**

Human effort is needed for achieving anything. In the improvement of accommodation and various amenities at Prasanthi Nilayam—over the past twenty years, what has been accomplished is the work of Joga Rao (cheers). As a member of the Central Trust for twenty years, he has laboured hard day and night ceaselessly to bring about these improvements in Prasanthi Nilayam. He is a Karma Yogi. He takes delight in work. Moreover, what he has been doing tirelessly night and day during the past twelve months is known only to Me and none else (cheers). He is not Col. Joga Rao. They call him "Colonel Jogi", but he is indeed a "Karma

even at this age he has laboured to provide as many amenities as possible, the devotees have been able to overcome their difficulties. To mark their appreciation of Joga Rao's services, the members of the Central Trust decided to honour him suitably. I do not regard Joga Rao as an outsider. But duty demands that a certain thing should be done. In honouring Joga Rao the Central Trust is discharging a duty. (Bhagavan then put kadiyams in gold round the wrists of Col. Joga Rao. The entire gathering cheered as Col. Joga Rao came to receive the kadiyams from the Divine hands. Bhagavan told Col. Joga Rao sotto voce that he should carry on the good work with the same energy.)

There should be many more Karmajivis and Karmayogis like Joga Rao in Bharat in the coming years. Everyone should become a Karmayogi. That Karma gets transformed into Dharma. That Karma will sanctify human life.

### **Is Bharat "Backward"?**

It is the duty of everyone to cultivate faith in the Divine, get immersed in Karmayoga and divinise his life. No Bharatiya should forget the sacredness of Bharat. Bharat is not at all a poor country. It is because this fact is not realised that the country is riddled with strife and disorder. Failing to distinguish between what is transient and what is permanent, people are ruining their lives in the pursuit of fleeting pleasures. For the sake of trivial and momentary benefits, people are sacrificing what is of lasting value.

At the time of attaining freedom, only 13 percent of the population was considered backward. This percentage has gone on increasing over the years and today it is 80 percent! In five or six years, it may become cent percent! This is not proper at all.

Bharat is not made up of "backward classes". Because for the sake of some petty concessions such classifications are being made. Foreign countries are regarding Bharat as a poverty-stricken country. Embodiments of Divine Love! Remember Bharat is a land of plenty. No country is so well endowed with resources as Bharat. Why, then, should we call ourselves a poor nation? Nor is that all. In the fields of education and medicine, we have to develop the spirit of sacrifice.

### **Make Education Free**

You all know how many students lost their lives (by self-immolation) a month ago. What is the reason? It was a protest against the system of reservation on a communal basis. We must seek to promote a system which will make education available freely to all. Education must be for the sake of learning. When that happens, these problems will not arise among students.

Here we have today the President of India, the Chief Minister and the Governor of Andhra Pradesh and other eminent persons. In the sphere of education, if we do not create new classifications like 'backward' and 'forward' (cheers) and establish a system of free education for all, without distinctions of rich or poor, the nation will make striking progress. We are wasting

immensely. Every spiritual organisation should also provide free education.

It is well known that the Tirupati Devasthanam has plenty of funds. Why should not the authorities there offer free education? How many crores are being wasted? It is because education is not free, not one of the students in the Devasthanam educational institutions cares to visit the temple. How can devotion grow? In the name of the Lord free education and medical relief should be provided.

### **New Hospital Project**

With this object in view, we decided yesterday to establish a big hospital here. Many persons appealed to me to set up the hospital in an urban centre. There are many medical institutions run as a business in several cities. When any educational or medical institution is established, the sole aim is to make a business of it. There are few who are ready to set up such institutions to provide free facilities for the poor. Therefore, from the start we decided to set up a hundred-crore hospital near Prasanthi Nilayam itself (cheers). Even as higher education is free here, "Higher medicine" also will be free. People spend some lakhs to get heart surgery done in the U.S. What is the plight of the poor? Who looks after them? If they go to the cities, they will not get even coloured water (mixtures). Recognising this fact, we have launched this big hospital project. Whether it is heart bypass operation, or a kidney transplant, or a lung operation or brain surgery, everything will be done free (cheers). This has been decided upon from the very starting of the project. The hospital will be opened on November 22, 1991 (cheers). No one can understand "Sai Sankalpa" (workings of the mind). Thought and action are simultaneous like the light and sound that come out when a gun is fired. Hence it is not easy for everyone to understand Sai's resolve.

