



Sathyam Sivam Sundaram

Volume 3

Life Story Of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
1969-1972

By

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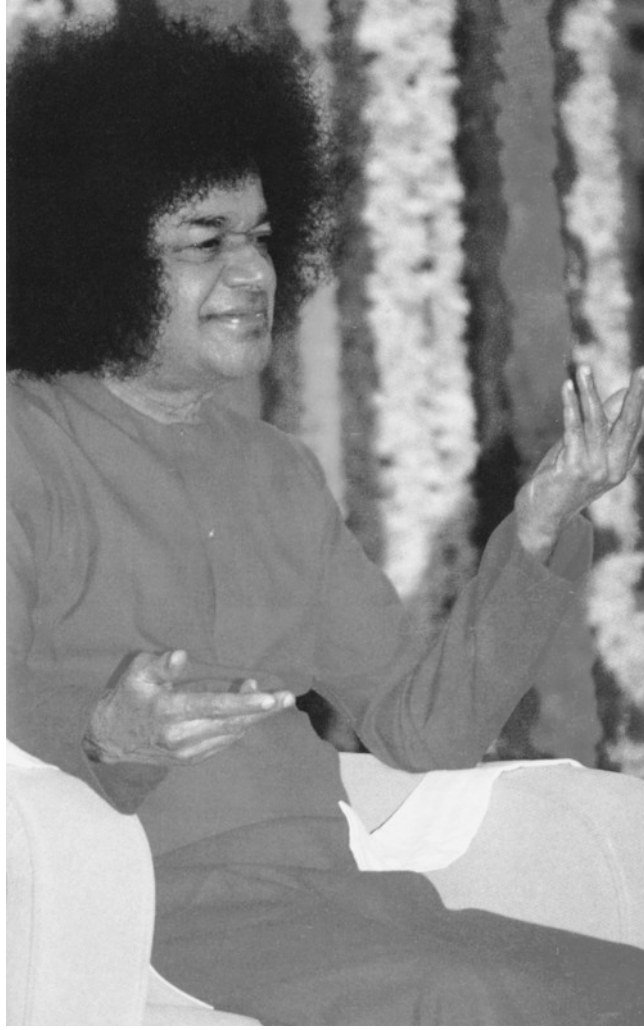
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Preface

Dear reader,

"From where the words of men return, foiled in their urge to fathom; which even imagination finds unattainable, whom the Upanishads denote only by negation and denial" – 'that' is Baba, the subject of this book. He declares that He is in each of us and that we all are in Him. He proclaims that it is futile to gauge His Reality.

"I am neither man, nor God, nor archangel, nor angel. I am not to be known by the names of any of the four castes, or of the four stages of human life. Know Me as the Teacher of Truth, Sathyam Sivam Sundaram," said Baba once. The picture in its first stage is negative: when it is 'developed', it becomes clear and true.

Baba has made it clear and true. He says He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. These are the three manifestations of the Prema that He is, the Love which He embodies. Love, as thought, is truth; Love, as action, is goodness; Love, as feeling, is beauty.

How can the amazing story of the multifaceted, transforming, and indelible impact of Baba be delineated by any pen, howsoever pious and profound?

But, the authentic ecstasy one is immersed in, when one is blessed by the slightest or shortest contact with Baba's love, presses upon the feeblest pen to call on all, "O! Come and share it," however illegible the call is.

Baba has come in answer to the mankind's agony. He says, "Good men and their own inefficiencies sighed for a Saviour to guide them and lead them: and I have responded."

Therefore, it is the right of all men everywhere, to listen to a narrative—however halting and hazy—of the Divine Play of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, of His guidance and leadership.

The first volume of this book appeared in 1960; the second was placed in your hands, in 1961; the third is now most humbly offered for your deep, delightful perusal. I am grateful that Baba blessed my hand, so that it may string the records of His Leelas and Mahimas into a garland, to be placed at His Feet.

N. Kasturi
Brindavan, Bangalore,
20.2.1974.

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Chapter 1

The Ascending Sun

His wisdom surpassed that of the greatest of sages. Those, who came to examine, remained to extol; those, who extolled, desired that others too should share the thrill; thus, the triumph of the Master spread from region to region. That was the ploughing of the field, the preparation.

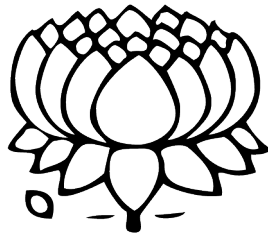
Sathyanarayana Raju, aged 14, student, fourth form, Uravakonda High school, threw off His bag of books one evening, saying, “My followers are calling Me; I have My work to do. I do not belong to you anymore,” and walking out of His brother’s home, He sat under a banyan tree and sang a song. He wanted the gathering to sing with Him: “Those, who desire to liberate themselves from the chain of birth, struggle, success, failure, ease and disease, and death! Come! Adore the Feet of the Master!” That was the Announcement of the Amazing Advent.

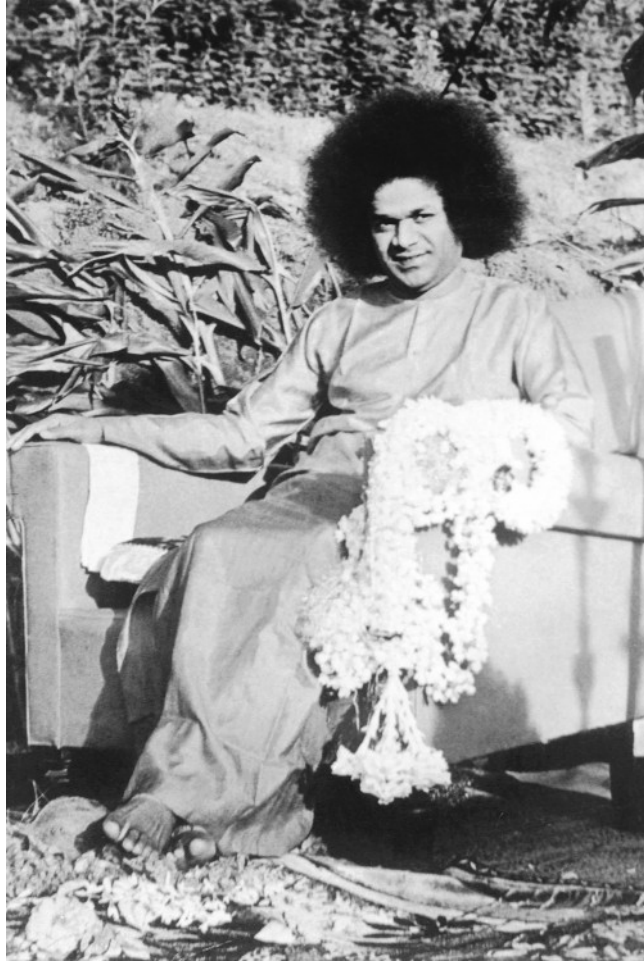
The good news spread: “The Sai Baba of Shirdi in Maharashtra has come again as promised.” Streams of pilgrims, bound for Shirdi, turned to Puttaparthi, where He was born and spent His boyhood in song and dance, music and mystery. The maimed, the ill, the distressed, the distracted – they came in hundreds from far and near. Baba consoled and cured; He revealed their past, which shaped the present and the present that would determine the future of those who sought His guidance. He showered love beyond measure on the unhappy, rich and poor alike; He manifested suprahuman powers, transcending the Laws of Nature: His wisdom surpassed that of the greatest of sages. Those, who came to examine, remained to extol; those, who extolled, desired that others too should share the thrill; thus, the triumph of the Master spread from region to region. That was the Ploughing of the Field, the Preparation.

Fresh from His beneficent tour of India, from Kanyakumari to Kilanmarg, Baba, in His 32nd year, resolved to further His *Dharmasthapana*, the revival and re-establishment of the moral order in human affairs, in a wider and more persistent manner. He inaugurated the *Sanathana*

Sarathi, the monthly magazine, in eleven languages – Telugu, English, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Hindi, Assamese, and Nepali: the Clarion for His Call, the Conch that awakens and arouses, the Banner for humanity’s campaign against its inner foes – Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride, and Hate. Baba also exhorted people to sing, in chorus, the glory of God and encourage each other to march towards Him. He Himself moved over the land like a rain-cloud, showering courage and conviction on hearts parched by the cruel rays of doubt, disappointment, disputation, and dilemma. This was the sowing of the seeds, seeds of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema*, seeds reinforced with the authority of the ageless *Vedas* and the indisputable experience of the sages and seers of all lands. Many were touched by the Light of Love and many were aroused into spurts of *Sadhana* and tenacious efforts to serve, through His discourses that inspired them to search within for the reality, instead of seeking without for its shadow. And many were helped to tap the springs of ecstatic communion with the Divine, through the discipline of *Bhajan*. These were called into the Presence, at Madras, for the First All India Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Groups, where everyone was armed with a new vision and a new vitality to render social service and win self-realisation. The seeds, thus, sprouted fast, fed by the warming rays of the Sai Sun.

The first two volumes of this book, "*Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*", have chronicled these events. Let me now resume the *Bhagavata*, the story of the Lord, bringing Heaven into human hearts and liberating man from the prison he has sentenced himself into!







Chapter 2

Attention: World At Prayer

Ponder for a moment on this Sathya Sai Manifestation. In this age of rampant materialism, aggressive disbelief, and irreverence, what is it that brings to it the adoration of millions from all over the world? You will be convinced that the basic reason for this is the fact that this is Divinity in Human Form.

On 12th May, 1968, the ‘Dharmakshetra,’ an architectural jewel built on an elevated spot, commanding a panoramic view of the environs of Bombay, as the International Centre of the Sai Family, was inaugurated by Him. This Palace of God is intended to serve as the residence of *Bhagawan*, while at Bombay.

‘Dharmakshetra’ is the first word in the first *Shloka* of the *Bhagavad Gita*; it is used there as an adjective to describe the battlefield, where the Kaurava ‘might’ was pulverised by the Lord and His Grace showered on the Pandava ‘right.’ The field was known as Kurukshetra, but the intervention of God to succour the cause of Truth, Justice, Peace, and Love transmuted it into Dharmakshetra. The word summarises the history of the two clans, who were in mortal combat on that field: it symbolises the beginning-less conflict between good and bad in the human heart, a conflict that ends in the triumph of the good, when, as the Pandava did, we accept and install in our heart, God as the charioteer; and now, it elaborates the role of Baba in human history one step further, for He had already declared Himself as Sanathana Sarathi, the Person at the Wheel of Life (since Time began and Space rolled out) for every Being that Became! We see before our mind’s eye Sri Krishna holding the reins, while Arjuna listens and learns. We see the Lord, as Baba is seen by us today, guiding and guarding, assuaging and asserting, reminding and reprimanding, revealing and reviving the wayward and the wavering! Dharmakshetra evokes in our memories a surging gratitude for all those who

discovered and delved into the pellucid streams of *Dharma*, for all who adored *Dharma* by living it and demonstrating how it can confer joy and peace, and for all those who sacrificed their all for it in all lands, in all ages.

Baba named that building so, not just arbitrarily; He declares that no word of His is devoid of spiritual potency; it is a call, an intimate invitation to you, to give ear to the *Gita*. He whispers from your own heart to cure you of your brand of delusion, to sublimate your inner battle-field into a playground of spiritual endeavour; it is a spell, a benediction, a blessing; it is an Announcement that the Lord has come, that His mission has begun. His charioteering is available for all who seek, now and here, on this sad, stupid, struggling earth, which He has adopted as His Dharmakshetra, for this is the place, where *Dharma* can be learnt, practised, and harvested. “Engage in *Karma* as regulated by *Dharma*. Practise *Dharma* with the awareness that all is *Brahman*. March along the path of *Karma* to Dharmakshetra, where *Brahman*—realisation awaits,” Baba says.

Thousands, from all parts of India and even overseas, witnessed the inauguration. From far-flung lands they came, wafted by the winds of grace. More than fifty thousand eager souls gathered that evening at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Campus at Versova, Bombay, to express their joy at the momentous occasion. The magnificent structure was completed in 108 days after the first trowel of concrete was laid, the number 9 being the theme of the holy structure, of the 18 petals of the lotus, which encloses the apartments where *Bhagawan* would stay, of the pillars, steps, and trellis squares, all in multiples of 9, the Brahman Number.

Sri P.K. Sawant reminded the audience that Baba blessed Maharashtra, while in His previous body at Shirdi and it is Maharashtra’s good fortune again that His Dharmakshetra is established here itself. Baba said that everyone is living, moving, acting, and accumulating merit or demerit as a consequence, in Kurukshetra, for '*Kuru*' means ‘to do’. In this process, if the current of *Dharma* illumines every moment of life, then the Kurukshetra becomes Dharmakshetra. This, He said, is the lesson that Dharmakshetra will radiate round the world.

Baba took up residence at Sathya Deep, the big rotunda with the lotus and a moat filled with water all around; the place immediately became a hive of spiritual activity, a prolific purveyor of sweetness and light. There, children brought together in Sathya Sai *Bala Vihars*, boys and girls of the *Seva Dal*, adult workers in the *Bhajan Mandalis* and *Seva Samithis*, all receive Love and learn reverence. Baba speaks to seekers and social workers, who gather in the Prayer Hall and they return with a deeper understanding and a wider outlook.

Meanwhile, scores of omnibuses, spilling over with the Sai devotees, sped into Bombay from distant towns, the occupants singing *Bhajans* at the top of their voices, making the pedestrians believe that *Prasanthi Nilayam* was passing by! Every train that drew up at the Victoria Terminus, Bombay Central, or Dadar brought special coaches from Madras, Trivandrum, Bangalore, Vijayawada, Nagpur, Navasari, Delhi, Calcutta, Lucknow, and Dehra Dun and the villages around, coaches packed with men, women, and children happy beyond measure, racing against time to have *Darshan* of the *Bhagawan* they adore. The journey was strenuous and irksome, but the tedium vanished as the vitamin 'G', released by the *Bhajans*, acted fast on both body and mind. And not just by land! The sea and air too helped in transporting the joyous lot, who came into Bombay by ship and plane from Ceylon, Singapore, Jakarta, Manila, Kuwait, Dubai, Casablanca, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kampala, Arusha and Malta, from Hong Kong, Fiji, Teheran and Tokyo, the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of America, the islands of the West Indies, Peru, and Brazil.

For, the First World Conference of those, who chose to accept Baba as their Master and Preceptor, was to be inaugurated on 16th May, at Bombay, in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Campus. Baba declared that this was the first time in the history of the world that a World Conference of the devotees of an *Avatar* was being held, in the immediate physical presence and under the direct supervision and observation of the *Avatar* Himself! No wonder they flew India-wards in flocks, like birds on the ocean's open roof, winging towards the sheltering mast!

As the delegates streamed into the Hall that day at sunrise, they found a friendly fragrance beyond all memory, a warmth of welcome seldom known before. Behind the dais, on the wall, were two murals, one depicting Chaitanya lost in the ecstasy of *Sankeertan* and the other, Thyagaraja, the saint who sang from the depth of his heart of the Compassion, the Majesty, and the Might of the Rama Form of God he had ever before his eyes! Behind the chair that Baba was to grace was a mural of the Lamp: the Flame of Light and Love, straight and bright, which no wind could shake or dim! At 9 a.m., Baba came in, showering the fresh petals of His gracious smile on all present. The sight of Him emitting Light and Love thrilled and delighted every one of them. Soon, the heavenly echoes of *Vedic* chants tingled in the ear; then, after certain preliminaries, Baba called upon the delegates from each state to speak on the organisational aspect of *Sadhana* in their respective regions. In response, Judges, Vice-Chancellors, Scientists, Doctors, Poets, Administrators, and Businessmen rose and presented reports of the activities of the *Seva Samithis*, Study Circles, and *Bhajan* Groups engaged in

Sadhana, prompted by devotion, in their states.

Howard Murphet from Australia said, “Australia needs Your Love, Your Light.” Tideman Johannessan from Norway confessed, “Your Teachings, Your guidance are urgently needed in Scandinavia, where dogma has very nearly suppressed genuine, spiritual yearning.” Dr. Nallainathan from Ceylon pleaded, “We are children groping in the dark. Make us see!” Dr. C.G. Patel from Kampala prayed, “Africa needs You most.” Indra Devi from Tecate, Mexico, said, “When I speak about *Bhagawan* to the students of Santa Barbara, Berkeley, Chicago, and other colleges, they refuse to disperse after the talk, unless I promise that I would bring Baba to America; they are hungry for Him.” Charles Penn from Los Angeles asserted, “We look to India for spiritual guidance; we pray that Baba will come to us. When He is with us, He will be with everyone else, too!”

The Public Meeting at the Campus held later in the evening was attended by over a hundred thousand and Sai could be seen seated firmly in the hearts of every one of them. The Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sri Morarji Desai, the most puritan of the lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi, presided over the meeting. He had earlier met Baba at Dharmakshetra and sensed His Divine Compassion for a world, struggling in the deepening bog of hate and greed. He was visibly moved, when he saw before him squares upon squares of thickly packed aspirants, women on the right and men on the left; silent, expectant, full of ardour and adoration, from all over the world, from the steps of the temple, the mosque and the church, the gurdwaras and other shrines, feasting their eyes on the charming face of Baba. Sri Morarji Desai said that, the best teacher of man was the *Gita*, since it exhorted him to work for the betterment of the world to his utmost capacity and at the same time, to be unconcerned with success or failure, for God, to whom all work is dedicated, knows best how it should be rewarded.

Baba began His address in Sanskrit! He had directed me to translate His speech into English and I stood behind a mike at the other end of the dais. But, as ‘the language of the Gods’ flowed so mellifluously from those Divine Lips, I was almost struck dumb with admiration and apprehension. How, I wondered, am I to canalise this surging Ganga into the Thames? Soon, Baba continued in Telugu: “The body is the shrine, in which the ‘I’ is installed; the country is the temple of the ‘We,’ the collective will; the world is the temple of the ‘He,’ the sum total of the ‘I’ and ‘We.’ This is a gathering of people of all faiths and so, it is fitting that I assert here, that every faith is but an endeavour to cleanse the impulses and emotions, as part of the process of discovering the Truth, both seen and unseen. The search is for the same Treasure; the Summit is one; only, the tracks are many. The guides too are many, clamouring

and competing for pelf and prestige,” Baba said.

“Even those, who swear that they did not find any trace of God in the depths of space, or who aver that God is dead, or that even if alive, He has outlived His use for man, that He has ever been a handicap and a costly nuisance for man, these too have to admit that there is something inscrutable beyond the reach of reason, something which pervades the world and reveals itself in Love, Renunciation, and Service. That something is God,” Baba declared, in the course of a rousing discourse on the Divinity inherent in the Universe.

Appreciating the efforts of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to resuscitate the ideals and practices of *Sanathana Dharma*, Baba said, “This Conference is the confluence of three holy streams – the *Atmavidya*, which the delegates and visitors held primal for successful living, the *Satsang* provided by the aspirants from all races and religions, and the basic principles of *Bharatiya Culture*, which the Bhavan helped them to remember.”

Seven Sub-Committees, which were discussing the topics allotted to them, presented their recommendations and suggestions to the Open Conference at noon, on the 17th. They dealt with

- (1) *Bhajan, Namasmarana, and Nagara sankeertana*
- (2) *Vedic* and Sanskrit Education
- (3) Moral Instruction in Schools and Colleges
- (4) Enrolment and Training for *Seva Dals*
- (5) Establishment and Working of *Mahila Vibhags*
- (6) Co-ordination of the Units of the Organisations at all levels, and
- (7) Relations between the Indian and Overseas Units of the Sathya Sai Organisation.

Dr. V.K. Gokak then addressed the gathering on the *Avatarhood* of Baba. “We have met here, with the common purpose of affirming the supremacy of consciousness over matter, subject over object, seer over the seen, charioteer over the chariot, and the transcendental over the trivial; so, we will not be baffled, as others are bound to be, by the phenomenon of the Human Form, which the Formless Absolute had donned,” he explained.

As He Himself announced the previous evening, Baba spoke on the grandeur and glory of the Name of God, be it any name, and the steady influence of good its repetition generates in the

individual. “In this age of materialism,” Baba said, “the constant repetition of the name of God is the one hope, which man has, to rise up to Him or to bring Him near. Repeating the Name brings down Grace; Meera quaffed the cup of poison with the name on her tongue; it turned into nectar. Sanctify every minute of your day and night with the unbroken recollection of the Name. I do not want you to think that I desire this Name and this Form to be publicised. I have not come to set afoot a new cult. Know that this Sai Form is the Form of all the various Names, that man has used, and uses now, to identify and adore the One Divine. So, I teach that no distinction should be made between the Names—Rama, Krishna, Eshwara, Sai, for they are, all of them, My Names. Of what avail is it, if you worship My Name and Form without attempting to cultivate My *Samathva* (Equal love for all), My *Shanti* (Unruffled equanimity), My *Prema* (Love), My *Sahana* (Forbearance), and My *Ananda* (Perpetual state of supreme bliss)? Many of you plead for a Message from Me! Well, My Life is My Message. You will be adhering to My Message, if you so live that your lives become evidences of dispassion, courage, and confidence, revealing eagerness to serve those who are in distress.”

As *Bhagawan* cast His Grace-filled eyes on the thirsty faces before Him, eager to drink in the Truth He was vouchsafing to pour into their hearts, suddenly His eyes softened in compassion. His voice rose, the speed of His words doubled and trebled. Everyone present sensed, almost instinctively, that a great moment in their life had come; in ecstatic thrill, they prepared themselves to listen to a great Revelation, to a Benediction that the world can hope to receive but rarely in its history.

He said, “Gathered here today are people, who have devotion, people from all sections of society; I must tell you about My Reality, because ninety nine out of every hundred among you do not know. You have come here, drawn by diverse needs or interests, by a taste for spiritual matters, by eagerness to develop the institution to which you are attached, by admiration or affection, by love or reverence or loyalty, or just in a spurt of enthusiasm to join others in their exultation, or to share with them your own.

In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My Reality, either today, or even after thousands of years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry, even if all mankind were to join in that effort. But, shortly, you will become cognisant of the Bliss showered by the Divine Principle, which has taken upon itself this sacred Body and this sacred Name. Your good fortune, in having this chance, is greater than what was available to the anchorites, monks, sages, and saints and even to personalities that embodied facets of the Divine Glory!

Since I move with you, eat like you, and talk to you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but a human phenomenon. Be warned against this mistake. I am also deluding you by singing and playing with you and engaging Myself in activities with you. But, any moment, My Divinity may be revealed to you; you have to be ready, prepared for that moment. Since Divinity is enveloped by humanness, you must endeavour to overcome the *Maya* (delusion) that hides it from your eyes.

This Human Form is one, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, all the Names and Forms ascribed by man to God, are manifest. The statement in Telugu was *Sarvadaivathwa Swaroopalanu Dharinchina Maanavaakarama Ee Aakaramu*. Do not allow doubt to distract you. If you only install in the altar of your heart steady faith in My Divinity, you can win a vision of My Reality. Instead, if you swing like the pendulum of a clock, one moment of faith, another of doubt, you can never succeed in comprehending My Truth and win that Bliss. Fortunate are you that now, in this very life, have a chance to experience the Bliss of the *Sarvadaivathwa Swarupam* (the Form of God in all Forms).

Let Me also draw your attention to another fact. In the past, on the occasions when God incarnated on Earth, the Bliss of recognising Him in the Incarnations was vouchsafed only after the physical embodiment had left the world, despite plenteous evidences of His Grace. Moreover, the loyalty and devotion, which those Incarnations commanded while in the physical embodiment, arose through fear or awe at their superhuman powers and skills, or at their imperial and penal authority. But, ponder for a moment on this Sathya Sai Manifestation. In this age of rampant materialism, aggressive disbelief, and irreverence, what is it that brings to it the adoration of millions from all over the world? You will be convinced that the basic reason for this is the fact, that this is Divinity in Human Form.

Again, how fortunate you are that you can witness all the countries of the world paying homage to Bharat; that you can hear, even while this body is existing, adoration to the Name of Sathya Sai reverberating from even the nooks and corners of the world, when this Form is amidst you, with you, before you!”

This thrilling declaration stunned the delegates and as they left the hall and reached their rooms, each one found inches added to his height, for each felt blessed with a unique vision. Often had Baba spoken of His being the Incarnation of God, of being God Himself in human form, but this time, He had emphatically identified Himself with all Names and all Forms of God that man ever moulded in his mind, in the course of his history on Earth!

The next day, in the morning hours, the reports of the sub-committees were considered by a meeting of all the delegates and a few more delegates addressed the gathering. Baba summarised the conclusions and spoke on the basic approach to service through the Sai Organisation. In these days, when the world is safe only for hypocrisy, Baba's directives had to be straight and sharp. "It is wrong," He clarified, "to believe that all have equal rights and duties and obligations and responsibilities. You cannot say that all cows are equal and purchase them by the dozen. Some may be dry, some may clamour for more feed, some yield less milk, some are young, some decrepit, some tame, and some wild. Nor are all men equal. The code of conduct, for each and towards each, is decided by changing factors, like age, profession, status, authority, scholarship, and sex and considerations as to whether the person is a teacher or pupil, master or servant, father or son, sick or healthy, etc. As far as I am concerned, there is only one rule that binds Me: Love. That Love will quieten you, it will comfort you, and it will inspire you to merge with Me."

When the Conference met for the evening session, speeches in Sanskrit were delivered by four *Pundits* of the All-India Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha founded by Baba. Mrs. Osborne addressed the gathering in English. She was introduced as the wife of the author of the book 'Incredible Sai Baba', written about the previous incarnation of the Inexplicable Sai Baba, now with us!

Baba offered to sum up the suggestions for spiritual uplift that emerged from the deliberations among the delegates, as also the gist of His talks with representatives from the various States. He spoke about *Bhajans*, *Dhyana* Sittings, Study Circles, and particularly about *Nagara sankeertan*, which received attention as a very important activity of the Units. "This was how," Baba said, "Jayadeva, Gouranga, Tukaram, Kabir, and Purandara Das led God into every heart. Gather together in the hours before dawn and walk slowly along the streets, singing *Bhajans* glorifying God. Carry the Name to every doorstep. Wake up the sleeping. Purify the air polluted by day-long angry shouts of hate and greed, faction and fear. What greater service can you render than this—beginning the day with the Name of God and helping others to remember Him?"

The valedictory meeting of the Conference was held at 10 a.m., on the 19th. Baba wanted that all those, who had come from far and near, be informed of the major decisions of the Conference, which were rare directives aimed at the spiritual upliftment of the common man. Dr. Gokak, in his address, found himself saying, "Sai is the gateway to all the greatness, all the effulgence of the spirit," for he was too overwhelmed to be silent. "Sai is no blinding

word; Sai is no limiting word,” he said, “It is a word that contains the meaning of every other word. In the beginning was the Word! That Word is He.” Mr. Bharde, Speaker of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly said that, Baba was fast transforming Bombay from *Bhoganagari* into a *Yoganagari* (from the City Sensuous to the City Divine). It could well be said that, this process of transmutation is on, not just in Bombay, but the world over! Baba too spoke of the urgent need for man to be aware of his immortality and to draw courage therefrom, as Arjuna did, when overcome by despondency.

Dharmakshetra, where Baba stayed during the Conference, was the venue every day, for a number of gatherings, where Baba was busy explaining, elaborating, elucidating, and emphasising the fundamentals of spiritual discipline and wisdom; regardless of time and unmindful of the exhaustion His physical body was likely to get. Besides this, Baba was guiding there a Prasanthi Youth Camp of over 65 University alumni. There was held a special gathering of the Lions of Bombay City, who sought from Him guidance regarding the basic attitudes that will help their activities and the philosophy that can sustain them. It was noticed that Baba granted audience to the overseas delegates more often. It was because they had fewer chances of personal contact with Him and they were eager to be as near Him and for as long as He permitted.

Among those, whom Baba drew to Himself during the Conference, was the veteran Gandhian, the scholarly statesman, the patriotic writer, the practical administrator, the devoted student of *Bharatiya* Culture, Kulapathi Dr. K.M. Munshi. He had realised, more than most of the doughty warriors led by Gandhiji in the struggle for *Swaraj*, that India had to be independent, so that she can gain self-respect and adore her own culture and thereby, make her invaluable contribution to the progress of humanity, through her adherence to the ideals embedded in that culture. The *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan* is the institution, through which Munshi sought to achieve the revival of Indian culture and so, implant in the hearts of the Indian Youth a genuine appetite for living their lives as true sons of *Bharatha Mata*, as legitimate inheritors of the peerless wisdom gathered by the sages of this land. Baba agreed to have the Conference in the Bhavan Campus; a fertile field, wherefrom a rich harvest of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* culture was to be reaped in the near future. This fact Baba mentioned with appreciation. So, Dr. Munshi visited Dharmakshetra as well as the Conference Hall and he said, “All my life, I have taken a keen interest in personalities, to whom supernatural powers are attributed; I have tried to understand their ways, how they project their personality and release streams of faith, and transform their followers into dedicated persons.”

When Dr. Munshi met Baba for the first time in Dharmakshetra, hope met fulfilment, aspiration met achievement, and prayer met the boon desired; for, Baba has come. Come He has, to install *Bharatiya Vidya*, that is to say, *Atma Vidya*, on the throne of Science, to reinstate India as the *Guru* of humanity, to help Indians to win the fruits of India's independence, teaching them the way to master the self and through Indians, the rest of the world.

Baba observed that Dr. Munshi's right hand was trembling slightly, on account of chronic Parkinson's Disease. Then, in Dr. Munshi's words, "Baba rose from His seat, took my fingers and covered them with His own, and rubbed them with sacred ashes, which came out of His hand. Then, He waved with a sweeping gesture and caught a ring He had materialised; He slipped it on the little finger of my right hand. I immediately perceived the stiffness of my fingers almost gone; so had the trembling in the right arm and leg." It needs to be mentioned here that the cure was permanent and not a passing phase, for as the science of medicine says, Parkinson's Disease (Paralysis Agitans) is one of the least tractable of maladies, even as regards the relief from its symptoms!

More than this miraculous relief from a physical handicap, which he was stoically tolerating, Baba removed the handicaps, which stood in the way of the septuagenarian savant accepting Baba as the *Guru* he was seeking. Baba visited Munshi's home and all the members of the family found themselves confiding in Him. He assured them that He was with them through all the turbid years of torture and sacrifice, martyrdom and power, disillusionment and determination, revival and recuperation. He told Munshi's son that He was with him, years ago, when he had to take refuge with a way-side Station Master while travelling by train! He took upon Himself the burden of bringing health and happiness upon his kith and kin, for none is there beyond the pale of His Love. Dr. Munshi writes, "He has the capacity to plant seeds of faith in men—seeds, which, when they sprout, will liberate them from greed, hate, and fear."

No wonder, then, that all the mental reservations, with which Munshi approached Baba, whom he had taken to be just another in the array of babas he had encountered during his chequered career, disappeared the moment he recognised the Reality and he did not hesitate to declare this in the pages of the Bhavan's Journal, one of the leading Indian Periodicals commanding a circulation of 50,000 copies. Describing his campaign in Britain, Julius Caesar said in a historic phrase, "*Veni Vidi Vici*," (I came, I saw, I conquered); here, "I went, I saw, I was conquered"! This is the experience not only of Dr. Munshi. Everyone, who goes

to Baba and sees Him through eyes that are clear and keen, has the same experience.

On the 18th, at the special request of Indra Devi, who had planned a “Crusade for Light in Darkness” aimed at illumining the hate-ridden hell within the human heart, Baba lit a Perpetual Lamp at Dharmakshetra. That Lamp, and other lamps lit from that sacred flame, will serve to shed the Light of Love on all, who meditate on them.

The rising of the Sai Sun made certain vested interests feel ill at ease. Bewildered at the millions milling towards wherever Baba was, calculating practitioners, who traded in religion, feared that the traditional tithes and offerings would soon dry up, threatening their very sustenance. Little did they know that Baba has come to water every plant in the Garden of Faith, that He was no sower of schism, but the Great Harmoniser, the Mountain Peak that appeared to some as Siva, to some others as Vishnu, to some as Christ, to some others as Allah or as Buddha, according to the angle from which they viewed. The yellow section of the Press yielded to the temptation of blasphemy and scandal-mongering; the more responsible periodicals tried to probe and understand. They requested that their representatives meet Baba and try to measure the depth of the rare Phenomenon in their midst. About 30 special correspondents, representing leading English and Indian language newspapers, came to Dharmakshetra on 21st May. The questions they asked were naturally prompted by curiosity; they wanted to know the purpose and modus operandi of the “miracles” performed by Baba. In reply, Baba declared that these were evidences, rather than demonstrations of the Divine. “It is Love that prompts Me to give and when I want to give, the thing is ready,” He said. “I can, by My *Sankalpa*, change the earth into sky and the sky into earth, but that is not the only sign of Divine Might. It is the Love, the Compassion, the supreme Patience to deal with all—this is the Unique Sign,” Baba explained.

Those, who came to probe, were prompted to sit and learn. He advised the newspapers to stress the unity of Indian culture, to emphasise the values of the Indian way of Life, instead of playing up the differences and defects. He wanted them to indulge neither in flattery, nor in mudslinging; He asked them not to inflame or burn incense, but portray and highlight all examples of service and sacrifice.

On the 24th, Baba left by car towards Gujarat, where a large number of Study Circles and *Bhajan Mandalis*, and the miracles emanating from His will, had soaked the people in Sai Devotion. He visited Navasari and Surat on His way to Baroda, where He spent a day meeting devotees from the area around, like Nadiad, etc. Baba then returned to Bombay and

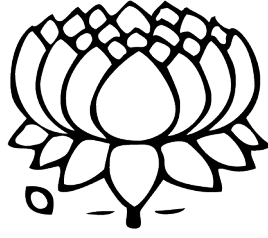
left for Poona. The Andhra Association of Poona welcomed Baba at the premises of their Association (but, it was not owing to any linguistic or regional label; for, which geographic region can claim to contain Him more than another? He belongs to all humanity). Baba spoke of the problems that afflict mankind and of the valid and valuable solutions thereto, discovered by sages millennia ago. The people of Poona felt blessed at the chance to have the *Darshan* and imbibe the nectar of His Discourse. On His way to Hyderabad, Baba halted at Solapur, where He urged the people to investigate into their own inner resources and learn to develop them. "Develop unshakable faith in yourself, in your capacity to live well and long, in your capability to be of use to others," He exhorted. At Hyderabad too His message was a tonic to the wayward and the vacillating: "Be cheerful and sprightly. Cultivate faith in God, keep virtuous company, nourish discipline, and cherish lofty ideals of service. Control the senses; avoid seeing evil, hearing evil, relishing evil thoughts and sights, words and news. Go straight, not along a crooked path. Do not read trash, or see foul films. Discipline the wavering mind by means of *Bhajan*, *Nagara sankeerthana*, and *Namasmarana*," Baba directed. On the 10th of June, Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam.

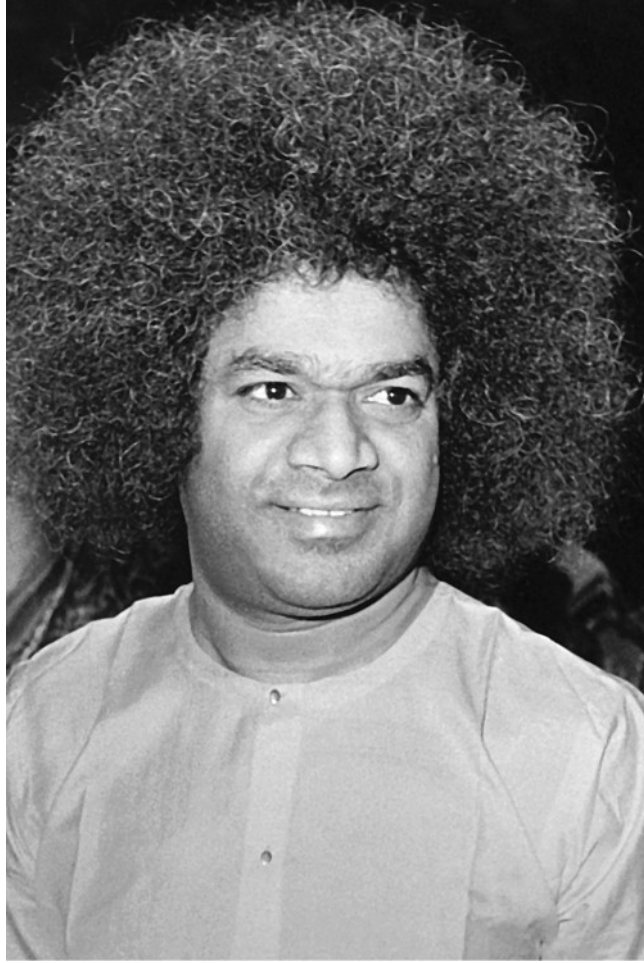
This chapter may well be closed with an extract from a letter from Charles Penn, on his return to America, after being exhilarated by his first physical *Darshan* of Baba, having his faith and devotion enriched by the experiences at Dharmakshetra and the World Conference at Bombay—especially Baba's Revelation of His being the One Divine Principle come in Human Form. Baba appeared before him at his U.S. residence and said, "You, Charles, saw at Bombay the tens of thousands of seekers of Liberation, striving to catch at least a glimpse of Me. These numbers are but a drop in the ocean, compared to the countless unseen souls, who try to reach Me from beyond mortal bounds. To all I give My Light and Love and help each forward, towards Liberation.

All, who come to Me in their concrete form, have fortunately reached the stage, when they are beginning to 'see' the reality. Those, who cry for the chance to see Me in the concrete form, have their prayers answered; to each I give every opportunity for *Darshan*, for they deserve and receive My Love.

Then, Charles, there are those, who may never see Me in the concrete form. They have, all the same, reached Me through a friend, a book, or a photograph. To each of these, if they yearn deeply, I give My *Darshan* inwardly. These too I love as deeply, for they have begun to see themselves as being beyond their body, as Divine Souls. This is true advancement towards self-realisation. Liberation and Peace can be theirs through loving the Lord in

meditation. All, who meditate upon Me as the One with many Names and Forms, will have *Shanti.*"







Chapter 3

The Awakening Continent

When He saw a sad face, or heard a groan of distress, He stood for a moment, waved His hand gently, and created for the person the Divine Cure. He went up to the lines of standing Africans on the margins of the assembly; He held many by the hand and brought them Himself into the shade among the others, so that they may sit in comfort.