### **The Sathya Sai Saga**

Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not regard what I am going to say as an exaggeration. There is not a trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do is only for the sake of others. I do not regard you as "others". All of you are My own people. Such an all-encompassing feeling cannot be found anywhere in the world. Have you seen anywhere else an organisation which has grown so stupendously in fifty years? In the case of earlier avatars, their fame grew only long after their passing. In the case of the present avatar, in His own life-time, a university, a big hospital, an aerodrome and many other things have been established for the benefit of the villagers and many more will follow in the years ahead (cheers). Many persons have doubts as to how all these are being accomplished. The advent (of this avatar) took place 64 years ago. All these years, this hand has not been stretched at any time to seek anything from anyone (cheers). I have not asked anyone. I will never ask anyone and there will never be an occasion for it. How then are these things happening? For any good work, there is no impediment in Bharat. When you want to do any good work wholeheartedly, money flows in torrents. The narrow-minded who undertake any work will never be satisfied. They cannot understand the actions of those who are large-hearted and broadminded.

within you. Regard all mankind with fraternal feelings. Recognise all as the children of God. Bear no ill-will or hatred towards anyone. Do not hurt anyone's feelings. Only such a large-hearted attitude will confer on you limitless bliss. If you are celebrating Swami's birthday, this is all that I desire from you. Have unity among yourselves. Strive to revive and promote the glory of Bharat.

### **"Always Happy"**

As I was coming here, some people greeted Me with the words: "Happy birthday! Happy birthday!" I am always happy. I need no "Happy" greetings. Convey your greetings of "Happy birthday" to those who are not happy. I am filled with infinite joy. I have never had any worry at any time or place. What is the reason? All things are transient like passing clouds. Why worry about them? We should not be elated or depressed by births or deaths. We came naked into the world. When we leave, we cannot leave our address with "our" kith and kin. How can they be "our kinsfolk". All these are worldly phenomena. As long as we live, we should spend our lives in harmony and fellow-feeling. All our difficulties can be overcome by contemplation on God. Forgetting God and immersing yourself in worldly concerns, what do you achieve? Have firm faith in God. Don't give room for differences of caste, creed and nationality. All names and forms belong to the Divine. All that you see is a manifestation of the Cosmic Form of the Lord. With firm faith in the Divine, chanting the Lord's name, redeem your lives.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajana binaa sukha santhi aahi*", in which the vast gathering in the stadium joined with full-throated gusto.)

**AVATAR VANI:**

**FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE:**

### **“Share in Bhagavan’s Love”**

*"My Love is My greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Then it becomes one. All of you should strive to develop the Seva Organisation from day to day. Let all join the organisation. Treat all of them as the children of God. Serve them in that spirit. You will experience Divinity very soon. Swami's Love will be with you always, in you, beside you and around you"; declared Bhagavan Baba, in His valedictory discourse to the Fifth World Conference of Sai Organisation on November 24th, in the vast Hill View Stadium.*

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the Conference on November 19th and addressed the Conference on the 20th and 21st. Over 50,000 delegates, Seva Dal members, and active workers attended the Conference from all parts of India and 90 overseas countries. During the first three days the delegates had discussions in groups regarding seva and other activities to be undertaken in the future.

All-India Coordinator, presented reports on the consensus reached at the Conference and submitted them to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan then delivered His valedictory discourse, in the course of which He said:

### *Embodiments of Divine Love!*

Love (Prema) transcends the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas). It is boundless. It flows continually like an eternal light. The sages called it Atma. This divine flame of love shines in every heart. Atma and Hridaya (heart) are synonymous with Divinity. For this love, there is no distinction of 'mine' and 'thine'. It is totally free from self-interest.

Love is like the mariner's compass, which always points to the north. At any time, any place or in any circumstance love points only towards God. Hence, everyone should try to understand how the Love principle works. Love can be compared only with love.

Prema (love) and Anuraga (affection) are one and the same. But affection, when it is directed towards worldly objects; gets tainted. Because of this pollution, joy and sorrow ensue. Man becomes a prey to desires and disappointments. However when Love is directed towards God, it becomes pure, selfless, enduring and divine.

### **Sweeter Than Nectar**

Nectar is described by the scriptures as extremely sweet. But nectar nowhere approaches the sweetness of love. As against love, nectar appears insipid. The uniqueness of such love is beyond the comprehension of ordinary people. Such love arises only when you churn the ocean of bliss.

Hence, all our actions should be based on Love. But in this mundane world, love assumes external forms. When pure gold is given to the goldsmith for making a jewel, he mixes copper and other metals with it and thereby its value is reduced. Likewise, because pure love is mixed with worldly attachments, it gets tainted. But when such tainted love is directed towards service (seva) it gets purified.

### **Experiencing Divinity**

Failing to understand pure love, man is leading a miserable existence. A man who is neck-deep in water would still be able to speak. But the man who is wholly submerged cannot speak. Likewise a man immersed in pure love cannot find words for his experience. It is those who are above the surface that attempt to describe it. How, then, is this divinity to be described? There is a basic means for this. Some persons have a direct vision of the Divine. Some others in spite of all their sadhanas are not able to get such an experience. What is the reason? There are different kinds of rosaries (japamala). One is a Rudraksha japamala. Another is a string of lotus seeds. There are coral japamalās. No one can see the string which runs through all the different beads. Only in a rosary made of transparent "sphatika" (crystal) beads can the thread be seen. In

present. But only in a heart filled with pure love can Divinity be perceived.