I have resolved to enfold the people of the world in the fostering care of Universal Love, as laid down in the *Vedas*. For, the world is My mansion and the continents are the halls therein. I have come to inscribe a golden chapter in the history of humanity, wherein falsehood will fail, truth will triumph, and virtue will reign. Character will confer power then, not knowledge, inventive skill, or wealth. Wisdom will be enthroned in the councils of nations.

“Do not be misled. It is not My purpose to strike men dumb by the display of miraculous might! I have come to confer the boon of blessedness, the benediction of bliss as the reward for genuine, spiritual endeavour and to lead mankind into Liberty, Light, and Love.”

With those words, Baba concluded His revelation of Himself and His Mission on Earth, which thrilled the one thousand seven hundred delegates privileged to listen to Him.

On the last day of June, barely fifty days after this announcement, Baba emplaned the Boeing leaving for East Africa from Bombay. This was His first voyage beyond the confines of India, that is to say, accomplished physically, announced in advance, and undertaken with members of His entourage.

He was going to the infant republics of a continent that was just emerging into the dawn. He was to confer courage and consolation, to knit hearts and quicken the circulation of Love! Baba always rushes to where aspiration calls, or anxiety gasps.

The citizens of Bombay, at a mammoth Public Meeting convened at Dharmakshetra, bade Him farewell on the 29th of June. Later, at the Airport, crowds spilled over the terrace, pushed through to the tarmac area in thousands, and used every atom of enthusiasm to cheer Him as the plane took off!

Flying at 590 miles an hour at altitudes of over 35,000 feet, Baba was busy in the Boeing, granting the passengers (many of whom had boarded the flight on purpose) signs of Grace, such as autographing a book or photograph, materialising a handful of curative ash, or furnishing illuminating answers to solve personal problems of every kind.

Bob Raymer of Los Angeles, a member of the party, saw Baba keep both His feet pressed on the slanting back of the empty seat just ahead of Him; he did not miss the chance; he clicked twice and got two pictures of the Lotus Feet, which millions adore. At this, Baba pulled out one of the cards from the pocket behind His seat and wrote an affectionate admonition, sending it to "Bob, Boeing 707!" Bob responded with apology-cum-adoration, through another picture card, "The sky is blue, the ocean too; our wish has come true, we are flying with You!"

In fact, the sky was not always blue. It was mostly murky, what with the huge concourse of slow-moving, monsoon clouds on their way to India. The sea mirrored the sky; there was an occasional zig-zag of silver ripple upon its surface. One felt as if the plane hung in mid-air, while sea and land were pulled away from underneath by an unseen hand. Soon, gleaming streaks of rocks and boulders, and blotches of greenery were visible as far as the eye could see. But, fluffs of cloud soon hid the ground. Mount Kenya was announced! We saw only its jagged crown of blue, over the sea of milk.

In a moment, that sea was over us! Below us, scintillating in and reflecting the sun, was a quilt of red and brown roofs, Nairobi! The clock showed four minutes to twelve, while our watches insisted it was already 2:24 P.M.

Baba at the door was greeted – "*Nandalala! Yadu Nandalala!*" spontaneously, from the yearning hearts of thousands perched on all available vantage points. While we of the party waded past the counters and through the corridors, filling forms and having certificates stamped and signed, climbing over the routine hurdles, Baba was whisked away in a floral automobile by Dr. C.G. Patel, into the gathering from which the welcoming *Bhajan* had emanated.

"It was a feast for the eye and ear – the scene, where they showered flowers and waved lights,

when they sang melodiously and from the depths of their hearts,” Baba said. “I was reminded of the days, when Jayadeva and Gouranga sang the Glory,” He wrote.

We had to proceed to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda—the State known as the ‘Pearl of Africa’. The road was 407 miles long. The cars sped on, encouraged by the fine, unbending road through miles of delightful scenery.

The motto of the State of Kenya (through which we passed, until night enveloped us) is ‘*Marambee*’ - “Let’s pull together,” and this spirit was evidenced all along the route in wheat fields, cattle, plantations, and groups of village-folk on the wayside, brimming with vitality. They were merrily dancing along with leafy boughs in their grasp, which they shook vigorously at the sky.

The tedium of dreary hours of travel was made less monotonous by the beautiful avenues of trees, through which we passed. Their restful green, together with the coolness of air as we climbed higher and higher, was comforting. The rains that come upon this land all the months of the year, have mothered a succession of gurgling streams and fresh water lakes.

We had a glimpse of the Rift Valley, about which I had read when teaching Anthropology in my college at Mysore. Two thousand feet below us it gaped, with sheer escarpments for its banks! We saw the soda lake, Nakuru and the town bearing its name. A sizeable gathering of eager Africans and Indians awaited Baba there; they were rewarded with *Darshan*. Baba moved among them and discovering a few, who needed *Vibhuti*, He created it and blessed them. From Malaba, on the border of Uganda, an impressive pilot car preceded the car of Baba, as a sign and symbol of His being welcomed by the rulers of that state. The cars drove on to Jinja, where the Nile emerges out of the womb of Lake Victoria and, channelled through turbines, flows on the North to fulfil its vow of a 3,500-mile pilgrimage to the Mediterranean Sea.

Kampala was reached at 1:30 A.M., hardly the hour for a hearty welcome by a cheering throng. But, Baba is a category by Himself. Wildly waving banners of silken welcome stretched across the streets; every few yards, a floral arch (someone of the party counted exactly 108) beamed with lights as Baba passed through. Outside Dr. Patel’s bungalow, 2,000 people continued their *Bhajan*, singing with unabated ardour in the hope that Baba would give them the coveted *Darshan*. And Baba did not disappoint them. Alighting, He walked slowly amidst them, feasting the eye and delighting the heart. Their restraint and reverence were exemplary.

Never had Kampala yearned so excruciatingly for daybreak as on that night! For the city knew that Baba had arrived and would be granting *Darshan*, when the sun rose. Baba came out early next morning; He stood facing the unprecedented, massive gathering. He moved, lithe and lovely, along the passage between the barricaded blocks of people, showering upon everyone His supreme Compassion.

When He saw a sad face, or heard a groan of distress, He stood for a moment, waved His hand gently, and created for the person the Divine Cure. He went up to the lines of standing Africans on the margins of the assembly; He held many by the hand and brought them Himself into the shade among the others, so that they may sit in comfort, listening to the community singing of the *Bhajans*. We felt that those were the devotees, who prevailed upon Baba to fly across the sea and give health and happiness by personal ministrations.

“I have no need to see places. I am everywhere, always!” Baba told us, “You may drive around. I have My work, work for which I have come.” But, Dr. Patel persuaded Him to visit the Hindu temple, the Bahai House of Worship, and the Television Tower Hill. While driving down, He summoned the six-foot Police Constable, acting as motor-cycle escort, and created for him a charming locket with the picture of Christ, to be worn around the neck. He knew the man was a Christian. Baba has come to fulfil, not to destroy or to disturb, man’s faith in God. His love brooks no barriers, no boundaries, no walls separating ‘ism from ism.’ During the *Bhajans*, He selected the sick and the disabled, the deaf and the dumb, the blind and the maimed and taking them into the bungalow, He spoke to each one with love and tenderness. He spoke in Swahili, in English or Hindi, and gave each some token of Grace – holy ash, talismans, and lockets with His own portrait, or the picture of Christ, or some sacred design. Everyone, who came out of the room, had a smile on the face, a twinkle in the eye, a ray of sunshine in the heart, and firmness in the step. A person, who was stone deaf when he went in, came out wonder-struck at the amazing world of sound. A polio-affected boy came prancing outside; a patient, who was wheeled into the ‘Room of Hope’, walked out, his hands on the shoulders of his companions, while a volunteer pushed the empty chair out of the gate.

The third day of July was a memorable one. First, the flight to Nagorongoro Crater. It is the largest concentration of wild life in Africa. Reaching the Entebbe International Airport by car, Baba, with some members of the party, boarded a twin-engine aircraft at 9 A.M., while three of us having full faith in Him, brushed aside the fear aroused by overzealous friends, who warned that a single engine plane was not the craft that one would choose to fly over a jungle, teeming with wild life!

We followed Baba in that frail super-wagon, piloted by a veteran Britisher, who oozed confidence all the time. For an hour and a half, we flew over the immense, inland sea of fresh water—Lake Victoria—which the Nile attempts in vain to drain. We could see hundreds of gazelles, zebras, and wild beasts, while our vehicle flew slowly over the Serengeti National Park. The Crater is a huge, circular plain, over 127 square miles of grassland, bush, and forest, sheltering large masses of wild life. A few Masai Manyattas, stock full of fat cattle, were to be found in this fantastic milieu.

As we drove from the air-strip, to the Crater Lodge, a family of wild elephants received us with the gentle flapping of broad ears and an array of ivory tusks, gleaming in the pre-noon sun. Land Rovers took us into thick shoals of wild buffaloes, zebras, and gnus. Soon, we entered the haunts of the simba (lion). From within the safety of the cars, we admired a heavy-weight male yawning on a mound and very nearly ran over a pair of fat females, having their siesta amidst the grass! We came upon more such families and soon, they endeared themselves to us. Baba had come to bless them, we felt. Rising up almost from nowhere, a stately, dowager lioness walked majestically towards a group of sleek giraffes. This onset of danger was communicated to the long necked fraternity by some birds and they, in their turn, alerted the buffalo, zebra, and gnu! In a few seconds, they disappeared into the distance and the distinguished lady stood, sniffing the empty air!

Baba drew our attention to this demonstration of mutual service. He said, man is highlighting the advantages of competition and the struggle for survival, but the beast is teaching him co-operation and service as the ideal means for survival.

We took off from the Crater at four o'clock, in the afternoon and when we neared Lake Natron, the planes flew perilously over a newly formed volcano, emitting incense to the God of Fire! Our 'mini' wagon hovered a while, awaiting a signal from the airport over the Nairobi National Park, giving us a bird's eye-view of giraffes and ostriches, before landing at Embakasi.

Baba's car crawled through the crowded roads of Nairobi to the park, where He was to address His first public meeting in Africa. The rush of listeners was without parallel in the annals of Kenya, for no visitor, until now, had such universal appeal. People loyal to a single faith or to all faiths, sceptics and *sadhakas*, scientists and spiritualists, men and women from all walks of life were there, filled with eagerness to see Him, hear Him, and if possible, to be accepted by Him. Baba builds His shrine in every heart with the brick of Truth and the mortar

of Love.

His discourse stressed that each human being, in fact each being, was “a spark of the Divine Effulgence, a wave of the Divine Glory.” He advised all to see beneath the skin, within the physical, mental, and even intellectual encasements. “This habitation of flesh and bone, of fear and feeling, of doubt and desire, is the residence of the One, Indivisible, All-pervading God.” Baba knows that this vision is the strongest basis and the surest means for ensuring racial and regional harmony.

Baba returned to His residence and blessed the enormous gathering that surged around it. Later, He sat before the television set, which some members of His Party were seeing for the first time. The programme that was then on led to a discourse by Baba on the evil sown by that medium. Baba said that, it blunted the higher impulses and activated the lower. “The aim of the sponsors is to bring more and more people before the receivers; so, standards get more and more vulgarised and this valuable instrument of education is reduced into televisham (telepoison!),” He said. Baba is a relentless opponent of films, comic strips, and horror serials that sow the seeds of sensualism, anarchy, greed, and bloodthirstiness in virgin minds.

Nairobi is the only city in the world, which has a suburb owned and inhabited by Lions! It awakens every day to the full and free roar of these regal cats. On the 5th July, early in the day, we went into the National Park and proceeded to the Hippo Pool. There was a busy school of these monsters and also, a few crocodiles basking quite near. This led Baba to point out to us how the beast is wiser than man in the art of living. “We slaughter our own kind, for the greater glory of ourselves!” He said.

While driving back from the Pool, we saw two magnificently maned lions and three well-groomed lionesses basking indolently in the sun. They did not wince at all, when a dozen cameras clicked. Instead, they preened themselves like stars surrounded by fans! We also watched many ostriches and giraffes, hurrying in uncouth haste to some mysterious rendezvous.

After lunch, Dr. Patel took Baba and the party in cars to Nanyuki, 6,400 feet above sea level—a town, where, if you have the poetry in you, you can experience the thrill of having one foot in the Southern Hemisphere and the other in the Northern, for the Equator passes through the place! In fact, a hotel here boasts that the Line passes through its veranda.

The road to Nanyuki showed us coffee and sisal plantations; thatched huts of the Kikuyu peeped furtively at our cars. In Secret Valley, we stayed at ‘Tree Tops’, built on high stilts,

from where at night, under an artificial moon, we could see leopards mauling meat, bison licking salt, and elephants, gazelles, and other beasts showing themselves off and generally enjoying themselves.

It was Thursday; so, Baba turned us away from elephantine fantasies and the antics of animals. He took us, instead, into the jungle of our own minds and described how the wild beasts sheltering there could be trapped. He told us about the discipline that can quieten and domesticate them. Suddenly, with a circular gesture, He created a jewel with the imprint of His portrait and placed it in the hands of the person, sitting by His side. Here! Wear it! For many years, you have longed for this. Then, turning to us, He said, “Oh, each of you wants something, don’t you?” And the Hand waved again. There was a golden vessel in His Hand, now. When He unscrewed the lid, it was full to the brim with Divine Ambrosia! Fragrant beyond imagination—thick, sweet, liquid Grace!

Next morning, on the road back to Nairobi, Baba alighted at Nanyuki and many other towns and villages, where crowds were waiting for Him. He wondered, “Who has informed these people that I would be passing this way?” They must have sensed it through His compassion; that was the only explanation we could offer. About noon, Baba and others boarded the waiting aircraft and flying over the Rift Valley, the famous Kenya Highlands, and the inland Port of Kisumu on Lake Victoria, reached Entebbe.

Baba’s Presence at Kampala was utilised by many, for receiving Blessings and Counsel. The High Commissioner of India, Shri K.P.R. Singh, the Chief of Staff of the Uganda Army, General Idi Amin, the Minister of Defense, Mr. Onama, the Minister for Information and broadcasting, Mr. Ojira, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Bataringaya, the Inspector of Police, Mr. Ortega, and other African leaders met Him at Dr. Patel’s residence and obtained a glimpse of the Glory of Baba. During His stay, He addressed gatherings of Lions and Rotarians, Doctors, Businessmen, and members and workers of service organisations. He replied with His natural gentleness, sweetness, and sense of humour, even intimate, personal questions from those who participated. Towards the close of each of the meetings, He moved among the participants, creating and distributing to those around Him, portraits in enamel or gold, or Christ for the Christians, Guru Nanak for the Sikhs, Zarathustra for the Parsis, and of Himself for those who yearned for them. He spoke lovingly and for long to a group of students from Makerere University and stood amidst them, when they wanted a photograph with Him.

During the group meetings, a variety of questions were asked, “If there is a God, why cannot we see Him?” Baba replied, “Why should you seek to see God? You are God. There is nothing that is not He. Experience Him that way.”

“How can we be happy always?” Baba said, “Derive joy from within. You are the *Atma*, the eternal spring of *Ananda*. Love all; no one will then hate you or envy you.” He said to the doctors, “Jealousy is the professional disease of doctors and lawyers! Be glad, when another doctor earns a good reputation or remuneration; honour the affirmations you made at the Convocation, where you took your degree.”

On the 7th, Baba addressed the first public meeting at Kampala. He told the multi-racial, multiradial gathering, “Just as the same bloodstream circulates in all limbs of the one body, the One Divine Principle activates the entire Universe. Do not get too involved in the turmoil of living and ignore the kinship in God that you have with all beings around you. Do not over-emphasise individual variations, but fix your attention on the universal kinship. Ignore the beads, contemplate upon the unifying, eternal, ever-present thread.” This was a heartening message and it was received with enthusiastic approval by Muslims, Christians, Bahais, Hindus, and Parsis alike.

On the 8th July, Baba addressed another vast gathering at Kampala. He said, “Here, in Kampala, I shall pinpoint the basic requisites for a good, contented, and happy life.” He elaborated the discipline essential for it, like *Dhyana* and *Prema*, meditation and love. “Love is Power; Love is Bliss. Love is Light; Love is God,” Baba said.

These discourses bound Baba close to the hearts of the Africans. People recognised in Him a friend, a guide, a leader, and a light. But, word had spread that Baba was leaving on the 10th for India, since that was the day of *Guru Poornima*. So, that evening, when Baba moved among the thousands seated in the Pandal, rows of Africans knelt, handing notes and letters to Him, some with tearful pleas. Looking through a window of Dr. Patel’s bungalow at the faces filled with adoration, I could not suppress my tears. I was overcome by a delightful sense of gratitude for the opportunity Baba gave me, to witness this spontaneous surge of devotion in a new continent. I was awakened from my reverie by a light tap on my back from Baba, who enquired, “Why the tears?” The notes and letters were filled with sorrow, for the Africans had learnt that Baba planned to leave for Bombay on the 10th. “Father, do not leave us so soon!” was the plaint in every prayer. India was informed by cable that the return was postponed.

The full moon day, when spiritual aspirants dedicate themselves anew at the Feet of the Master, was on the 10th. Baba had told Bombay that He would reach that City by plane, at 9-45 P.M., leaving Kampala at 11 A.M., so that both Africa and Asia would have the thrill of His *Darshan* on the same day! But, yielding to the yearning of the Africans, He decided to spend the whole day at Kampala, granting devotees in other continents other evidences of His Omnipresence.

More than twenty five thousand persons gathered that morning for the *Bhajan*. The Africans joined the chorus led by a Tanzanian, Mr. Zoodoo. For over two hours, Baba walked slowly among the lines of lonely, love-seeking, eager hearts, giving each person a handful of sweets and a packet of *Vibhuti*. To the amazement of the recipients, most of them discovered inside the packet, lying ensconced in the midst of the holy ash, enamel or metal portraits of Christ, the Cross, Krishna, or Sai Baba Himself. The "Uganda Argus" published an article, announcing that Baba had brought the message of unity and service to the peoples of that continent. Baba's discourses as well as activities were also televised and broadcast, so that the entire population could share the inspiration of the Gospel!

On the evening of the tenth day of July, Baba talked to about 200 young men and women, who served as volunteers at the *Bhajan* gatherings and at Public Meetings. The constables on duty, as well as the chauffeur of the pilot car were also rewarded by His Grace. Baba appreciated the spirit of service and the intelligence of the youth of Kampala. He spoke about them later, at Bombay, on His return. "They had no previous experience in controlling and guiding such vast congregations; they had no training; they were their own guides, but they behaved with exemplary patience and alertness. They worked tirelessly, round the clock, with smart team work," He said.

On the 11th, besides the *Bhajan* sessions, for which, as days passed, more and more people from far and near flowed into the capital, Baba met groups of *sadhakas* and active workers in service organisations, from the far flung states of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Later, Baba visited Dr. Patel's clinic and also, the residences of many ardent devotees. Wherever He went, throngs of people, eager to win one more glimpse of the Radiance, rushed in and stood at the gates or on the pavements for hours.

On the 12th, Baba proceeded to the Murchison Falls National Park, one of the most beautiful and fauna-stocked regions of East Africa. The straight road, leaping over the shoulders of a series of hills, tempted the person, who was at the wheel of our car, to race and overtake

every car that moved in front. We were catapulting so fast, that a sudden turn of the road found the car rolling madly over and over, finally coming to rest on its jammed wheels in agonised silence.

Baba's car had gone on beyond Masindi, which was some 30 miles distant. He said to the people in His car, "The second car has trouble. They will resume their journey in a taxi!"

We four were thrown against roof and floor, receiving knocks, bumps, hits, and cuts we did not know where! The man at the wheel fell out; the friend on his left struggled to open the stuck door with his uninjured left arm. The cushion from the back seat was on my head, wedged between it and the caved-in top! I found myself sitting astride on the chest of my companion, with blood tricking on his shirt from a long gash upon my forehead, caused by my glasses getting broken there, when I knocked myself against I do not know what!

The third car came up in utter bewilderment and friends gently pulled us out. There was a hospital, right where the car had presented us with this surprise item—"Kasturi Falls"—not included in the original programme! I went in there on my own, despite the bleeding gash, the black eye, the cut on the left leg, the huge lump on the right! I was the man, who was worst hit, thank Baba! The entry, as made by the African doctor on the hospital O.P. Form (which I still have, though it is clearly printed thereon, "This Form is the property of the Hospital"), is dated 12-7-1968. Name: Kasturi. O.P. No. 11112/ 68. Diagnosis: Minor cuts. (Baba's Grace!) Treatment: Surgical Toilet. Inj. Anti-Toxoid 1500.

I lived to laugh at myself, for so helplessly bouncing inside a speed-intoxicated car and landing on my neighbour's chest! Speed goeth before a fall! Baba always advises, "Start early; drive slowly; reach safely!"

The fatal corner in front of that hospital I shall remember, until memory lapses. The name of the place is as potent as a charm; its charisma is remarkable. Repeating that name might avert future, automobile misadventures for me. Nakkasongola! That is the word for the place. It is a thaumaturgical polysyllable! I wish someday to plant a stone on that spot inscribed—"Here, four men called out 'Sairam'! They were saved."

We packed ourselves thick in the third car and reached Masindi. From there, we hired a taxi and moved on towards Baba. When we neared the Park, we saw the welcome poster: "Elephants have the right of way!" It means that we could see some herds during the day.

We found a pair of gigantic bison eyeing us rather wickedly, munching roadside grass. Our cars were ferried across the wide, green Nile and passing between two live tembos (Swahili,

for elephant) with sharp, white tusks about five feet long, we rushed into Pra Safari Lodge; Baba came forward to pat us and pet us, while listening to our description of the accident, of which He already knew.

Oh! It was worth all the panic and pandemonium inside the car! No mortal mother could have been more compassionate towards her injured child. The curative *Vibhuti* was ready. He applied it Himself on the cuts. He used His own handkerchief as a bandage for my eyes. He created ointments and tablets out of nowhere. He pressed or rubbed the spots of pain gently. He drew us near with affectionate consolation. He gave us the strength to dismiss the picture from our minds. I thanked Nakkasongola and the person, who drove our car, for this unique gift of Divine Tenderness.

Within minutes, we went for a motor-boat ride up the Nile, for over fifteen miles, towards the Murchison Falls, and back. The boat passed through a 'school' of hippos lying close together, showing just their eyes, ear tips, and occasionally, their noses above the water! Some of them were on land, with red, barrel-like hippolets behind them, peeping through the thick, papyrus reeds. There were crocodiles too, with open jaws, but the vicious tail and voracious jaw did not frighten the juicy hippos in the least.

We saw crocodiles in the water and hundreds on the shore, perhaps even thousands, for the shore seemed alive with crocodiles from one end to the other. Winston Churchill, who had plodded through these jungles and boated along this stretch of the Nile in his youth, fired a shot from his gun at one of the sleeping saurians. "At the sound of the shot," wrote Churchill, "the whole of the bank of the river, which before was a long, brown line of mud, rushed madly into the Nile. At least a thousand of these crocodiles had been awakened and astonished by that single shot." Baba noticed many plovers hopping about the crocodile area, a few daring even to perch inside the horrible teeth traps! He said, "Look at the mutual service that bird and beast are rendering to each other!" Yes, the plovers are the only species of the birds that are tolerated and even welcomed by the crocodiles; they eat the parasites off their scales and pick the decaying bits of food from between those deadly teeth!

Returning to Pra Safari and recrossing the Nile, our cars took us through elephant-land to the Nile above the falls. Herds of thirty or forty elephants looked from a distance like flocks of sheep grazing on the downs, but when we neared them, the sight filled us with awe and amazement. A bull stood a few yards away from the car, wherein Baba was and to give him a good *Darshan*, Baba stood on the foot board! It appeared as if he was highly grateful, for he

stood there gazing a few minutes, filling his little eyes with the loveliness, then turning back, quickly joined the herd.

We could hear the loud, incessant hum of the Falls at many a turn of the road; as we neared, it became a thunderous roar and suddenly, there were the Falls! Small groups of Africans were dancing on the river bank in wild ecstasy. The Africans are seldom still. They trip it as they go to the tune of some lilt.

The Murchison Falls are furious and fascinating. The Nile comes foaming and rapid, down a continuous stairway, until the bed contracts suddenly into a gap in the rock, barely six yards wide; through this strangling portal, the tremendous river is shot in the single jet, down a depth of 160 feet, into a chasm of terror and beauty. Baba was happy that we could see the sublime scene. Bob Raymer got a series of lovely pictures of Baba before these waters. Returning to Masindi, through a road rendered slushy with a thick shower of rain, we had to slacken speed to avoid skidding. Elephants crossing the highway were another cause of delay.

From Masindi, we proceeded to Kikondo, 80 miles away, where a *Bhajan Mandir*, in authentic Afro-architectural style built by a devotee, was to be inaugurated. It was a large estate, growing paddy, sugarcane, and bananas. The *Mandir* was full of squatting African labourers, who venerated Baba as the God-man from the East. Baba sat on the special seat arranged for Him, but soon, He was among the kisans, creating and distributing sweets and curatives.

He told the gathering of Africans and Indians that man alone among the animals had strayed from his allotted tasks; the rest stuck to their *Dharma*, whatever the obstacle. The tiger will never stoop to eating grass; the elephant can never be tempted to have a meal of fish or flesh. But, man, the crown of creation, is grovelling in the mire of bestiality and withal, proud of it.

Kampala was reached at 1 P.M. The lateness of the hour only whetted the appetite of the thousands for *Darshan*, who were waiting there, busy with *Bhajans*. Baba gave them the much coveted gift, walking among them and standing on the decorated dais long enough to satisfy them.

The 13th of July was a day of growing gloom, though everyone had the chance of *Darshan*, *Sparshan*, *Sambhashan* (seeing, touching the holy feet, and listening). From Mwaza, Daressalam, Mombasa, and Eldoret, people came to persuade Baba to visit their places. The Mayor of Kampala pleaded for a short extension of the stay. Baba is always everywhere. He reveals His Presence to all who call on Him or even to many, who are unaware that God is

amidst them for their sake. So, for Baba, there is no going or coming, no arriving or leaving. Still, the physical presence wins such indelible loyalty that one feels an orphan without it.

On the 14th, hours before dawn, half of Kampala was at Dr. Patel's door. Streams of cars and planes brought Jjinja, Mbale, Kakira, Kabale, Ikaye, and Kapila, where Sathya Sai *Seva Samithis* and *Bhajan Mandalis* were active. "I have no desire to stun or shock people into submission or adulation; I have come to install Truth and Love in human hearts," Baba declared. Therefore, thousands prayed that He should stay on, or if that was not possible, at least come again very soon.

When He got into the car, even the hefty constables on duty, keeping back the surging rows of citizens, wiped the tears streaming from their eyes! Baba patted their backs, but that only sharpened the pang! The road to Entebbe was choked with cars, trucks, scooters, and cycles. The East African Airways Plane, which was to take Baba to Nairobi (where the Air India International Boeing was waiting), developed a small trouble while moving on the runway; so, Kampala got a bonus of two more hours with Baba on its soil! The motto of the State of Uganda is "For God and my country." And Baba blessed the people, who bore it.

Nairobi was reached at 2-30 P.M. and the thousands, who acclaimed the plane, were rewarded by a quick *Darshan*, since the delay prompted the airport officers to let the Boeing on its way immediately. We flew over Ethiopia and Somali land, ferried across the Red Sea at a height of over two miles and a half, and landed at Aden at 5-15 P.M. Bombay was 1910 miles away and two hours and forty minutes ahead!

Though Baba did not disembark and though the date of the flight had been postponed while at Kampala, we were surprised to find a long line of devotees and admirers (Indians and Arabs) filing into the aircraft and touching the Lotus Feet. Baba spoke to them with sweet affection; He created holy, healing Ash for their sake. At 12-45 A.M., Indian Standard Time, the plane, which had the unique, good fortune of carrying the most precious cargo that the world offers in this age, touched ground at Santa Cruz, starting off a chorus of "Jais" from over ten thousand quickly pounding hearts.

On the 15th, Baba addressed a mammoth gathering at Dharmakshetra, which was presided over by Dr. K.M. Munshi. Dr. Munshi could not suppress his tears of joy and gratitude, when he said, "I was pained to see around me the quick decline of faith in God and earnestness in religion, and I was on the brink of despair when I contemplated the future of this ancient land. But, as I look upon Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and witness the transformation He is

effecting in the hearts of millions, I am heartened and happy.” Baba declared that racial conflicts and animosities spring from sheer ignorance of the basic brotherhood of man.

He related the heart-rending story of Karna, the eldest of the Pandavas. His mother cast her first-born into the Ganges; it floated down-stream and was rescued by a charioteer, who fostered the child as his own. He took him to the court of the Kaurava cousins, who had vowed eternal vengeance on the Pandavas. Karna grew up as the very right hand of the Kaurava group. The Pandavas hated him and fought him, determined to destroy him, no matter what the cost. They succeeded at last. It was only then, that they learnt that Karna was their eldest brother, born of the same womb! O how they lamented, repented, and cursed themselves!

All men are brothers; they owe love, service, and reverence to one another; but, they are not aware of this Truth and so, they hate, they fight, they kill, they poison themselves by revenge. “Triumph over another is only another name for self-humiliation,” Baba said.

“It was this Truth, this Unity, often misunderstood as diversity when seen through ego glasses, that was propagated by Me in East Africa,” declared Baba, “The people, whom I met there and those who listened to My discourses and talks, had a glimpse of the Reality, upon which the waves of joy and grief, of gain and loss, of travail and triumph alternately rise and fall.”

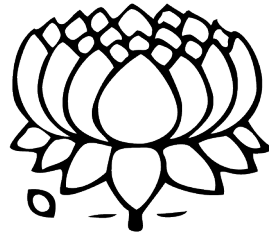
“Many of them told Me that the vision of the Indian Sages alone can save them and fill the heart with Peace. The splendour of the genuine culture of India will spread in this manner, from continent to continent, from country to country, from community to community, continuously, in the days to come. That is My Task. That is My Will,” He said.

Months later, a Muganda teacher wrote from Africa, “Baba! Redeem me, deliver me from grief! One of my best friends was fortunate to touch the hem of Your robe, while You walked near him. He directed me to pray to You and to save myself from sorrow.” An aspirant from Mukono wrote, “O Lord! Give me the strength to forgive those, who harm me; make me forget the injury I receive from them.”

A Roman Catholic from Sierra Leone writes, “Many of His sayings I have inscribed in a little notebook and I often refer to it, when I am in need of consolation or guidance. Someday, if it is His will, I may have the good fortune to come to *Prasanthi Nilayam*. Or perhaps, it may never be. But, I shall continue in my own way, to try to cultivate an ever-increasing awareness of God.”

These are intimations of the wonderful transmutation of urges, the sublimation of impulses, inclinations, and attitudes the touch of His Robe, or the touching of His Feet, a chance perusal of a book by Him or about Him, a word or two from Him, or the grateful acceptance of a glance from His eye can bring about in man.

May the Light of His Love illumine our hearts, too and may the whole world shine in that eternal effulgence.





Chapter 4

Example And Precept

Example is better than precept, the saying goes; but, the example that the older generation is holding forth before the young now, is more pernicious than their precept! Baba has laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of parents, teachers, and society, for bringing up the rising generation in dull, drab, dismal schools, with God kept out and idealism negated.

Baba hurried from East Africa to Bombay and from Bombay to Anantapur, enroute Bangalore, since a great step in the campaign of *Dharmasthapana*, for which He has come, had to be initiated on the 22nd of June, 1968. Baba was establishing a college for Women at Anantapur!

Aurobindo has said, “A new centre of thought implies a new centre of education.” This *avatar* has no destructive weapon in His possession, like the *Kodanda* (bow) of Rama or the *Chakra* (discus) of Krishna. He relies on education, rather than elimination; instruction, rather than destruction. The good are encouraged to become better, the better to enter the region of the best and the blest. The bad are encouraged to shed the coil of cowardice, which keeps them in fear and induces them to cause fear in self-defence.

Baba is, therefore, the premier educator of the age. Every word of His is a *Mantra*, every speech an *Upanishad*, every exhortation a *Gita*, every song that He sings a pilgrimage into the holiest core of one’s being; a revelation of one’s destiny and Divine glory. Baba instructs the incorrigible, the intransigent, the infidel, and the infant in spiritual *sadhana*. He takes all into His fold. In His presence, one cannot say, “The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.” They may be sheep or goats; they may not look up at all; they may not realise that they are hungry; they may not recognise good from bad; they may not be aware of where food is available in plenty! But, Baba fondles them and feeds them with food that ensures health and

happiness beyond measure, beyond the ravages of time and the erosion of doubt!

Baba often writes letters to those, whom He wants to correct or console, or to conduct into the fortunate group of the illumined. He showers love, guides with sweet companionship, warns sternly, and leads *sadhakas* by the hand. The books He has written – Prema Vahini, Gnyana Vahini, Prasanthi Vahini, Dhyana Vahini, Dharma Vahini, Sandeha Nivarini, the Gita Vahini, and the Bhagavatha Vahini – are treasures that shed light on intricate problems of spiritual discipline. Passing down the corridor of time, the epics and *puranas* have accumulated interpolations from imaginative enthusiasts, which mar the grandeur of the originals and disgust seekers of Divine Nectar. Baba has edited the Bhagavatha and the Ramayana in a manner, which makes them invaluable guides for aspirants to liberation. Baba's discourses, which attract gatherings of tens of thousands even in the most secluded village, herald a new era in the lives of all, who hear them, even if they do not understand the language, which He uses; for, as Baba says, when heart communicates with heart in Love, language is an impediment, rather than an instrument!

Baba as Educator does not spare even the hours of sleep of those, whom He intends to teach. When He struck Swami Abhedananda on the head, while He was lying in bed at Sri Ramanasram in Thiruvannamalai, the aged Swami sat up and wondered who, what, and why! Baba gave him the *darshan* of the late Sri Ramana Maharishi and of Himself, separately and as an upsurge of light, in which both merged. This was to reveal to him that He and his *guru* were the same. Then, He spoke to him in Telugu about the ways, in which he had to modify his meditation, to enable him to get rid of the doubts and deviations that haunted him.

Baba appears to some *sadhakas*, during what can only be described as 'dreams' and favours them with timely advice, such as, "Concentrate on the *Visuddhi Chakra*." The *sadhaka*, who received this advice, asked me what and where the said *Chakra* is situated. It was found that this *Chakra* is the centre of nourishment for the body, which at the time was just the problem confronting the *sadhaka*. Or, "Read the *Mahanyasa* also," He advised another *Sanyasi*, who was ceremonially reading the *Devi Bhagavatam*. Baba also teaches during *dhyana*, as He does Mr. Penn in California, whenever the latter has a spiritual dilemma or knot to unravel. I shall give here two extracts of what He once said to a *sadhaka* in a dream, which the *sadhaka* recorded in his notebook as soon as he awoke:

"You must have freedom not only from fear, but freedom from hope and expectation. Trust in My wisdom: I do not make mistakes. Love My uncertainty! For, it is not a mistake. It is My

Intent and Will. Remember, nothing happens without My Will. Be still. Do not want to understand; do not ask to understand. Relinquish understanding. Relinquish the imperative that demands understanding.

Meditate upon the feeling between waking and sleeping, know how immediate, how close, how deeply compatible it is. There is the feeling of really giving up; the body is limp. Awareness too is limp. Let the feeling of God overcome you like sleep.”

Appearing to devotees in dreams, Baba has taught them new *bhajan* songs, sitting in front of them as music teachers do, with instructions to sing them during the *Dasara* festival at Puttaparthi. Later, when they arrived at Puttaparthi, they were prompted by Him to sing them! A devotee was once so involved in civil suits at court that he was nearly bankrupt. Appearing to him while he was asleep, Baba told him plainly, “Properties, My dear fellow, are not proper ties!” Baba, as an Educator and as the Incarnation that has come in order to educate, is engaged in that task, all over the world, at all times.

His opening words at every discourse are “*Divyatma Swarupulaara!*” *Embodiments of the Divine Atma!* That is the sum and substance of all His teachings. Man had to realise that he is the *Atma*, unconquerable, indestructible, unlimited, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-wave of the ocean that is God. The awareness of this truth is *Bhakti*, “*Swaswarupa-anusandhanam-Bhakthirithi-abhidheeyathe,*” says Sankara.

Baba insists upon every one being told this truth about himself, every one being given a glimpse of himself in the mirror, so that he may live in strength, faith, courage, and peace. He says that, the tree of life, the *Aswattha*, has its roots in the *Atma*. If that faith is absent, we dry up and are wafted hither and thither by every wind of fortune-wayward whiffs of transience! The trunk and the branches, the leaves and twigs of the tree of life are the ramifications of our contacts and commitments with the outer world, the kith and kin, the I and mine, the plus and minus, into which life proliferates. The flowers of the tree are words, thoughts, and deeds of Love; and the *Ananda* derived is the fruit. But, Baba says the sweetness in the fruit is virtue, *Seela*, good, godly character. Without *Seela*, which makes the fruit worthwhile, and the *Atmic* root, which sustains the tree, life is mere ploughing of sands, the body is but fuel, fodder for vermin.

In order to imprint upon man the truth of this *Atmic* core, Baba has a continuous chain of organisations, which are supervised and managed by devotees soaked in His teachings and guided by Him. Toddlers are gathered by affectionate arms into *Bala Vikas* classes; they were

called *Bala Vihars*, but the name has been made more purposive and significant. They are taught *Bhajans*, they enact plays on the themes selected from the *Upanishads*, epics, *Puranas*, and the lives of saints, many of them written by Baba Himself.

They are trained to revere parents and elders, to observe the rules of the road, to draw and make models of scenes and shrines reminiscent of the higher values of life. They greet each other reverentially with “Om”, which is as it should be. In short, the *Bala Vikas* child discards the A for Apple and adopts the A for Arjuna stage. It does not repeat, “Baa Baa Black Sheep, have you any wool?” or talk of Robin Redbreast and Santa Claus. It repeats Raghupati Raghava Rajaram or Subrahmanyam, Subrahmanyam, Shanumukhanatha Subrahmanyam!