It is thus not easy to recognise the Divine. Kabir asked: "How is it possible to perceive you, Oh Krishna, when you are all-pervading and are present in the minutest particle and in the mightiest object in the cosmos?" Hence, everyone should have the conviction that wherever he may render service and whomsoever he may serve, he is rendering service to God because God is omnipresent. Such service alone is true sadhana.

### **Love and Serve**

Kabir declared: "Oh Rama! I am not qualified to perform sacrifices or penances. I can attempt to realise you only through love. Please enable me to attain you through love." Therefore, through love, you must seek to serve all and enjoy Divine bliss. When you embark on service in this spirit, the whole world becomes one single home.

From the earliest times, Bharat has held forth this path of service. This is not intended for Bharatiyas alone. Once the Moghul emperor Babar wrote a letter to his son, Humayun, when he ascended the throne. "Bharat is a country noted for its adoration of God. It is a magnanimous nation which gave asylum to people of all faiths. Bharatiya culture is a wonderful one. It has been nourished and cherished by Bharatiyas from times immemorial. No other faith has such an all-encompassing outlook. It is your great fortune that you are becoming the ruler of such a nation. You must be grateful all your life to God for conferring such a blessing on you. You should not impose any restrictions on the religious practices of the Bharatiyas. Do not go against Bharatiya culture. Do your duty (as a ruler). When you want to take say vital decision consult all the great scholars of Bharat. If you do not follow this path, you will come to ruin. "Such was the warning of Babar. Babar wrote that Bharatiya culture was based on equal respect for all religions. He also said that service, sacrifice, Dharma and love are the vital limbs of this culture.

### **The Spirit of Service**

In the sacred culture of Bharat, the spirit of service occupies a primary place. But, alas, because true sevaks have become rare in the country, the nation is a prey to all kinds of troubles. The nation needs more sevaks. People should realise that service is the passport to leadership. Hence, in the service organisations, no distinction of high or low should be permitted and all should be invited to take part in service.

In fact, human birth is intended for service. Whatever other accomplishments one may have, they are not equal to the joy to be derived from rendering selfless service. Hanuman who was powerful, courageous and great in so many ways, was content to describe himself as a servant of Rama when he was asked in Lanka who he was. You may realise from his example what a great thing it is to be a servant of God. The Lord of all the worlds, Sri Krishna, was willing to serve as the charioteer of Arjuna. The attitude of service has always been dear to the Lord.



Only then they will be able to render service wholeheartedly. They should also realise that no purpose will be served by worshipping God without purity of heart.

This Love has also to be practised in different forms of yoga and spiritual exercises like Pranayama and Hamsa Gayatri. Exercises like Pranayama are related to the body. All such physical exercises will not lead to realisation of the Divine. The exercises will have to be done with the mind. When the body and the mind are associated in sacred service, that becomes true yoga. Through seva, the mind gets purified. The body gets sanctified. Without pure mind, the body is utterly useless. The natural state of the mind is purity. It is polluted by contacts with the world. When it is purified through love, it regains its natural state.

### **Love in Prasanthi Nilayam**

Acquire love through love. Only through love can unity in diversity be experienced. This kind of unity through love can be witnessed only in Prasanthi Nilayam and nowhere else. There are a myriad pairs of eyes here. There may be larger gatherings elsewhere, but the eyes of the crowds there are directed in different directions. But here the eyes of everyone, young and old, men, women and children, are all turned towards only one direction (cheers). Look at anyone's face. The eyes are turned only towards Swami. What is the reason? Only love.

At this Conference, many inconveniences have been experienced. But all efforts at keeping the entire area clean and maintaining order and security have been made out of love. Many tasks have been performed successfully only through love.

It is love that confers peace on the heart. When one's heart is filled with peace, the whole atmosphere is filled with peace. You have been witnesses to what happened yesterday. The entire sky was covered with dark clouds. At 7-30 a.m., a heavy downpour seemed imminent. But instead of a downpour, the clouds "air-conditioned" the atmosphere and left. When you have good thoughts and feelings, nature responds in the same manner. There is an example in the Ramayana. When Rama embarked on the search for Sita, the monkeys, the rocks and many other elements in Nature came to his help. As Sai is the very embodiment of Love, the entire Nature cooperated and helped. There was no hindrance to any of the activities. Nor was that all. All elements were indeed helpful. Even this morning, would it have been possible for so many to gather early in the morning but for the cool weather? In the carrying out of sacred tasks in the service of the Divine, the Vedic prayer has indicated the spirit in which they should be done. "Let us live in amity. Let us move together. In harmony and understanding let us live together. Let us promote unity and friendliness." If only we have unity, how much joy can we experience! Unity is strength. To develop unity, you must have the consciousness of spiritual oneness.

### **"I Love All"**

Today our Conference has come to a close. When you go forth from here, you must carry with you wherever you go the sacred ideas you have gathered here. Moreover, you must interest your friends and relations in these ideas and draw them into service activities. Do not entertain any fear or embarrassment regarding your participation in service activities. Be firmly convinced

requires to be done to serve anyone, at any time, in any form, you should do without hesitation. There are in the Sathya Sai Organisation lakhs of such sevaks. And it is because of that we have been able to have this prodigious Conference. There are any number of preachers in the world. There are equally numerous scholars. But there are few who practise what they preach and make others do likewise. Here alone there is a power that simultaneously preaches and practises (cheers). Whatever I say, I practise. I speak only on what I am doing. The students present here know this well. Love, love, love. I love all and I ask all to love. My greatest wealth is love. People speak about My powers and My miracles, but My Love is My greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Only then there will be oneness.

All of you should take a vow continually to develop the Seva Organisations. Let all join in the activities. Treat all as the children of one God. Whomsoever you may serve, consider you are serving God. Then you will experience the Divine. You are bound to have that experience soon.

Never give up the organisation. Regard it as the breath of your life. This is real penance. Having this firm resolve, become exemplary leaders. This is My sole desire. Swami's love will accompany you everywhere.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho!*")

**GURUDEV VANI:**

### **Message of the Vedas**

*Dear Students!*

*There is no disease equal to greed. There is no greater enemy than anger. There is no misery greater than poverty. There is no happiness greater than wisdom.*

*Man is ignoring these sacred truths.*

*Faith in God has been replaced by disrespect for reverence and righteousness. Atheism is rampant and preceptors are not honoured. Devotion is at a discount and the ancient wisdom is being given up these days. In education character has reached its nadir.*

*"I am in the Light. I am the Light. The Light is in Me. The Light is Myself." When this awareness arises in the heart, it will lead to oneness with Brahman.*

The Vedas are the most ancient among the world's scriptures. They are a vast storehouse of wisdom. They enabled man to have an over-view of the universe. Historically, they are the

declared: "Everything is derived from the Vedas." All knowledge, all the principles of right living, all qualities are derived from the Vedas. "Anantho Vai Vedaah" ("The Vedas are infinite"). The Vedas are immeasurable, unrivalled and filled with bliss. Veda is derived from the verb "Vid", to know. Knowledge of the Supreme is Veda. It represents Atma-Jnana ( Knowledge of the Spirit ), Brahma Jnana (Knowledge of the Universal Consciousness), Advaita Jnana (Knowledge of the One that subsumes the many). These different terms are synonymous.

It is not easy for laymen to understand the Vedas. But whether they are understood or not, their truth permeates the universe. They embody the cosmic sound ("Shabda Brahman"). They are not confined to a particular place, time or person. They pervade the cosmos. Realising that it is not easy for common people to understand the Vedas, Vyasa codified them in four groups. They have been propagated and practised in three sections: The Karma Kanda (dealing with rituals), Upasana Kanda (dealing with forms of worship) and Jnana Kanda (dealing with the path of Knowledge).

### **Triple Yoga**

"Karmanyeva Adhikaarasthe" ("You have the right only for the performance of actions," declares the Gita). These actions have to be in accordance with Dharma. It must be realised that the body has been given only for the practice of Dharma. When man's actions achieve ripeness, they become "Upasana" or worship. When the worship is offered with full devotion and love for the Divine, it becomes Pure Knowledge (Jnana). Thus all three stages are really integral. Just as a flower by stages becomes a ripe fruit, similarly through Karma, Upasana and Jnana, the final stage of Self-realisation is reached. It is to enable the common people to go through these three stages that the Puranas and epics were produced as aids to spiritual advancement. The Upanishads are the culmination of the Vedas. Hence they are known as Vedanta.

The Upanishads have offered three kinds of yoga for mankind. With regard to actions, the dedication of every action to God is commended. As regards Upasana Yoga, what is required is wholehearted devotion to God, with purity in thought, word and deed. Love for the sake of securing some worldly benefit or return is not true love. Love must be for its own sake. The third is Jnana Yoga. "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat." "The cosmos is pervaded everywhere by the Lord." Everything is a manifestation of God. The Divine is in every being. This awareness is Jnana.

Students may have a doubt. Is it possible to conceive of this sense of oneness when forms, names, thoughts and actions are so varied among beings? You watch the waves on the ocean. Each wave appears to be different from another and unrelated to it. Yet the water in all of them is the same. The waves are not different from the ocean. Likewise, though names and forms and thoughts and actions may be different, all of them are like waves on the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. This Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) is present in everyone in a subtle form.

and Jnana) in three sections of six cantos each. Thus from the Vedas to the Upanishads and then to the Gita the eternal teaching has come to divinise mankind. The Gita does not belong to any one nation or people. It is for all mankind. It is the Voice of God.