Then, the boys and girls enter the Junior *Seva Dal*, where they learn selected verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* and songs sung by Saints in adoration of God. They attend first aid classes, practise meditation, develop artistic talents through plays, painting, and floral decoration, and speak before gatherings on Baba and His teachings, reproducing the illustrative stories and parable that Baba uses.

When they reach the age of eighteen, they are inducted into the regular *Seva Dals* and given a sound, spiritual training to withstand the hard realities of *Seva*. They organise *bhajans* in jails, remand homes, leprosaria, hospitals, slums, schools, and hostels. They help in keeping their town or village clean and healthy, donate blood to the blood-banks, study the scriptures, and enact moral plays. Every opportunity is used by them to develop skills and place themselves at the disposal of the distressed and the deprived.

The older people have the *Seva Samithis*, which organise *Bhajan Madalis*, *Nagara sankeertana*, Study Circles, and the celebration of Holy days to commemorate the greatness of saints and sages. The *Mahila Vibhags* of these *Samithis* extend *seva* among women and conduct *Bala Vikas* classes, guiding the children along the path of Truth. Thus, under Baba’s continuous and consistent inspiration and guidance, a fertilising flood of higher education and spiritual transmutation is sweeping over the earth.

Baba has declared that He has come to establish Truth, uproot untruth, and revitalise the moral ideal in the affairs of mankind. The *Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation* has become the new centre of education for the new centre of Sai thought, in this Sai Era. Baba says, “This organisation is intended to broaden service. It has not been devised to parade devotion, or collect devotees, or canvass support for some new-fangled breed. It is dedicated to the great task of progressively aiding people to realise their Reality and merge in it.”

Vidya dadathi vinayam (Education must endow man with humility). The wise are humble that they know not much; the fool is proud that he knows so much. Humility and reverence are the genuine fruits of education. Instead, reverence is the first casualty in schools and colleges, today. Baba repeats a *Gita* dictum: *Pundithah samadarsinah* (Scholars visualise Unity). They do not promote factions, they do not encourage hatred. They seek the One; if known, all else is known! They seek harmony and not conflict. But nowadays, scholars have envy, malice, and conflict as their professional malady. Baba finds that the task of *Dharmasthapana*, the re-establishment of morality and righteousness, has to be undertaken in the educational institutions also, for every year, they pump into the stream of national life the perfidious poison of irreverence, indiscipline, inefficiency, and rootless culture.

The *Upanishadic* student was advised by the *Guru*, before every lesson, that education was a shared experience and that the slightest tinge of anger and misunderstanding between the teacher and the taught contaminates the gift, the giver, and the receiver – all three.

Students of today terrorise the teacher; teachers calculate their monetary rewards and evade their fundamental duty to teach. They do not examine their right to claim reverence. The *Upanishadic Guru* sent the student home, after he had completed his studies, with the exhortation: *Sathyam vada, dharmam chara, mathru devo bhava, pithru devo bhava, and acharya devo bhava!* Utter Truth. Walk in the path of righteousness. Revere the mother as God, revere the teacher as God! But, parents are now treated as obstructions, troubling the young from the other bank of the generation gap. The mother is a bundle of old-world superstitions and the teacher is a person, who can be bribed or frightened into granting certificates and marks to pass examination and get degrees!

Therefore, Baba felt that youth has to be quickly led back onto the road they have missed. They must be warned of the calamity that awaits them and through them, the country, not only in India, but in all lands. The student unrest that is spreading over the world is but the external rumbling of an internal maladjustment. The atmosphere, in which they grow up and the roles, which they are being prepared for by parents, elders, and rulers, are reeking with hypocrisy and pettiness, triviality and titillation.

“Example is better than precept,” the saying goes; but, the example that the older generation is holding forth before the young, now, is more pernicious than their precept! Baba has laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of parents, teachers, and society, for bringing up the rising generation in dull, drab, dismal schools, with God kept out and idealism negated. Baba

holds that there is no authority, which has laid down that an *Avatar* can do this or cannot do this. Krishna planned to drive a chariot, for this was the best and speediest way for the task, which He had come to accomplish. Rama went hunting a golden deer, though He knew that it was only a clever decoy, for it was necessary that He should be away, so that Ravana could kidnap Sita by a stratagem, a fell crime, for which death was the legitimate reward! So, Baba asked, “What prevents Me from starting colleges? No one can prevent a flower from imparting its fragrance to the air! It is My Nature to educate, to draw forth into the light the Divinity that is inherent in man. I use all means for that consummation. You have been praying – *Thamaso maa jyotir gamaya* – lead us from darkness into Light! This is one of the answers.”

Baba thought of correcting the education of women, in the first instance, for as He has written in *Dharma Vahini* – “No nation can be built strong and stable, except on the spiritual culture of its women. This generation is full of unrighteousness and injustice, malevolence and greed, falsehood and cruelty, because the mothers, who brought it up, were not vigilant enough or intelligent enough, or because they were not trusted enough by men with the responsibility of chastening and fostering their children. What is past is past. To save at least the next generation, women have to be educated in a well-planned manner and endowed with the wisdom, fortitude, and faith that can equip them for the great responsibility that rests upon them.”

In June, 1966, Baba was at Anantapur, the biggest town of the District and its official capital, 60 miles from Prasanthi Nilayam, at the invitation of the High School for girls. The plight of the girls, who had to go to distant places for higher education and also, the kind of education, for which they were spending much time and money, affected Him. He resolved upon another step in His task of *Dharmasthapana*; for, women have been the custodians of *Dharma* since millennia; the cradle is the first school for the children of man. He announced that there would be a Women's College at Anantapur, soon. He resolved upon making Anantapur the focal point of the Educational Revolution that will consummate the revival of *Sanathana Dharma*, for the lasting benefit of the human family.

The Women's College was inaugurated on the 22nd of July, 1968. Very few colleges are inaugurated under such distinguished auspices, or with the promise of such triumphant careers for the alumni. Few have, on the opening day itself, such an imposing array of equipment, furniture, books, and above all, a band of teachers with such enthusiasm and academic efficiency.

The Minister in charge of Education in the Government of Andhra Pradesh, who presided over the Public Meeting, said that, what was being inaugurated was not just one college among so many, but a new chapter in the history of women's education itself. He knew that the College was to be the precursor of many more such colleges all over the country, for Baba announced that He was planning a college or two in every state of India, all to be knit together, later into a University, as an instrument forged for His Task.

Baba said, "The prompting behind this College is not the search for reputation, or the desire to propagate a cult, or the hope of monetary profit. Fame is a fickle figment! Reputation rots quite soon. Profit, when it is calculated in terms of cash, defiles. I have allowed this College to rise, because it will install in the minds of the students, the ideals of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema*—ideals delineated in the *Vedas*, described in the *Shastras*, illustrated in the epics, practised by countless generations, and confirmed by experience as best suited for individual and social progress. Every child born in Bharat has the right to know and benefit by this precious heritage.

"Agriculture is for living; *Atma*-culture is for success in life. An educational system that keeps children away from God—the only refuge, the only kinsman, the only guide and guard—is a system, where the blind are engaged in blinding those, who long for light."

"Women are the bulwarks of spiritual culture. But, as is evident from the attitude and behaviour of educated women today, they are fast succumbing to the flimsy attractions of froth and frippery, cheap and shoddy literature, and sensual films."

"Every child has five mothers and owes its loyalty to these five; they fill its life with meaning and purpose. The *dehamatha* (the mother, who gave birth to its body), the *gomatha* (the cow that gives it milk and the bullock that is the partner in growing its food throughout life), the *bhoomatha* (land, that in return for seeds, offered grain a hundred-fold), the *desa-matha* (the region inhabited by the society it is born into, that stamps on it its way of living, lines of thinking, and ideals and goals), and *Vedamatha* (the heritage of spiritual treasure). The first Mother has to reveal to the child the glories of all the other four and so, her status is crucial, her responsibility is pivotal. That is the reason why I have resolved to start a Women's College in the first instance, in order to preserve and promote *Dharma*—the Universal *Sanathana Dharma* I have come to vitalise and lead to victory."

"*Atma-vidya* alone can fix the mind in *Dharma*," Baba declared. The Sathya Sai Vedashastra Patasala at Prasanthi Nilayam is preparing a number of young men, acquainted with the

terrain of the spirit as explored by the adventurous pioneers of ancient India. They also imbibe the message of Prasanthi Nilayam, practising the discipline of silence (not the negative silence, when the temptation to speak aloud and to express emotion and passion are resisted, but the positive silence that springs from freedom, holiness, and awareness of the Omnipresence of Baba).

There is also the All India Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha with its galaxy of *Vedic Pundits* and Sanskrit Savants, who have been commissioned by Baba to share their scholarship and their wealth of *Prasanthi* (unruffled mental peace) with the uninitiated and the struggling, so that they too may get a glimpse of the Glory and move forward. But, Baba says, *Atmavidya* should no longer be the monopoly of *Patasalas* and *Pundits*; it is the right of every human being, endowed with *viveka*, *vairagya*, and *vichakshana* (reason, detachment, and discrimination), whether they are aware of it or not, to imbibe and earn joy and peace.

Water is cheaper than milk. Water is essential for the process of living. Milk is essential for health and strength, to resist the onslaught of disease. Now, secular education (water), which teaches skills and transmits information, is being supplied in schools and colleges. *Atma vidya* (milk) is stored by *Patasalas* and *Ashrams*. Water becomes costly and a high price is paid for it, when mixed with milk. Then, it too becomes nourishing! Therefore, *Atma vidya* has to be communicated to youth in the colleges along with skill and information, so that they can face the dilemmas of life boldly.

Baba says, “We have heard of the Seven Years’ War, the Thirty Years’ War, and the Hundred Years’ War. The war between Man and Mind, between the *Jivi* and *Maya*, the individual and the objective world, is co-terminus with Time. The earliest men were entangled in it; the last man will have to fight it, unless like Arjun, you choose the Lord as your Charioteer and surrender the senses, the mind, the intellect, the desires, the means, and the ends to Him, the war shall not end in your victory. That is the lesson that *Atmavidya* teaches; that is the lesson that the children of men have the right to imbibe.”

Apart from the curriculum and the attention paid to its demands, the College insists upon the students attending prayer sessions and meditation classes. A course of lectures on the Cultural Heritage of India is given during the year. The importance of *Yoga* and mental poise for physical well-being is emphasised and practical lessons are arranged. Students are trained to keep away from the contaminating influence of films and horror comics. They are encouraged to be simple in dress and avoid elaborate hairstyles, which attract attention by

their outlandishness. They are advised to emulate the great women of Ancient India, celebrated in Epics and the *Upanishads*, as well as in History.

The atmosphere of the College, charged with the blessings of Baba, is itself conducive to the development of *Satwic* qualities. Baba visits the College often and advises the students Himself. Occasionally, He brings with Him eminent educationists filled with Sai inspiration to speak to them. Above all, Baba knows every one of the staff and students. He is immediately aware of whatever happens in each one's mind and so, all are ever alert that the limits set by Him for conduct are not infringed. Dr. Gokak has said that, many others have emphasised the ideals of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema*. But, it is only Baba, who has shown them in practice so clearly and so uncompromisingly. "If you yearn for *Shanti*, learn it from Baba. If you aspire to find *Prema*, approach Baba and be inspired by Him. But, there is one more superb excellence—an excellence that is unique in Baba, and that is Power. He has the power to change circumstances, to shape the course of events, to redirect help forward, transmute and terminate whatever He feels needs such treatment. So, when He starts a College and dedicates it for a purpose, it is bound to move along the lines He has laid down. He has the Power. Its students have the fortune of being forged as instruments, for transforming the world into the Heaven He has planned it to become."

"Make Me your Charioteer!" Baba tell us. "Take hold of the unique chance. Ask Me about the *Sadhana*, which can grant you Liberation. For, later, it will be difficult for you to approach Me. Flood streams of people are coming to Me from all quarters. This Divine Phenomenon is bound to grow into a *Viswa Vriksha* (a World-tree that provides shade and shelter for all humanity). This has come down in this Form for that very purpose. It knows no hesitation, no halting. My Name is *Sathya* (Truth); My Teaching is Truth; My Path is Truth; I am Truth."

Baba, luckily, is the Charioteer of the College and so, the students will grow into straight, brave, honest pilgrims. They will grow into good daughters, efficient citizens, faithful wives, affectionate mothers, and expert teachers. The mother brings up the child; she also teaches the child to revere the father. She has to do it, because nature does not bind the father to the child as intimately as it binds the mother.

"Baba has come to teach!" declares Charles Penn, "Let us all avail ourselves of Him. Know that we have been drawn to Him, to learn! We must not only bathe in the momentary bliss of His being, but learn to carry this security, this inner Peace with us to our homes. When we

arrive home, we must remember that distance has no power to prevent Baba's teachings to flow to us. We must remember to ask Him to solve each of our problems and then, be constantly aware of each succeeding moment for His guiding answer. The answer will be clear and correct, and the interpretation will be easy, if only we pray." Every student of Baba's college is privileged to have such a Teacher! This is indeed a great, good fortune!

Baba has a sense of urgency, when He speaks of educational reconstruction, for the consequences of starving the spirit at a time, when boys and girls are preparing for the battle of life, are serious. So, the Anantapur College was started in borrowed rooms and halls and hurriedly erected sheds, so as to avoid any further delay while the buildings came up, according to the plans He had drawn and designed. So too, when He resolved upon boys' College at Bangalore, He graciously allowed the College to encroach into the garden at Brindavan itself, so that temporary structure could be erected there in order to commence the college instantly. "Colleges are not composed of brick or mortar; nor are they to be evaluated by the magnitude of the buildings, which house the classes. They are to be evaluated by the character and usefulness of the students, who fill the classrooms, their behaviour in the playgrounds and outside, their attitudes towards their parents, elders, and teachers, and the ideals they follow in their later lives," Baba says.

Baba Himself supervised, at every stage, the erection of the building for the laboratories, the library, and the classes. He guided the fulfilment of all the contingent requirements and so, on the inauguration day, the college looked spick and span—a rare example of a college completely equipped and furnished on the very day, when it began receiving the first batch of pupils!

On the 9th of June, 1969, the College was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Mysore State, Sri Veerendra Patil. He said, "Baba has come to resuscitate *Dharma*, which is the foundation for the welfare of humanity. *Dharma* insists on the supremacy of ethical and spiritual values and a College fostered by Baba is bound to promote these values among the youth."

Dr. V.K. Gokak, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bangalore, to which the College is affiliated, welcomed the new addition as a "gem in the jewel crown of the Bangalore University." "It will set the pattern for College education, not only in the academic field, but also in the ethical and spiritual fields. This is a college conceived, devised, and completed by Baba's Love, Grace, and Wisdom. Brick by brick, plank by plank, He attended to every detail. It is a lesson for all, who seek to do sincere, loving service. Here, teachers and students

have the unique chance of learning the art of achieving harmony and gaining peace, apart from the intellectual attainments, which the curriculum enjoins.”

Baba drew the attention of the large gathering of rural folk, who had evinced enormous enthusiasm that a College had been established in their village. He said that, villagers still preserve and promote traces of mutual co-operation and brotherly love, faith in God and reverence to elders. He exhorted them to uphold those ideals, so that their children might grow into happy citizens, unaffected by the damaging distractions of city life.

“This College will pay attention to providing for its alumni a complete education, namely *Karmamarga*, *Dharma-marga*, and *Brahma-marga*, all the three – the principles of right action, social behaviour, and spiritual advancement,” He said.

Addressing the students, He said, “You may continue in this college or leave and join some other one, returning home after completing your studies, but wherever you are, I desire that you should shine forth as recipients of the special attention we bestow upon you. Do not enter the fray of political controversies. Politics at present, and perhaps always, is a sordid game, where passions run high, power is sought through devious ways, and prejudices are fanned into hatred. You must become a new type of leader. Shaped in the crucible of *Seva*, march into the future with the Light of the past, as one who appreciates the wisdom that has been garnered through the ages.”

In a message Baba gave to be printed in the prospectus of the College, He stated, “This is a divine and blessed land. The tradition of this land is spiritual, but ninety-nine percent of the people are either ignorant, or scornful of anything that bears the label of spirituality. The people have themselves devalued their culture. Correct your own faults and do not search for faults in others. Be respectful and loving to your near and dear ones, and to your fellow-beings; serve the country and pray for the welfare of the world.”

The College emblem selected by Him is eloquent about the ideals that are being translated into action in the College. It has a five-petalled lotus within a circle. The petals represent the five major religions of the world. *Om* standing for *Sanathana Dharma*, the Cross for Christianity, the *Chakra* for Buddhism, the Crescent for Islam, and Flames of Fire for Zoroastrianism. The Lotus is the ancient Aryan symbol, untouched by the mud where it is born, and unsoiled by the water, through which it emerges and upon which it floats. It is a symbol of beauty, peace, and auspiciousness. Inside the Lotus is the Flame of illumination, without which knowledge is a burden and life an arid encounter with the flimsy urges of the

senses. Overarching the circular emblem is a semi-circular border, along which is printed the College motto, '*Dharmo rakshathi rakshithah; Satyannasti paradharmah,*' embodying the very core of *Vedic* teaching. *Dharma*, it says, guards those who adhere to it and there is no *Dharma* higher than Truth. When *Dharma* ceases to inspire and transform individuals, the world will inevitably be afflicted by agony and fear.

Among the rules for students that are given in the prospectus, we find this sentence: "Now that you have earned the privilege of being students of this College, under the direct guidance and fostering care of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, make up your minds to be worthy students, remembering Baba's exhortation, "Education without character is a great danger." No. 10 of the Rules reads: "Students are particularly advised to cultivate courtesy, helpfulness, and tolerance. Baba's five-fold message of conduct—*Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema,* and *Ahimsa* should inspire everyone working and learning in this College." No.11 reads: "The College attaches great importance to studies." Weekly and monthly tests, quarterly examinations, etc. are laid down and progress reports are sent to the parents periodically.

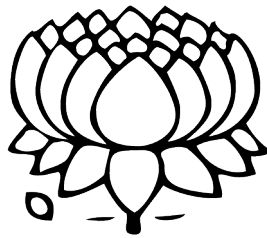
Here too, *bhajan* and meditation, and Prayer at the beginning of the day's work, for which students and members of the staff have to be present, are insisted upon. Above all, Baba evinces maternal affection upon every student, however large the number in the College. He loves the boys so much that they obey Him implicitly. They are so afraid of His neglecting them or ignoring them even for a minute, if they misbehave or break any of the taboos, that they are ever vigilant in discipline.

Baba always advises them to avoid five delinquencies: The eye should not wander towards sights that inflame the senses, or arouse ideas conflicting with morality or the duty towards parents, elders, and the culture of our country. Words that emanate from the mouth should not hurt the self-respect of others, or utter lies, simply because they are pleasant; they should not smack of scandal or spite. The hand should not be raised in anger against anyone, nor should it be used to wreak vengeance or steal another's property. The ears should not exult in salacious stories, scandal, or deleterious lilt. The mind should not be fouled by attachment to bad habits, bad impulses, and plans to achieve the conspiracies of the senses. These five '*doshas*' are anathema in the opinion of Baba and every student is made to remember this by constant warnings from Him.