God is one for all people though He may be worshipped under different names and forms. Whether they are Hindus or Muslims, Christians or Parsis, Buddhists or Sikhs, God is one for all. Whatever the form in which worship is done, it reaches the one God. The sun is one and does not vary with the nation on which he sheds his light.

### **Gurus and Shishyas**

The Vedas are infinite and boundless. Because of their profound meaning, those who studied the Vedas went through an arduous exercise. The preceptors were men of severe austerity. It is because of their great discipline and devotion that the Vedas could survive to this day. They are not recorded in a book. They have come down through an oral tradition from a succession of gurus and shishyas (preceptors and disciples). Great care has to be taken in reciting the Vedic hymns, observing the rules regarding accent, pause and rhythm. The gurus of those days were utterly selfless, pure-hearted and dedicated to the Divine. They were filled with love for the disciples and dedicated their lives to imparting Vedic knowledge to the students. The students also were highly disciplined and adhered to all the prescribed regulations. Those who violated the preceptor's injunctions were placed beyond the pale. No quarter was given to those who exhibited five defects: Indifference, lack of humility, egoism, envy, and bad manners.

### **Vaisampayana and Yagnavalkya**

Vyasa had many disciples who were learning the Vedas from the sage. Chief among them was Vaisampayana. He was an ideal disciple, who implicitly carried out the guru's injunctions and studied the Vedas diligently. After completing his studies under Vyasa, Vaisampayana established a Gurukula (preceptor's ashram) for imparting Vedic knowledge. "Gurukula" is regarded as some kind of special educational establishment. It is not so. "Gurukula" was the dwelling place of the guru and it was also the abode of the shishyas (the students). The guru, after taking his meal, would distribute the food as prasadam to the students who used to spend their entire time with the guru. The guru and the disciples enjoyed everything in common and had the same ideals. The preceptor initiated the students in the spiritual quest.

One day, the sage Yagnavalkya came to Vaisampayana's gurukula. Yajnavalkya was a brilliant intellectual with keen intelligence. Yagnavalkya was proud about his intellectual attainments and this was responsible for his downfall. Pride always goeth before a fall. Yagnavalkya developed indifference to his studies and started behaving in an unbecoming manner. Vaisampayana was noticing all this. The preceptors of those times would give even their lives for deserving disciples, but would give no quarter to those who were proud and ill-behaved. Displeased with Yagnavalkya's conduct, Vaisampayana called him to his presence one day and told him: "Yagnavalkya! You have no right any longer to study in this Gurukula. You must leave it at once. And before leaving, you give back all that you learnt here." Yagnavalkya, who

Then the birds began to recite the Vedic hymns, which came to be known as Taittiriya Samhita.

### **Yagnavalkya's Penance**

There are two traditions relating to the Vedas. One is known as the Brahma-sampradayam (the Brahmic tradition). The other is "Aditya-sampradayam" (the Sun tradition). What Yagnavalkya gave back is known as the Brahma-sampradaya. It is also known as Krishna Yajur-Veda. Subsequently, feeling penitent about his misconduct, Yagnavalkya did penance in the form of Suryopasana (worship of the Sun), giving up food and drink. In this manner he was atoning for his misconduct. The Sun-God appeared before him in the form of "Vaaji" (a sacred horse) and told him: "Child! What has happened, is past. Remember it is a grievous crime to be disloyal to your preceptor or ungrateful to the Divine. You should not indulge in this kind of behaviour. Be careful in the future." Saying this, the Sun-God himself taught the Vedas to Yagnavalkya. Why did Surya appear before him in the form of "Vaaji"? Yagnavalkya's ancestors were noted for their offerings of food (vaajasanam) to the hungry, Hence they got the name Vaajasam. For this reason, the Sun-God assumed the form of "Vaaji" and taught the Vedas to Yagnavalkya. This Veda is known as Sukla Yajur-Veda. It is also called Vaajanaskanda. The Yajur-Veda thus got divided into two parts: Krishna Yajur-Veda and Sukla Yajur-Veda.

### **Greatness of Annadana**

It should be noted that it was because of the gift of food made by Yagnavalkya's ancestors that the Sun-God himself came down to teach the Veda to Yagnavalkya. This shows the supreme efficacy of the gift of food (anna-dana) to the hungry and the starving.

There is no greater gift than the gift of food  
There is no god higher than one's parents  
There is no japa or tapa higher than righteousness  
There is no Dharma greater than compassion,  
Nothing is more profitable than the company of the good  
There is no worse enemy than hatred.  
No disease is worse than indebtedness,  
Death is preferable on earth to infamy  
No wealth is more precious than a good name  
There is no ornament superior to the Lord's name.

Realising these truths, Yagnavalkya taught his disciples the value of service to parents, reverence for the guru, and efficacy of the gift of food.

### **Good Fortune**

Dear students! The summer course began on an Ekadasi day and is concluding on an Ekadasi. Regard these classes as a sacred Ekadasi observance. In this holy exercise, many veterans and experienced scholars have spoken on many vital subjects. It is not easy to get such eminent persons to address you. You have greater access to Swami than to these lecturers. It is

have taught you.

What you have been taught during these fifteen days is the essence of the Vedas. You have received also the nectar churned out of the Shastras, the Puranas and the epics. You will be the future leaders of Bharat. You have to practise Dharma and lead ideal lives. Never give up Truth and Righteousness. The Vedas have indicated what are to be followed and what are to be avoided. Unfortunately today people follow what is prohibited and have given up what should be followed.

You students should consider yourselves extremely fortunate in having an opportunity like this. Whatever enterprise you may engage in, do not forget your duty and your faith is the Divine. Perform good actions. Thereby you will purify your mind. When you worship God with a pure mind you will achieve Self- realisation. The Lord does not seek from you material offerings. When you love Him with all your heart He will shower His grace on you. This is evident from the examples of Valmiki, Kuchela and many other devotees. Whatever you do, do it as a dedicated offering to God. Bear in mind the example of Sabari, whose devotion to Rama beggars description.

Keep in mind the sacred things you have heard, act upto the teachings, purify your hearts and be exemplary citizens of Bharat. This is my benediction for all of you.

**From Bhagavan's valedictory discourse at the Summer Course in the  
Brindavan Campus on 3-6-90**

***PRASANTHI SAMACHAR:***

### **Akhanda Bhajan in the Divine Presence**

In the Sathya Sai calendar of annual events, the Global Akhanda Bhajan has a special significance. When it was first inaugurated some years ago, it was designed to bring together Sai devotees, wherever they might be, in a 24-hour sacred exercise to remember the glories of the Lord and sing His praise as a prelude to the birthday celebrations on November 23. But with the passing of years and proliferation of Sai centres in all the continents and in over a hundred countries round the globe, the Akhanda Bhajan, starting from 6 p.m. on a Saturday and ending at 6 p.m. on the following Sunday, has become a unique symbol of human unity in a fellowship of the Spirit.

Moreover, with increasing numbers of devotees streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam during November, the Akhanda Bhajan at Prasanthi Nilayam, in the divine presence of Bhagavan, has become the most impressive manifestation of human unity based on a common faith in the Divine.

This year, a very large gathering of Indian and overseas devotees was present when Bhagavan lit the Akhanda Jyoti in the Prasanthi Mandir and inaugurated the bhajans. This year, it was a field day for the students from the three campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Boys and girls of the Institute kept up the unbroken flow of bhajans from 6 p.m. on November 3 to 6 p.m. on November 4. Thousands of devotees inside and outside the Mandir grounds joined in the bhajans. The bliss of having darshan of Bhagavan from time to time during the 24 hours of the Akhanda Bhajan, as He went round the darshan lines, was ample reward for many who had kept the all-night vigil and participated in the bhajans.

During the whole day on Sunday, Bhagavan was unremittingly distributing clothes to countless persons who had been active in the service of Bhagavan in one capacity or another. In fact, the distribution of clothes started earlier in October itself and went on for more than a fortnight.

Before the bhajans were to end at 6 p.m., Bhagavan arranged for the distribution of prasadam to everyone in the Nilayam. The prasadam, which consisted of sugared rice and tamarind rice, served as a full-fledged meal for the devotees, many of whom partook of it in the Nilayam itself on the leaves on which it was served.

The bhajans concluded with Arati to Bhagavan in the Mandir. Thousands of devotees joined in the refrain: "Jai! Sadgurudeva!"

—N.

## **Those Feet**

*Has Ganga  
Laden with flower and paste  
Kissed those Feet  
Every dawn  
Since the rise of Dawn?*

*Do those Steps  
Soft and slow  
Firm and fast  
Keep beat  
To tunes not heard?*

*Will this bosom  
Dry and dark  
Feel the touch  
Of those feet*

*Every dawn  
Since the rise of Dawn?*

**Prof. S. Jagadisan**  
Prasanthi Nilayam

*If man is valued at his trite worth, and treated as a Divine Spark enclosed in the body, then, he will rise to new heights of achievement and produce all the necessities of life in profusion. He will not grab or cheat; he will be a good worker, a pure person and a sincere Sadhaka. He will cultivate the inner vision and realise that he is not the body or senses or mind or even intellect. He will be full of Prema and self-confidence.*

**—Baba**

## **Removing the Veils**

When Jesus was speaking of forgiveness, and was asked if forgiving seven times was enough, He replied that we should forgive seven times seventy! It would no doubt take a very large japamala to keep count of such a number, yet the message is driven home: forgiveness is a crucial part of our sadhana, and cannot even stop at four-hundred and ninety times.

Traditionally, we have thought of forgiveness as being something which we do in order to be "good" or "charitable". We find ourselves as being good people by forgiving those who have done "wrong" to us. Yet, this is hardly what Jesus was referring to when He spoke of forgiveness. He was speaking of a direct corrective device for removing the very cause of Maya. He was perhaps sharing one of the greatest means of freeing ourselves from identification with our bodies and egos. He was teaching us how to remove our super-impositions upon reality.