There is no activity of the College, in which Baba does not evince interest, for He knows that

it is the atmosphere, in which education is imparted and imbibed that really counts. Since the College and Hostel are situated within the compound, Baba walks in during the Prayer Session, presides over the Moral Instruction Lectures, and Himself supplements the Instructor. He writes and directs plays for the College Dramatic Society. Often, He pats a good student on the back, pulls up a lecturer, who saunters into the Lecture Hall a few minutes after the bell, inquires from a sluggard the percentage of marks he secured at the monthly test, creates a fountain pen or a watch for some diligent, well-behaved boy, about whom the Principal gives a report that confirms His own opinion, advises the Librarian about classification, peeps into the dissection room of the budding zoologists, and generally moves about as the Guardian Deity of the Institution.

As a result, the students of the Colleges established by Baba reveal qualities of goodness, levels of sympathy, depths of learning, and veins of golden devotion that few would believe they have.







Chapter 5

Sign And Signature

Baba has said that, the Nagarasankeertana is Bhagavatha in practice... This is self-help as well as social service of the highest order. It is a tonic to the body and shake-up to the mind. Every song cuts the knot of laziness that is infecting someone. You remind your neighbours to offer thanks to God, for the gift of another day; it is a mission of love. It is purificatory Yagna, for it disinfects the air fouled by slogans of anger and cries of pain and pride. It helps to remove inner and outer pollution.

When Baba called, “Roll up your bed and follow Me,” very few realised that the call was for *Nagara sankeertana!* At the World Conference, Baba advised His devotees to wake up at 4 or 4.30 in the morning (the *Brahmamuhurta* as it is called) and move along the streets, singing the Glory of God, awakening people into the awareness of the Divine. *Sankeertan* of this type was a common feature of village life in the past, but due to apathy and ridicule, the habit is fast disappearing. After Baba’s command, people, who had never seen the sunrise, since they arose from their beds only when it was high up in the heavens, have started moving out into the cool, refreshing air to join their brothers and sisters, in rendering the new day a happy event to themselves and to others. When Baba said, “Follow Me,” it was clear that He meant He, in anyone of the Infinite Forms that God assumes and with anyone of the Infinite Names that God can be remembered. As a matter of fact, Baba has announced that hymns on a variety of these Forms and Names have to be sung and that no portrait of either Himself, or of any other Form of Divinity be carried, when the *Bhajan* party moves on. “Follow God,” that is His call.

The intricate mysteries of metaphysics are beyond the ken of the common man; even those, who can delve into them, do it for the pleasure of disputation or dialectic gymnastics; they do

not intend to practise even an iota of the principles of life underlying them. The abstruse labyrinth of rituals, with its armoury of do's and don'ts, creates only apprehension in him. Mere *Gnyana* (knowledge) can make you a good logician or a debater, capable of indulging in hair-splitting sophistry. But, if it is lived through, or in other words, implemented, then you become a *Gnyani* (a wise man). *Sadhana* or practice helps you to achieve the goal of life. Baba has restored faith in the Name and the efficacy of the Name. "Call on Me in your distress; it is your right to invoke My Grace."

Dr. D.J. Gadhia, of the H.H. Agha Khan Dispensary, Arusha, Tanzania, writes: "In May, 1971, Mr. Jamnadas M. Patel became seriously ill. When this poor soul was called to attend on him, there was no breathing; the heart-sounds had completely stopped. The pulse could not be felt. The heart was massaged with sacred *vibhuti*, with sincere prayers. He recovered miraculously. When Mr. Jamnadas visited Puttaparthi, Baba told him, "I gave you new life, as your doctor called Me at the right time." Devotees of Baba know the unfailing power of the Name to bring forth the Grace of Baba. They need no elaborate argument, to convince them that *Sankeertan* is the shortest and the sweetest means of winning His Grace.

But, there were some, who had their fears! Will people get up so early? What about the rich, the officers, who wield authority over the area? Will the neighbours permit singing in the early dawn? Will the police keep quiet? What about dogs, will they not bark us out or even inflict a bite? Many, who felt they should not be seen singing in the streets, but who wanted to observe Baba's command, started at 3 a.m., when the streets were empty and all were sleeping soundly, and came home quickly before they could be discovered! But soon, the atmosphere changed. A wave of whole-hearted enthusiasm swept over the land from one end to another. Neighbours welcomed the melodious tonic! The police themselves joined, to imbibe delight! The dogs were no problem at all. From one day in the week, the *Keertan* was increased in frequency to two or three and in some places, every day in the week. The distances covered increased, the number in each group multiplied. Soon, each section of the town or city had its own *Nagarasankeertan* party. They usually met in a temple and proceeding from there, ended up in another temple.

In Sathyavada, it was found that some mysterious person knocked at the doors of sleeping members and asked them to wake up and join the party. In Chembur, Bombay, they noted that on no day, even during the most furious monsoon days, was the *Nagara sankeertana* party disturbed or bothered by even a drizzle. At Gauhati, Assam, Sri Dutt Gupta moved on along the usual route at the usual time, with the name of God on his lips and the group behind

him. A cyclonic wind was raging and roaring, bringing “cats and dogs” with it; on the way, the *chaprasis* and watchmen of the State Treasury warned them to take shelter from the oncoming calamity, but they sang and stepped as slowly as usual, to the place where they generally end the *bhajan* and perform *arati* before they disperse. The rain did not fall upon the road, the drizzle did not wet their clothes, and the wind did not disturb their hair!

People unable to walk without a stick have, after attending a few of these matinal *Bhajans*, thrown off the stick and walked majestically along. I know of an invalid in Channarayapatna, Mysore, who earned Grace in this manner. Baba has said that, the *Nagara sankeertana* is *Bhagavatha* in practice. When the senses are still dormant after the night’s sleep, before they get too loudly involved in the pursuits of the busy day, you should move along the quiet streets in the cool, thrilling the predawn silence, bringing God into every ear, radiating the fragrance of the Divine Name through every open door and window. This is self-help as well as social service of the highest order. It is a tonic to the body and shake-up to the mind. Every song cuts the knot of laziness that is infecting someone. You remind your neighbours to offer thanks to God, for the gift of another day; it is a mission of love. It is purificatory *Yagna*, for it disinfects the air fouled by slogans of anger and cries of pain and pride. It helps to remove inner and outer pollution.

Several such groups, operating in different parts of Hyderabad, converged towards the Lotus Feet of Bhagawan, one day. The sight and sound of *Bhajan* was a feast for the eye and ear: Baba blessed the participants and granted them further impetus to continue their *Sadhana*.

An *Akhanda Bhajan* (singing the Names of God continuously, for 12 or 24 hours) was arranged on 25th July by the *Bhajan Mandalis* of Bangalore, at the famous Lal Baug gardens in the Glass House. The inscription at its entrance, “The garden of flowers is the temple of God” appeared so apt, during the singing of *Bhajan* in the Divine Presence of Baba. Baba lit the lamp to mark the inauguration of the *Bhajan* and when it came to an end, He sprinkled, on the heads of the thousands attending, the water sanctified by the holy hymns. In the evening, when Baba arrived to give His discourse, it was raining. Baba does not like anyone suffering in sun or rain. His heart is moved with irrepressible compassion. He moved amongst the people, made them sit inside the building, lifted an iron chair for Himself from behind the table on the dais, and placed it in a position from where all could have *Darshan* and thereafter, commenced His discourse.

Krishna Jayanti, 1968 was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam for 3 days. Many *Samithis* call it

Sai Krishna Jayanti: they have converted it into a children's festival, when children are given new clothes, trained to enact small plays and sing *Bhajans*. At Prasanthi Nilayam, *Bhagawan* gave three discourses on Krishna and the significance of the *Leelas*. Dwelling on the value and validity of the Name, He said that, the root of the Name Krishna implies power to attract, to enchant. Krishna is the personification of the Divine principle that is born in the umbilical region of the body (Mathura), which is conveyed to the mouth (Gokulam) and there, fostered by the tongue (Yasoda), who alone knows the sweetness. "Foster Krishna on your tongue," He advised. "Just as the poison from the hoods of the serpent Kalinga was ejected, when Krishna danced upon them, bad thoughts from your system will evaporate, if you recite the name of Krishna," He said.

His interpretation of Krishna-*Avatar* as a consummation of a *Yoga-marga* reveals that this *Avatar* has come to co-ordinate and collate the apparently differing paths to God. The three systems of philosophy – the dualist promulgated by Madhawacharya, the qualified non-dualist promulgated by Ramanujacharya, and the nondualist promulgated by Shankaracharya – are all emphasised by Him as adjusted to the needs and capabilities of seekers and listeners.

An *Avatar* appears from age to age, whenever *Dharma* is on the decline, so as to reaffirm faith in right conduct. *Chitta-suddhi* leads to *Gnyana-Siddhi*, that is Goodness leads to Godliness. The *Avatar* will guard and guide and fill with Divine bliss all those, who have *Satwic* pure virtues. This declaration is addressed to a dualist. From the "qualified non-dualist" point of view, *Jiva* and *Deva* are the two rails, along which the engine, *Manas*, is dragging the coaches of *Vishaya Vasana*. Each coach contains items of luggage, viz. *Buddhi*, Senses, etc. *Atma* is the driver of the engine; if the coupling with the engine is not well tightened, the coaches will be left loose on the line. *Bhakti* and *Shraddha* are the coupling. They should be tightly fixed. It is 'absolute non-dualist' philosophy, when the seen (*drisya*) world is superimposed on the undivided, indivisible *Brahman*. It can only be as real as the turrets and bastions of a city among the clouds. Can anyone build castles in the air and live therein? The turrets and bastions are fantasies and creations of your own fancy, ephemeral and meaningless. So too, in this *Parabrahma*, this *Jagat* is superimposed; it is baseless and false. Everything is only the *Chaitanya* of the non-dual, unequalled, bliss-pervaded *Parabrahma*. According to *Bhagawan*, what others think you are is the dualist view; what you think you are is the qualified non-dualist view; what you really are is the non-dualist Truth!

Dasara, 1968! It was remarkable for more reasons than one. Baba made it clear that He is the

Sanathana Sarathi, as well as Parthasarathi, while addressing the volunteers. “I too have certain vows to fulfil, they have been mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*. I have to uphold the supremacy of *Dharma*; I have to bear the *Yogakshema* (acquisition and maintenance of welfare) of those, who are immersed in thoughts of Me alone. The best way to please Me is to see Me in all beings and serve them, just as you yearn to serve Me.”

Elaborating a declaration about Himself that He had made in the *Gita*, Baba said, “I have none to compel Me to work, nor do I profit by work. Still, I work without intermission, in order to guide and teach and set things that are awry, right. If I remain inactive, how can the wheels of the world revolve? I have no manager, secretary, aide, or assistant. I attend even to the minutest detail, here and everywhere. I do everything Myself. I need no other food than the *Ananda* of beings. I am *Anandaswarupa*, My nature is *Ananda*; *Ananda* is My sign and signature.”

On another day, He announced, “Shall I tell you exactly when I feel restful, relieved, and content? When I know that you are having *Ananda*, through the cultivation of detachment and the spiritual discipline of *Seva*. I am ever engaged in some activity or other for your benefit. There is none to question Me, if I do not act; there is nothing I would lose, or could gain. Although I have no urge to be active, yet you see Me ever active! The reason is, I must be doing something all the time, in order to inspire and instruct you or to set an example for you. I am engaged in activity, so that you may learn to translate every minute into a golden chance to elevate yourselves into Godhood.”

Clarifying another statement made in the *Gita*, Baba said in one of the Discourses, “When the *Gita* directs you to give up all *Dharma*, it does not ask you to give up all *Karma*! For, you cannot escape that obligation. But, when you do *Karma* for God, through God and knowing that He is the doer, not you, every *Karma* becomes *Dharma*, leading to Grace. No *Karma* can then be tainted by sin or sacrilege. The *Gita* assurance is, therefore, not an invitation to licentiousness, sloth, or inactivity; it is a call for the surrender of the ego and dedication to God of all that it is and does.”

Dharma is the Inner Voice of God in the Individual and Community. It is the Voice of History; the Conscience that has shaped itself like a cocoon, to protect the caterpillar, so that it may take wings and fly into the Bliss that is its heritage. And on the last day of the seven-day long *Yagna*, when the Valedictory Offering of silk, gold, sandalwood, and the precious gems He creates for the oblation were placed ceremonially in the significance of that act, He

said, “You have to pour into flames that rise up to destroy (for they are the flames of revelation, purification, discrimination), the limited vision that sees Nature as different from the Divine. The Divine created all this through the Divine and with the Divine substance.”

“*Sarvam Brahma Mayam*”: All this is *Brahman*. The offering is *Brahman*, the fire is *Brahman*, the offerer is *Brahman*, the goal is *Brahman*. Transmute every trifle into God; everything in the objective world is the Divine, appearing to the limited, the myopic, the ignorant vision as different. In a silver idol, the crown is silver, the clothes are silver, the pedestal is silver, the flesh is silver, the face is silver, and the eye is silver. Know the silver and declare: “*Sarvam Brahma mayam.*”

In another discourse, Baba integrated the three paths of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Gnyana* in a very illuminating manner, so that the world could follow them with proper understanding. “When someone asks your name, you do not give your real name; you fob him off with the name, by which your body is identified as separate from other bodies in this life. You do not give the name that has been with you life after life, that has survived many deaths and births, namely, *Atma!* That name is ignored by you, since it is overlaid by three veils – *mala*, *vikshepa*, and *avarana*; *mala* is the dirt of vice, wickedness, and looseness. This is removed by *Karma-marga*, the observance of selfless activity dedicated to high purpose and with no tinge of pride, pomp, or sense of ownership, so far as the fruits of that activity are concerned. The second veil is *vikshepa* – ignorance, which hides truth, befogs the intellect, confounds reason, and clothes falsehood with the tinsel that attracts. This is removed by *Bhakti-marga*, steadily worshipping the source and sustenance of all, Him, the True, the Good, the Beautiful, the Embodiment of Love, Peace, and Joy, in all, as all, for all, through all.”

“The third veil is *Avarana*, the superimposition on the eternal of the temporary, on the rope of the snake, on the noonday desert of the gleaming lake, on the mother-of-pearl of silver, on the *Sarvam Brahma Mayam* (*Brahman* that is the real Reality of the Universe) of the multiform, multi-coloured, distracting, changing world. This veil is removed by *Gnyanamarga*, which reveals the *Atma* as all-pervading, all-inclusive, all-sustaining. When the Illumination of *Gnyana* is gained, the Reality is experienced and man is free. He merges with the Truth, from which he broke off aeons ago, on a long and arduous adventure into the dark night of individuality.”

Dasara is a Festival of Victory of *Shakti* (Power), adored and celebrated in three forms, for three days each – Mahakali (the facet of Power as anger, vengeance, adventure, audacity, the

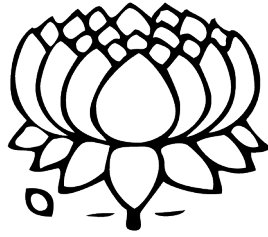
Tamasic nature), Mahalakshmi (all facet of Power as wealth, authority, imperium, prosperity, the *Rajasic* nature), and Mahasaraswati (Power as self-control, vision, value, validity, knowledge, keenness, discipline, justice, aspiration, adoration, the *Satwic* nature). *Dasara* at Prasanthi Nilayam is for everyone, who invests himself in it for Initiation, Instruction, and Inspiration. Kindred souls come from all over the world and so, one is bathed in the glory of Sai, which each one brings in his heart, treasured with loving care. Each person has a golden book of experiences of Baba's Grace written in tears of gratitude. The scholars, whom Baba encourages to delve into the intricacies of philosophical speculation, so that they may ultimately gain the philosopher's stone, which transmutes distinctions into the One Divine, speak in His Presence of the Unfathomable Mystery and later, Baba unravels the same and renders it understandable by His sweet, simple comments. As the Supreme Educator of the Age, He leads us through song, drama, and discourse, through glance, gesture, or gift, through word, wit, or rebuke into the path, which leads through Love unto Light.

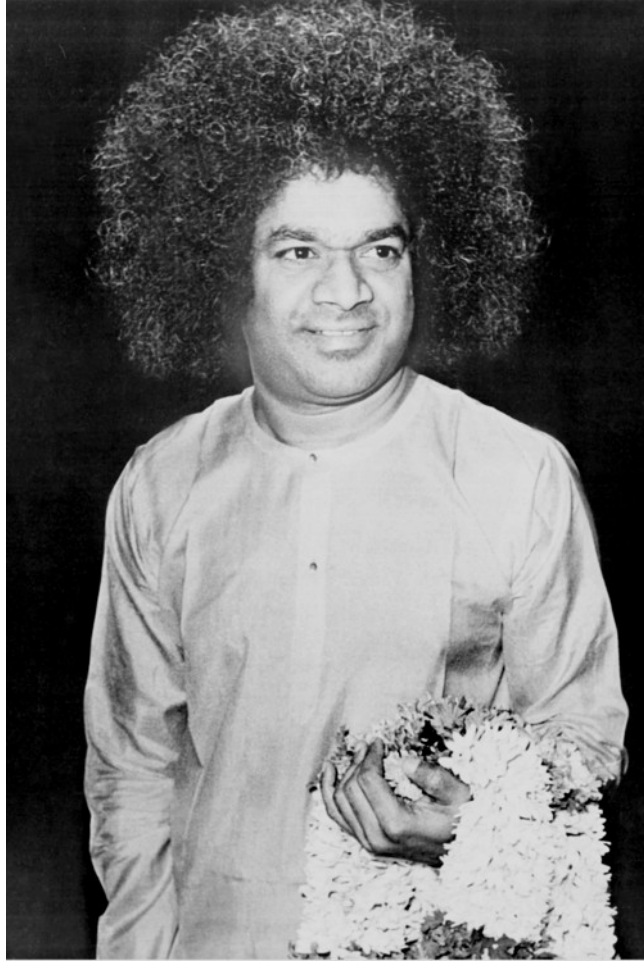
The *Yagna*, which is performed for seven of the nine days, is a lesson in spiritual science, for we experience, while it is witnessed, the whole gamut of bliss. The bliss of contemplating the Formless, Attributeless, Cosmic Principle described in the *Upanishads*; the thrill of conceiving and adoring the Solar Orb as the source of Light and Life; the joy of installing in our hearts the Author of this amazing adventure of Creation-Continuance-Destruction as emerging from the Formless into Form, or as merging from the Form into the Formless (as the *Linga* or Spheroid) symbol, which is worshipped as part of the *Yagna*; the exhilaration one is filled with, when the *Shakti* is consecrated, praised, and propitiated through an image, into which she is invited ritually to contain herself, the recalling to memory of the sweetness of *Vedic* hymns and the ecstasy of epic poetry – Baba uses every medium of expression to convey to us the message of self-control, to silence the clamour of the senses and the mind.