The *Upanishads* are well known to give an example of superimposition, with the man who mistakes a rope for a snake and becomes frightened. This entire world is said to be a similar illusion: a superimposition over the One Eternal Changeless Brahman. Through our ignorance, we are said to mistake the many for the One and it is this process which keeps us deluded.

### **The Super-Imposition Process**

It is no doubt very difficult to experience directly at this moment how we are super-imposing the entire world over the Paramatma. However, we can look at areas of our day-to-day life and see how this process is occurring.

One morning, while sitting in the ashram canteen, I looked around and could see many super-impositions I had placed on those around me. Every person I saw, with whom I had any



Some judgments were "good", like: "There's that nice man who..." while most were not quite so favourable. But with regard to each person I looked upon, my mind had already determined who and what they were supposed to be for me. And, of course, having already decided upon these things, I interacted with all these people based upon my judgments. Not only that, I expected, or even demanded that they interact with me in the way my mind had determined. At this point, it was clear that all anger stems from someone failing to be or to do what we've decided they should be or do. And this is superimposition.

Nowhere, however, did the intensity of this activity become so blatantly apparent as in relation to Swami Himself. It became clear that all feelings of negativity experienced around Swami were a result of this superimposition. I had predetermined who Swami was supposed to be for me, and what He was supposed to do for me. I had determined what God was supposed to be like, and what He was supposed to do. And the result of this was a fear so incredible that it became unbearable, and I had to ask myself what I should do to free myself from it. The answer? "Forgive Swami."

Forgive Swami! But what wrong has Swami ever done? And even if I thought He had, why would God need my forgiveness? After all, don't we forgive only those who have done us wrong? Aren't we doing it out of the kindness of our heart for them? Wouldn't they be forever condemned if we weren't so gracious as to give them our forgiveness? But Swami? What does He need of my forgiveness?

### **"Teach me who you are"**

It then started to become clear to me. People don't need my forgiveness of them. I need my forgiveness of others, if I am to know the truth. Swami has never been anything other than perfect love to me. Yet, my mind still entertained judgments which were existing upon Swami's form. It doesn't matter what the judgments are, whether they be favourable or not. All of them stand like veils which block the ever existent reality. And removing these veils, THIS is forgiveness.

Suddenly, it all started making sense. I don't have to define Reality. God has already done that. However, I must remove all of my judgments of what reality is supposed to be. Upon removing them, Reality will simply reveal itself as a direct experience.

So, I began practising this discipline of removing the self-created veils. During morning bhajans, I would eagerly await Swami's arrival to sit in His chair. Many times, upon His entering, I would again feel terrified. Yet, I would begin removing every concept I held about Swami, telling Him inwardly: "I do not know anything. My judgments are useless. Teach me who You are."

Eventually, it became clear to me that all fear was a direct result of my demands to see Swami as His body, and regard His body as His reality. This was the superimposition! Seeing the formless as the form, the sky as the cloud. The deepest of the deep part of me wanted to just let

Swami as His body.

### **The witness within**

And then there was the witness, that part of me which could see the battle clearly. If I completely release my concepts of Swami as His body, then I have forever freed Him from my mental expectations. No demands for interviews, for Padanamaskar, for letter taking, even for Darshan! For all of these things are demands I have superimposed upon Swami, choosing to see Him as a body, in order to fulfill these expectations. Also, if I give up believing Swami is his body, don't I in the process also give up believing that I am my own body?

Such appeared to be the case. Every veil-removing "session" with Swami during both Darshan and Bhajans started to teach me the Truth. As I would remove all demands and concepts from Swami's form, the fear would begin to disappear. A deep feeling of love, peace and bliss would fill my entire being. I began feeling separate from both my body and my mind. There were no longer Swami and I, two different bodies separated by some distance. There simply was one changeless existence, of which I was a part. There was no gap between Swami and I. We were One, forever. And this wasn't just intellectual knowledge, it was direct experiential reality.

Suddenly, the uselessness of chasing outer experiences with Swami was driven home. Sure, interviews and form contact are useful at first. This however, was something else! I don't "need" anything from Swami, rather, I have no need to need anything from Swami, for needs create duality, while removing the veils reveals Oneness. It is like one part of the ocean demanding water from another part.

Forgiveness is a beautiful art! And how beautiful would our own life seem if we but saw it only as an opportunity to forgive whatever is brought to us. It can be anyone, anything, at any place or any place or any time. If it is done correctly, it brings forth an instantaneous transcendence of duality. Finally, we laugh, for we find that what was behind the form of that which we forgave, was really our Self all the time.