Every *Dasara*, He writes a play, in which the children of the *Vedashastra Patasala*, whom He trains for the purpose, pronounce spiritual truths. This *Dasara*, the play was on Dhruva, the princely lad of five, who went into forest to win by austerity the Grace of God, so that he might be restored to the love of his father. But, as the austerities cleansed his mind and sublimated his nature, the wounded pride was healed and he prayed for the boon of mergence with God. "People come to Me to get a chronic illness cured, but when they get to know Me more, they clamour for more substantial boons, which I am ready to grant," says Narayana in the play, an echo of the experience of most of the pilgrims to Baba's Presence!

Twenty thousand heavy hearts left Prasanthi Nilayam after the *Dasara* Celebrations, with

these words of Baba ringing in their ears and booming in the cavity of their hearts: “Ponder over the ameliorative and curative advice I have given you out of the fullness of My Love; try to cleanse your minds through repentance of wrongs committed or contemplated; resolve with unshakable firmness to shape your lives anew, rid it of deep-rooted deleterious habits of speech, thought, and action, and lead it in conformity with the Divine Plan, by which each will blossom into the fully Divine.”







Chapter 6

The Festival Of Lights

Sri Aurobindo writes in the 'Synthesis of Yoga,' "The Guru should awaken the Divine Light and set working the Divine Force." Baba awakened the Divine light; in every heart, He lit the lamps, He, the Divine, aroused the Divine Force.

When Baba started on 20th October from Anantapur towards Dharwar, from where He was scheduled to begin His week-long tour of the Districts of North Mysore, someone asked Him, "This is sure to be a memorable tour, what shall we call it?" Baba immediately replied, "*Amarapuriya Ananda-yatre!*" (Heavenly Tour of Bliss). Yes, He had decided on it; He was directing it; He was the host and guest, everywhere; He was the goal and the guide! No wonder it brought heavenly bliss to millions of people.

When His car and the others that followed it passed Bellary, the first town in Mysore State, the good news spread around gladdening the hearts of all, who heard it and they, in turn, communicated it to their near and dear ones. The news flashed with lightning speed in every direction. It was the eve of Dipavali, the Festival of Lights and the news lit a lamp in every heart: the light spread doorstep to doorstep throughout the region.

At Gadag, there were many, who had received signs of His Grace and who were gratefully adoring His Name and Form. They inspired many others and thus, a sizable gathering with flowers in their hands assembled at the entrance of the town, so as not to miss the chance of *Darshan*. Passing through Hulkoti and Annageri, where devotees stood on both sides of the road, singing *Bhajans* in the hope that Baba would stop and perhaps, alight for a moment, Baba reached the outskirts of the busy city of Hubli, where the mayor of the Corporation and about 3000 citizens acclaimed His arrival. The Mayor prayed for His Blessings, so that Hubli could be "happy, healthy, and prosperous."

Dharwar was only twelve miles away. While entering the city, Principal Dharwadkar and the erudite population of Vidyagiri (Hill of Culture), a complex of many Colleges and Training Institutes, cheered Him at the gates. Baba reached the University area and the Vice Chancellor's Bungalow at 9.30 P.M.

Dr. Appa Saheb Adke, B.E., Ph.D., the Vice Chancellor and Organiser of the Tour, had been ill ever since his visit to Australia in connection with University work. "I thought it was a simple affair, drafting the programme of His Tour! But, there was such a sincere pressure from all the corners of the region that I became perplexed. Realising this quandary, Baba came to my rescue; He said that, He will settle it Himself at Dharwar," Dr. Adke told me. "I was very ill, when Baba came to Dharwar, but His arrival charged me with vitality; I am more vigorous than usual, since that moment," he declared. He could hardly contain himself; no one could restrain him and remind him to be careful of his health.

Baba gave *Darshan* to the thousands that had assembled from far and near, that night as well as next morning, in the spacious lawns of the Bungalow. He met the office bearers of the *Seva Samithis* at 4 P.M. and quickly decided on the dates and the routes, which He would use for the tour.

That evening, there was a huge gathering of at least 20,000, to listen to His Discourse. Dr. Adke welcomed Baba to Karnataka and said, "This University has today, gained glory from this precious gift of grace. We deal here with materials and measurements, things that change, originate and degenerate; we are concerned with collection and codification of the intellectual processes of analysis and synthesis; but alas, we do not earn or confer wisdom! Our hearts are petrified; our brains have become books. Sri Rama awakened the stone that Ahalya had become through her craving for the trivial and temporary. When His Foot touched that stone, she was restored to life, beauty, and goodness. We too deserve that Divine Touch. Awaken us, Baba, and restore us to the life of truth, beauty, and goodness, of *Sathyam, Sivam, and Sundaram!*"

Dr. Gokak, who has had years of intimate association with the City of Dharwar and the Karnataka University, called up on his compatriots to offer to Baba the multifarious anxieties, worries and weaknesses, defects and disabilities that were then weighing heavily on their hearts and receive from Him, in exchange, Assurance of the Grace, which grants instant relief and constant Joy.

Baba began His Discourse in the Kannada language! It was an unexpected thing of

compassion; it aroused an applause from each man, woman, and child, when they realised that Baba's immeasurable *Prema* towards them has persuaded Him to speak, for the first time, in the language that they could comprehend; it echoed and re-echoed from the hills around! "Kasturi is not here! I have to speak to you without an interpreter. I have contacts with the Kannada region since twenty five years, but this is the first time I am addressing a gathering in Kannada. You praise your language, extolling it as Kasturi (fragrant as musk)! I hope I will not injure that reputation," Baba said.

His *Prema* is so overpowering, that He takes the words out of our mouths, so that He can convey His message to us in ways we can receive with welcoming enthusiasm. His first venture into Kannada lasted for over an hour and a half, the diction and the exposition being as sweet and savoury as the Telugu, which is His usual vehicle. The people of Dharwar were thrilled, "Oh, the delight that He imparted!" "Oh, the illumination that He granted!" "How fast is the flow of His Ganga!" – These were the exclamations that filled the University atmosphere.

After the discourse, Baba sang a few *Bhajan* songs, which the vast assembly sang after Him in chorus. The songs were in praise of God in a variety of Names and Forms as visualised by saints: Siva, Rama, Shakti, Krishna, Subrahmanya, Vishnu. The sacred songs, sung by Baba in His flute like Voice, filled everyone with such supreme elation, that there was genuine response.

Many in the gathering were staunch and stalwart followers, creeds which stick only to one Name and Form; ordinarily, they would have felt it a sacrilege to pronounce in reverence, much less sing in adoration, another Name and Form. Though the scriptures they follow declare that, "That One God has many Names," "*Ekam sat Viprah bahudha vadanthi,*" they grow in a social atmosphere that insists on concentration on one name only, so that their faith may be fractionalised and enfeebled. Therefore, the *Bhajans* of Baba came as a refreshing breeze, cleansing the hearts of fanatic conformity and sweeping out the cobwebs of fear! "Only Baba can overpower the habit of years and evoke in our hearts this spring of expansive joy," they exclaimed. Baba taps the very fountain of the religious urge, whether a person be a man or woman, young or old, Hindu, Buddhist, Parsi, Christian, Jain, or Muslim, or even Agnostic, Nihilist, or Anarchist.

From that day, the schedule laid down for the tour was rigorously gone through. Baba addressed a huge gathering at Vidyagiri, in the quadrangle of the Arts College. He planted a

tree to keep His Visit green in the memory of generations of students; He created a sapphire ring and gave it to principal Dharwadkar. Then, He spoke about the development of discipline and the earning of character. "My Message is this: Be embodiments of *Prema*; do not hate anyone or fear anyone. Develop Love towards all: understand the grief and the joy of others; be happy, when others are happy; don't exult, when others are in misery. Learn, even while you are learning good attitudes and habits, the art of silence and meditation, for example. These will help you to succeed in the School of Living. This is the most precious lesson available from *Sanathana Dharma*, which, let Me assure you, will be re-established in all its glory throughout the world, so that the world might have peace and prosperity. That is the mission, upon which I have come."

From Vidyagiri, Baba motored to Hubli, where a mammoth assembly was spilling over the Karnatak Medical College Buildings, yearning to have His *Darshan* and to listen to His Discourse. The good tidings – that Baba was speaking in Kannada – had spread to Hubli and beyond, all ears were alert to catch the speech and treasure it. "Today is Deepavali, when you consume sweets, but the component that sweetens every dish is sugar. So too, the article that bestows the characteristics of Existence (It is), Knowledge (It can be known), and *Ananda* (It confers joy) on every 'thing' and 'being', is the *Atma*, which, when Name-bound and Form-bound, is God."

He advised the students not to give way to gusts of anger or resentment, but to use Reason, a unique asset of man, to discriminate between alternative remedies! The word *mantra* can be applied to slogans also; the *mantra* has to be subjected to *manana*, deep reflection. So too, every slogan has to be weighed in the scale of Reason. Since there were many students of the Medical College before Him, Baba asked, "For a four-lettered degree, you spend the best part of your life; for attaining the Degree of Degrees, namely Grace, can you not spend at least five minutes a day, contemplating silently on the mystery and majesty of God, which is evident in the construction, the functioning, and the disintegration of every atom and cell?"

On the 23rd, Baba proceeded along the Sirsi Road to the West Coast. Leaving Dharwar at 9.A.M., Baba neared the village of Mundgod forty five minutes later. The highway passes only through a few villages, for in this part of the country, houses are situated not on streets, but they peep furtively in twos and threes from between huge bushes and trees, in plantations or forests; so, people, from as far as twenty to twenty five miles away from the road, had trekked to Mundgod for the coveted *Darshan* of the *Avatar* of the Age.

There were more than 4,000 simple peasants and plantation labourers there. Their eyes got a glint of joy, when Baba moved among them and granted the curative *Vibhuti*, created on the spot, to three broken minds, which He espied in their midst. Baba spoke a few words to them about *Namasmaran* and *Bhajan*; He sang three *Bhajans*, so that they could feel the exhilaration that *Bhajan* could give, and the gathering did their best to repeat the lines in tune with His entrancing melody.

From then on, the road was sanctified every few hundred yards, by song and dance! At Malagi, Ekkambi, Isalur, and Gowdalli, the sincerity of the villagers was appreciated by Baba so much that He alighted from the car and stood facing the disciplined throng for a few minutes, so that they may imprint His form on their hearts, just as they had already inscribed His Name on their tongues. Dr. Adke writes, “Whenever He noticed a gathering on the roadside, Baba used to stand on the foot board of the car, with the door open. People pressed upon the door, in their frantic attempts to get as near Him as possible and touch His feet. But, wonder of wonders, the door did not move even an inch! Hundreds pushed themselves forward on the door that was well ajar, but it stood firm, without even a shiver!”

At the stroke of eleven, Baba entered the premises of the Sathya Sai *Seva Samiti*, at the Gopalakrishna Temple at Sirsi. He had said casually, on the 21st, that, He would be reaching Sirsi at 11 A.M. People wondered how the clock had obeyed Him so meticulously! Just outside the town, tens of thousands had gathered to welcome Him. Dr. Adke writes, “He would not bear the suffering of people waiting in the hot sun. He told the gathering that, if they start *Bhajan*, clouds will gather overhead to provide cool shade.” And the clouds did! He quoted profusely from the *Vachanas* of Basavanna and other Veerasaiva poets and mystics, and captured the heart of the vast assembly. “Love is God; Live in Love: Start the day with Love; Fill the day with Love, End the day with Love. You have attached yourselves with Me, by bonds of Love. I am in all beings. So, have the same Love for all,” He reminded them. Baba said, “See the effect of the singing of the Name. If a few minutes of *Namasmaran* could confer this much of Grace, how much more can you gain by constant, uninterrupted *Namasmaran*! The yearning, which you cultivated in your minds for My *Darshan*, has fructified today. I am happy to share My Love. May this give-and-take become a continuous process!” When Baba descended from the dais, there was not a dry eye among the 40,000 before Him; tears of gratitude and ecstasy were visible. Baba returned to the Gopalakrishna Temple and looked at the exhibition of photographs of Himself and His activities. He moved from thence, without even the rest that many pleaded with Him to take, on the next leg of the

tour – towards Karwar, on the shores of the Arabian Sea!

The road was walled on both sides by thick masses of pilgrims, standing in eager expectation. One could read the name-boards of villages – Janmane, Kasage, Kathagala, Hiregutti. In many places, yielding to the silent importunity, Baba alighted for a minute or two, to bless the crowd with a smile that was immediately reflected on every face. At Ankola, the importunity became a little too boisterous and so, Baba moved on, with just a wave of His hand, which itself was to them a comforting gesture of Blessing!

The small village of Aversa presented a clean, festive appearance, with festoons and banners, arches and greenery across the road. The assembly of over 5,000 persons was a model of disciplined devotion. Baba spent a long time walking along the lanes between men and women and seeking out for succour the sick and the distressed. Winning the affectionate loyalty of all by this gesture of Compassion, Baba ascended the rostrum and spoke about the Truth of Identity, now ridden by the Falsehood of Diversity.

“The Truth shall make you fearless, for where there is only One, how can fear arise?” He asked. The Name for that One is God; remind yourself of the One, when you rise from bed; recollect that One during the vocations of the day; establish the faith in the One, in the heart when you go to sleep, so that when the senses, the intellect, and the imagination were inactive, the One might fill you and favour you with the bliss of its realisation,” He advised. The Aversans were not disappointed; they feared signs of hurry among the entourage. Karwar was waiting, miles away, since about noon! But, Baba sang and filled the cup of joy to the very brim.

“This vast expanse of water on one side, this vast expanse of humanity on the other, and this vast expanse of Grace in between!”—that was how Baba described the scene on the Marina that day. “That is the Ganga; this the Yamuna; and My Grace, which is silently gurgling within your hearts, is the Saraswati,” Baba declared, sending the 25,000 devotees assembled there into the seventh heaven of bliss! “This meeting should have begun hours earlier; but the serried ranks of devotees standing on the road shared that time with you; I gave it to them on your behalf; for, they too are *Atma-swarup*, having the same *Atma* illumining and inspiring them, instructing and guiding them towards the *Paramatma*. Their gratitude is your gain,” Baba announced.

The waves whispered into the ears of seashells how happy they were that they could be silent, when Baba sang *Bhajans* for Karwar to echo in full-throated exhilaration.

Night was spent in the bungalow of the Collector, from where one could see the wave-crests shimmering in star light. Next morning, Baba went into the Sitarameswar Temple, which is to Karwar as heart to the body and from there, He drove to the suburban settlement of Kodibag, where deft and devoted hands had erected a temple for the Previous Body and carved a statue for installation. The joy of the settlement dwellers knew no bounds; it was indeed a revealing ceremony, the installation by Baba and the homage from them to the Sai, actually present before them. From Kodibag, Baba went along the coastal road to where the motor launch was to take the party, cars and all, across the tongue of sea that is yet to be bridged.

The Kali River joins the sea at this point and so, the tongue tastes no salinity. Baba drew the attention of Dr. Adke, his son Manohar, and others in the launch to the pearly aquamarine, which the sea was, a furlong away! Baba remarked, "Crossing the Sea of *Samsar*, be confident of victory, since the Master is with you." "Why fear, when I am near!"

Retrieving the cars from the launch, the journey was resumed fast and when the State of Goa was entered, it was about ten. About half an hour later, they reached Margao, where too, aspirants for Grace were ready in their thousands. It was difficult to restrain them from their yearning to touch the Lotus Feet and so, Baba found it rather hard to reach the platform soon. His abounding Love overcame the resentment that mortals might have felt under similar circumstances; He walked coolly among the excited gathering: He recognised a sick person and materialised a portrait of Christ for him, for He knew, though it was not evident for others, that he was a Christian. He created *Vibhuti* and placed it in the hands of another person, whom they guessed was a Hindu, though the curative wonder can well be given to followers of all creeds. Baba spoke for about twenty minutes on the three *Gunas*, the dull, the passionate, and the balanced and how man can liberate himself from the apathy of *Tamas* and reach the enthusiasm of *Rajas*, and finally, attain the equipoise of *Satwa Guna*.

Then, Baba moved on to the capital city of Goa, Panaji. The *Samiti* at Panaji had arranged a Public Meeting, which Baba was to address in the "Vivekananda Hall" on the upper floor of the Secretariat Buildings! No hall on Earth can accommodate in comfort the audience that Baba draws to Himself in any town! He has said often that, the sky shall be the roof of the Shamiana for the assemblies He addressed! Therefore, the inevitable happened. A very large section was denied the chance of *Darshan*. Baba spoke for some time and sang *Bhajans*, which delighted those in the Hall. Those who heard the discourse and melody from outside, said, "Better luck, next time!" "Thanks at least for this much;" this was the consolation of the thousands, who could not get into the Hall. Dr. Adke writes, "When we were nearing Goa,

the springs of the Fiat car were damaged. But, when I suggested getting another car for the onward journey, Baba told me, 'We shall drive in this car only!' The road from Goa to Belgaum runs through thick forests and ghats and was also breached by rains. We started from Goa late in the evening and reached Belgaum at nine. How we reached the destination, without a breakdown, is a mystery that Baba alone can explain. We knew that it was Baba's Grace that brought the party safe."

At Belgaum, Baba went straight into the enormous gathering of about 70,000 persons, waiting for *Darshan*. Belgaum is a big city and Baba is the Supreme Saviour. The Sathya Sai Seva Samiti had taken elaborate precautions against any stampede; they had put up barricades of tough bamboo to sectionalise the gathering and provide vacant paths in between, for Baba to walk along and confer *Darshan*, from within a few feet, for all. When intimation was received that Baba had come, they rose in haste and rushed towards where they sensed He was! The Home Guards, the Volunteers (Men and Women), the Boy Scouts, and members of the *Samiti* sprang into action and curbed the excited crowd as best as they could.

Meanwhile, Baba had come on the dais; His golden voice floated in ever-widening circles far and wide. Everyone stood where he was and drank the ambrosia. Each man turned towards the place, from where the Call had come. Sri Narke, an Engineer who was of the Party, says, "Bhagawan raised His Hand! Every man was fixed to the spot, where he stood! Bhagawan's Hand came down; they sat silently, wherever they were."

"I couldn't leave Goa in time. There were eager groups of devotees waiting at every village, whether we passed through jungle or bald fallow wastes. How can I ignore their tremendous thirst?" Baba said. "I borrowed a little time from you and gave it to them," He confessed. The gathering became gentle and calm. "Having joined this uplifting gathering of thousands of Seekers of Light, eager to cleanse themselves and become worthy of their divine destiny, you have a responsibility: Try to realise that you are fundamentally divine; practise meditation for a few minutes every day, to instil this faith into yourself," He advised. "The boulder on the hill turned into an idol for the temple. Hammer and chisel have made it a thing of beauty and joy forever, a perpetual source of inspiration to render life wholesome and holy! You too must subject yourselves to the hammer of discipline and the chisel of pleasure-pain, so that you emerge from the boulder into an authentic Image of God!" He exhorted. "I have been touring Karnataka since five days; I wish to emphasise one point, now. Thousands of people are attending such meetings; thousands more are waiting along the roads. In the heart of every one of them, I know, sincere adoration is welling up towards God. But, adoration must

be regulated through discipline. It should not be wild and untended. You rush forward to touch My feet or to prostrate before Me, regardless of any consideration for women, children, the aged, and the sick. You fall upon them, when you press forward towards Me. Do not injure the Sai in those people, when you rush towards this Sai, to demonstrate your devotion! The merit and all the austerity you undergo to see and hear this Sai is well-nigh cancelled, when you inflict pain on the Sai, who resides in them,” He said. Many bowed their heads in repentance and shame. “Cultivate Love, Tolerance, and Reverence towards the weak, the handicapped, the distressed, and the diseased. Give them your compassion and sympathy. Serve them, sensing the divine bond of kinship,” Baba directed.