—*Michael J. Oliver, Prasanthi Nilayam*

This article was received for publication a few weeks before Oliver merged in the Lord. —Editor

### **A Traveller's Prayer**

O Dearest Lord, whom I adore,  
Thank You for all that's gone before  
And on the unknown path that lies ahead  
Please hold my hand; direct my tread

So from my road to You I never swerve  
But ever as I journey, truly serve.  
When duty is done no more I roam  
Bring me surely to You,—safely Home.

—S. P. (Australia)

### **When the Avatar is here**

*We scamper through life running with fear;  
When dying is mentioned we turn a deaf ear,  
Somehow He live with the thought we can take  
With us, when we die, all that we make.*

*We must all live as if each day were the last,  
Not living in the future nor dwelling in the past.  
Constantly we must think about God in our chosen form,  
For only with this thought can we escape being reborn.*

*We all must die, it is deemed that way,  
We could leave our body on any given day.  
But the Avatar has come and says, "Not to fear,"  
That the Atma lives when the body leaves here.*

—Joy Ziegler  
Gilbert, Arizona

### **“Make the Heart Ready”**

Over the years one comes to know that people in general, and even friends in particular, have their individual life goals. Such goals are not cast in iron but are concepts subject to change. Observing this, one is led to ask if individuality is everything. If one then chooses to pose the question to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a firm and clear answer is received. He tells us that beyond individual likes and dislikes there is a common goal for all. This goal is the return to the Source from which one came. The Source is Divinity, the Absolute from which all has issued. To those of us who know this answer and to whom it has the ring of truth, the question must arise—is there a way to return to that Source, that Divinity, a way of return that is sure and swift? Again, if we ask, Sathya Sai answers. He tells us that the mind may seek the way, although with great difficulty and slowly, yet sure and swift is the way of love, of devotion to God, of love for Him, He who is love itself.

The question that we ask of Sathya Sai is the same question asked of Krishna by Arjuna. Krishna gave the answer some 5000 years ago as does Baba today. He replied to Arjuna, "For those who set their hearts on Me and worship Me with unfailing devotion and faith, the way of love leads sure and swift to Me." And, "They for whom I am the Goal Supreme, who do all work, renouncing self for Me, and meditate on Me with single-hearted devotion, these will I swiftly rescue from the cycle of birth and death to fullness of eternal life in Me. Still your mind in Me, still yourself in Me, and without doubt you shall be united with Me, Lord of Love, dwelling in your heart."

### **Eschew the Ego**

Divinity, clad in the dear-to-us Sai form, stands with each one of us, ready and willing to dwell in each heart as Love Itself, one's true Self, the indivisible Absolute. One need only set aside his unquestioning reliance on the first person singular and thus make the heart ready.

To open one's heart to the Divine, to willingly set aside "me-oriented" motives and emotions, and to totally dedicate every thought, feeling, and action to Him brings His grace into those thoughts, feelings, and actions. Thus, in such a mode of being, each one of us may immediately be His devotee, may live each moment in devotion to the Divine Sai.

### **Great Good Fortune**

Baba told me directly, one day at Brindavan, that to be born now was even more fortunate than to have been alive in the time of Krishna. How extraordinary! How could such grace be ours? Yet, it is so. Then let us not waste even one day of this great good fortune. Now, let each of us invite Sai to reside in our heart as Love. Be His devotee, let the mind be filled with thoughts of Him every moment in which the mind is not engaged in essential work. With work done, return to Him, who stands beside us lovingly regarding each as His own child, as not other than Himself. Why turn aside with idle wishes, random thoughts, and remembrances? Hold to Him, repeat His name, love Him, glow with happiness in His love, as does the devotee who is never separate from Him.

To live in devotion to the Divinity, to the Love that is Sai, is not impossible nor difficult. Each of us already is in love with Love. We are in love with Happiness, in love with Truth, Beauty, Wealth, and Auspiciousness. Sai, the Lord, is all these and much more. If we love these, then we are loving Him.

### **"Feel Close to Him"**

As a mirror reflects the rays of the sun and projects them outward, in like fashion, the Sai person is the focus which radiates all that is lovable, rich, and magnificent in the vast cosmos—both subtle and objective. See Him so, for He is the greatest of the great, yet also close and intimate to us. He sweetly tells us to feel close to Him, to regard Him not as the distant, Almighty Divinity, but as a close and affectionate friend who has the power to help. He is willing and able to help if we will just abandon the imagined separation. Know that He Is the Beloved, and that we are infinitely dear to Him.

God is Love; it is our destiny to merge in divine Love. Let each of us know that Sai declares it is so. Now is the time, today is the day to discard separation from God and realize that devotion is the bond by which we come to know that He and ourselves are, in truth, One and One only.

No great explosion of consciousness is needed to open one's heart; no great tragedy is needed to break our isolation as a supposed separate and unique individual. Now, let concepts fall away, let hatreds and fears fall away, and then let heart and mind love—and love Him—our divine Friend, our beloved, our Sai.

**—J. S. Hislop, Ed. D.**

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