Baba resumed the tour next morning, taking the road to Bijapur, the Headquarters of another District in North Karnataka. Within miles, He alighted at Bali-Hongal, where devoted hearts prayed for the triple gifts of *Darshan*, *Sparshan*, and *Sambhashan*: seeing Him, touching Him, and listening to Him. He conferred on them the first and the last of these only, for there were thousands so early in the day! Baba spoke to them of Inner Purification and the Awareness of the Constant Presence of God as the means to ensure it.

Throughout the day, mile after mile, it was *Bhajan* and *Kirtan* all along the road to Bijapur. The villagers waited, watching the cars that passed along, for hours at a stretch, doing *Bhajan*. They halted every scooter and truck, to find out whether Baba had started and was on the way. Some villages got ready a Folk Welcome with traditional drums and dances; some brought out long, brass horns, which they blew loud and long to awaken the countryside into the glorious day. Some paraded the temple umbrella and persuaded temple priests to stand across the road, with ceremonial pots of holy water in their hands and *Vedic* chants on their tongues! There were police cars before and behind the cars of the party; while the officers tried to regulate the enthusiasm of the village gatherings, they themselves were not above the temptation to seize as many chances as they could, to touch His Feet!

Baba halted for about an hour at Gokak, at noon and proceeded apace to Bijapur, the journey being interrupted every few miles by yearning on one side and compassion on the other. For those, who were with Baba in the same car, it was a boon of unstinted ecstasy. Baba sang many songs, asked all else to sing *Bhajans*, prompted one or two to compose poems on the spot about the epic, unfolding before their eyes; thus, as the road rolled away, fast from underneath the car, they lost all sense of time and space.

“At Bijapur, the gathering was packed thick for miles,” writes Dr. Adke. I made bold to

suggest to Baba, “This meeting has to be cancelled! It is impossible to go through this item of the tour! Let us go to the next place.” Baba said, “No.” At least 75,000 persons were surging impatiently over the roads and open spaces. Dr. Adke writes, “Baba went right into that sea of agitated confusion. Everyone was nervous about the situation. But soon, we saw Him safe on the dais, under the blaring lights and before the microphone. As soon as Baba started singing the usual introductory verse, every man, woman, and child was enchanted: the waves were stilled, quiet prevailed, and we were relieved.”

“For what purpose were you born? What has been your achievement, in the years that you have spent as men among men? What are you intending to leave behind, when you die?” Baba asked the vast gathering.

Vineetha Ramachandra Rao, who was of the party, writes, “We have heard that, when Krishna played on the Flute, even the thousand-hooded snake lay low; when Baba spoke in that captivating voice, even though His opening sentences were so challenging to their self-complacency and indolence, the seventy five thousand-hooded snake lay calm, plunged in self-examination. Baba advised each one to cultivate Love, for, 'Love is the motivator of the Universe, Love is God, and Love alone can win the Grace of God and merge man in God.' When Baba spoke of the efficacy of *Bhajan* and sang a few songs, the assembly yielded without reservation to the magic of His Flute! All the higher tendencies sprouted, foliated, put forth buds, and blossomed in the heart; *everyone* felt a thrill, the thrill of Cosmic Awareness.”

Spending the night at the Circuit House, Baba rose early and was ready to fulfil the engagements He had planned for the day. A score of minutes ticked away as they drove forward; they were surprised to see across the road, a pandal of green and yellow creepers and festoons, flags and garlands, and on the ground, about a hundred persons singing Prasanthi Nilayam *Bhajans!*

Let us listen to Dr. Adke describing what happened: “They beseeched Baba to drive into their village, which was only two miles off; they said they had repaired the road and made it car-worthy; they promised they would be quiet and disciplined; they announced that the villagers were longing for His visit. I was anxious about the correct execution of the busy time-table already laid down for the day. But, Baba said, 'Well, we shall go and be with them for five minutes.'

The cars turned, traversed the clean dustless road, which had been sprinkled thick with water, into the village. As the cars passed, lamps waved, women scattered flowers on the car. The

men blew horns and beat big drums. Bells on the necks of cattle tinkled as they stood on the sides, with red paint on their horns. Baba was happy to see the villagers, sitting with the surge of joy lending lustre to their eyes. He sang a few *Bhajans*, encouraging the assembly to sing them after Him without hesitation and fear. Baba drove back to the main road only after spending about forty minutes there.”

It was one continuous flood of Devotion, fertilising the entire area, entering into every home, every heart, arousing man, woman, and child. Baba could not bear to see the people sitting or standing in the sun. Nor could He allow them to be glum and cheerless. While moving from Bijapur to Bagalkot, Baba sang a large number of songs in Kannada to the delight of the Vice-Chancellor, his son, and others. He sang songs composed by the famous medieval Kannada saints, Purandara Das and Kanaka Das; He described the story of Kanaka Das at Udupi, where the idol of Krishna installed by Madhawacharya turned around, in order to give the shepherd saint, Kanaka Das the *Darshan* he longed for. For, Kanaka Das was not admitted into the temple, since he was a person of inferior caste! Baba also sang some songs composed by Him on the spot, in Kannada. It was a glorious hour for lovers of that language and seekers longing for the Divine.

Passing through places like Kerur, where devotees fed their eyes on Him, Baba reached Nargund and saw about twelve thousand people gathered there from all the villages around, and even from Hubli and Dharwar, which were hours away by car. He told them of the immanence of God in the Universe and said that, only a pure intelligence can recognise that fact, just as only one tongue among all the limbs and organs of the body, can recognise the salt dissolved in water.

Passing through wavy fields of grass and grain, fondled by the soft caresses of stray breezes, Baba reached Navilgund in the evening. A sea of faces sat before Him in disciplined silence and Baba spoke to them and sang for them in plentiful compassion. “The objective world is ever changeful; it is fitful and flickering, but the *Atma* is eternal, adamant, unaffected by time, space, and causation, which are only modifications it is supposed to undergo! *Ekam eva advithiyam Brahma*: One only, without a second, is Brahma. To become aware of the One, which has no second, you must practise the five disciplines of *Mantra*, *Namasmaraṇa*, *Yoga*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*. Just as the music and the musician immanent in the ether, as waves projected by the broadcasting station are caught and made manifest by the receiver and its many contrivances, God, who is present but unmanifest to the eye or mind, can be realised and recognised through these contrivances,” Baba explained.

The sun must have travelled slower than usual that day, for Baba was able to reach Hulkoti at 6 P.M., after a halt at Annigeri on the way, to receive flowers and shower blessings on a huge gathering on the roadside. There was a record crowd of eager devotees at Hulkoti and Baba gave them *Darshan*, as well as the assurance of His continuing Grace.

He then left for Gadag, a city famous since centuries for the Veera Narayana temple, immortalised in Kannada poetry and at present, a great centre of commerce and industry. Gadag astounded everyone by the enormity of the number of people, who assembled there to revere Baba. There were over a hundred thousand!

Sri K.H. Patil, who welcomed Baba, said, "The doors of Heaven have opened this day before Gadag! The Light of the Spirit is resplendent once again, in this ancient city." Baba spoke of the *vedic* prayer, which summarises the aspiration of man, since the beginning of his history on Earth: *Asato maa sad gamaya* (From the unreal, lead me to the Real!) *Tamaso maa jyotir gamaya* (From darkness, lead me to Light!) *Mrithyor ma amrtham gamaya* (From death, lead me to Immortality!) He said that, distinction is unreal, egoism is darkness, and desire is death! So, man must become aware of the One, of which He is a spark, of the One, which is all this and more, the One, which fills and fulfils all.

The *Bhajans* that Baba sang and which the voices repeated, cleared the sky of the vibrations of multiplicity and filled it with the "is-ness" of the One, Rama, Krishna, Shakti, Shiva, Vishnu; all were integrated in the melody of that music of the masses, offered at the Feet of Sai at His bidding and in tune with His Cosmic Voice.

When Dharwar was reached, lights in most of the houses had been extinguished and cows were dozing on the roads, chewing the day's fast-eaten cud!

When the sun rose, next day, over the horizon, the calendar showed October 27 as the date. And Baba was as fresh as the Sun, who shows no tinge of tiresomeness, however long the journey, however monotonous the route, however fulsome the acclamation offered to Him in however many languages, however gladly He is welcomed in however many languages, however many billions! He was as aware of His Mission and as unassuming in its performance as the Sun!

But, others of the party, who were mere men, aroused His pity. He persuaded Dr. Adke, his son, and others to take rest, in spite of their disinclination. As for Himself, He spent the day visiting the homes of devotees at Hubli and Dharwar, for as Baba has often said, "Your *Ananda* is what sustains Me" (*Mee Anandame naa Aaharam*). When Baba visits a home,

however short the stay, He leaves it a Heaven of Peace and love. Often, He goes alone into the house in order that ‘the devotee may not be distracted by the need to attend to the companions’! He persuades the devotee not to indulge in pompous receptions and invest in exhibitionistic decorations, exotic garlands, expensive feasts, or quick publicity among kinsmen and friends. He comes as our nearest and dearest kinsman, arriving after a long absence, to bless, heal, enrich, elevate, alleviate, console and correct, confer courage and conviction, and confirm the consummation of spiritual aspiration. He fondles the children, recognises even slight gestures of homage, remembers the names of everyone in the family, relates incidents unknown or forgotten, promises relief, and leaves everyone grateful. Where gloom hung thick, He installs joy; where the musty air of sickness was repelling, He brings the fresh fragrance of health and hilarity. His visit to a home closes the chapter of disease, despair, distress, and doubt and opens another, tingling with joy and cheer, peace and goodwill, vigour and vibrant harmony.

Monday, the 28th! He was to reach Brindavan that evening and so, He drove along the Hubli–Davangere Road, lighting the faces and lightening the hearts of the residents of those villages and towns, adjacent to that road. Kundgol was the first place, where a gathering had collected under the auspices of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti. And what a gathering! The wide expanse of a football field packed thick! At least 25,000 in number!

Baba spoke of Indian culture, of the word ‘Bharat’, of the syllable ‘*Bha*’, which He interpreted as ‘Light’, the Light of Spiritual Realisation, the light that reveals the identity of all as God. He said that, His heart was filled with joy at the Love that had induced them to wait for His *Darshan* for hours, since early dawn. “Extend this Love towards all, for I am in all,” He suggested. “Devotion to Me is to be expressed through service, love, and cooperation and by refraining from scandal-mongering, fault-finding, and hatred,” He emphasised. When He sang a few *Bhajans* towards the close, harmony reigned and distraction disappeared from the inner and outer atmosphere.

Karjigi was the next place, where Baba blessed the people. Then, Baba visited the holy village of Agadi, renowned as the hermitage of the late Saint Seshachala Swami. Saints and sages are the sappers and miners, the road-makers, the surveyors, the bridge builders, who prepare for the *Avatar*. Baba was received at the entrance to the shrine, by women waving lamps and *Vedic* Scholars chanting hymns of prayer and supplication. He moved among the vast congregation, which was engaged in *Bhajan*, and later spoke to them of the efficacy of the Name and the discipline of constant repetition of the Name.

The stream of cars bringing redemption and relief was delayed a while, at Haveri. Baba went to the *Grama Seva Mandap* (Home for Village Reconstruction) and addressed the gathering, composed of students of the Agriculture and other colleges of the place. He drew their attention to the setting of natural beauty and grandeur, where they had met and said that, it was a heritage, which all can share. “You have another heritage, which all can share and that is the Grace of God,” He said.

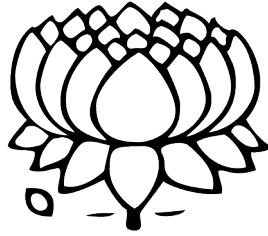
He advised them to learn well at college and also, learn the art of being at peace with themselves and others, through *namasmaran and Bhajan*. When Baba sang *Bhajans*, about a dozen sleek cows of the *Mandap* were seen listening with a glint in the eye and a tingle in the ear. There was an encephalic cow in the group; the calf hurried out into the world in its eagerness to listen to the voice of Brindavan. At Rane Bennur, Baba laid the Foundation Stone of the Arts and Science College and proceeded to Cotton Market, where 25,000 devoted persons were awaiting *Darshan*. “Let your words be charged with truth; let your deeds be charged with sincerity – *Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara* (Talk in truth; walk in righteousness); that is the way to reach the goal and find it,” Baba advised. The vast gathering got an hour of bliss, through word and song, that day.

Baba motored from Rane Bennur, through lines of devotees that thronged the roads, to Harihar, where He alighted from the car and gave *Darshan* for a few minutes and from Davangere, Chitradurg, Sira, and Tumkur to Brindavan, carrying with Him the Love and rapturous devotion of the millions His grace had captivated.

Dr. Adke writes, “I had the good fortune of being with Baba and witnessing the grateful joy of people, everywhere and the happiness of Baba at their sincerity and simplicity. I was able to go as far as Whitefield, near Bangalore, where *Brindavan* is, and take leave of Baba from there. When I left, Baba said, 'Do not think you are going back alone! I am with you! Let us both go together!' That is the measure of His Love, His Omnipresence, His Omnipotence, His Divinity!”

The adoration offered to Baba and the attention, with which huge gatherings at every place, whether it be a hamlet or village, a city of colleges or of factories, a historic spot or a place of pilgrimage, treasured His words of hope and promise, are eye-openers to those, who plan for the future. They reveal that people are eminently responsive to the call of the spirit towards the higher life, that the fascination for short cuts and artificial props to happiness cannot withstand the charm of the Divine Directive of Baba.

Baba began this tour on Deepavali, the day when India celebrates the Festival of Lights. Sri Aurobindo writes in the Synthesis of Yoga, “The Guru should awaken the Divine Light and set working the Divine Force.” Baba awakened the Divine light; in every heart, He lit the lamps; He, the Divine, aroused the Divine Force.







Chapter 7

White Man's Burden

And thus, the cures, the healings, the cleansing of hearts, the refining of character, the amelioration of habits, the rescue from drug-addiction, the winning of internal peace through the discipline of Japa and Dhyana, and other acts of Divine Grace go on, minute after minute, from the minute to the manifold; for, Baba is determined to lift up all sadhakas into the Supreme Bliss.

“At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way,” says Arnold Toynbee, well-nigh the wisest of modern historians. This is the age of frustration, fear, fixation, and fantasy. The sociological diseases—crime, delinquency, divorce, suicide, gambling, and drug-addiction—are in the ascendant everywhere. The political diseases of turncoatism, hypocrisy, faction, corruption, and jingoism are spreading from one nation to another. The economic diseases of poverty and luxury, exploitation and excessivism are also becoming worldwide. The root cause for all this chronic morbidity is, according to Baba, man's lack of faith in himself. “Man has lost faith in himself. He has put on the cloak of weakness and vacillation, doubt and dissatisfaction and hidden from his own cognition the vast potential for goodness, beauty, strength, and content lying dormant in his nature.”

Ayn Rand says, “In order to live, man must act; in order to act, he must make choices; in order to make choices, he must define a code of values; in order to define a code of values, he must know what he is and where he is – that is, he needs metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, which means philosophy.” And Toynbee declares, “In India, philosophy has never been entombed in tombs; it has ever been the current coin of the business of living, the very blood-stream of family, society, community, and nation. It is even termed as *Sathya*

Darshan, that is experience of wisdom. In other words, it is more a way of life than a view of life. It tends to emphasise *Dharma* – moral conduct, based upon unchanging Sathya-Metaphysics.”

No wonder, then, that Baba has become the solace and strength of a multitude of forlorn seekers-after-peace-and-bliss, arriving in His Presence from lands beyond the seas, like the United States, Great Britain, and other countries, suffering from the glut of glitter and gadgets. Baba told a group of ‘foreigners’ (to Baba, it is a misnomer to call them so; instead, He calls them ‘for-nears’, because they have come for somebody and something they can clasp as ‘near’ and ‘dear’), “You would not have come to Me, unless I called you; I know the past and the future of every one of you, what you are yearning for at present, and how and when your yearning will be fulfilled.”

John Hislop writes, “Most of us hear of Sai Baba from someone else. One starts to learn who Baba is, hearing someone tell about Him. The first wave of information here, in California, came from Bob Raymer and his friends. The second wave came from Indra Devi and her associates. Indra Devi heard from Mr. Murphet in Madras. Mr. Murphet first heard from Bob Taymer. Bob heard from a friend of his, who later became his wife! She, in turn, had heard about Baba from a friend. But, the first, original link in this chain is Baba Himself!”

Listen how Elsie Cowan first contacted Baba: “Myself and my husband have been searchers of Truth, during our many years of marital life. We followed one belief after another; each step gave some little wisdom, but no security, no actual knowing how to reach the goal. Like all truthstudents, we were also told that Christ is within us, we followed Him and His teachings. The truth He taught us was the same that all the Great Masters have taught. We learned meditation and silence. But, the spiritual revolt was still going on within us.

'Why can't we know God? If we must have self-realisation, why don't we?' we asked. We had no answer. We felt discouraged. We talked it over and made an important decision: pray loud and sincerely for the Highest Living Master to come and take us to our goal. And the Highest Living Master knew our plight and answered our cry, for He has come for such as us. The second day, a friend came to our house and gave us a book. It was a book on the life of Sathya Sai Baba! We read it from cover to cover; a great serene peace filled us. We knew our prayers were answered!

Further steps in Baba's ‘Operation Salvage’ followed fast. We contacted the friend, who had brought the book and we found other books by Baba; we read them and lost ourselves in His

simple truths. The following Sunday, we went to the Temple where we worship. A friend we hadn't seen for weeks came and sat by us. She took from her purse a little, folded paper; we watched her unfold it; we were surprised that it contained some ashes! She said a friend brought them from Sai Baba (Baba's Grace!) and she said she had such a compelling desire to give them to us (Baba's Infinite Mercy!) and she had to seek us out for the purpose. She said (Baba's words) that, we were to put some on our tongue each night. This was the start of the blessings and miracles that began to happen in our lives; although we were unable to see Him with our eyes, He made Himself known to us in various ways. Then, one day, we suddenly had a desire to see Him, physically and we journeyed to Prasanthi Nilayam."

John Hislop's wife Magdalena was drawn towards Sai Baba quite early in her life. Baba had to appear in Havana, Cuba, years ago, concretely before her, to imprint on the immaculate mind of the child, just a year old, the shining splendour. She was just learning to walk, says Hislop, when she saw the Sai Baba of Shirdi (Baba assumes that Form too, to bless and confer Grace), standing in the corner of the garden! She started to toddle towards Him, saying, "Dada! Dada!" then, confused, she stopped. For, her real daddy was standing at the entrance to the house. "Wonder of Wonders," Hislop writes, "last year, while we were in India, Baba confirmed to Magdalena her experience was a fact; He described the costume He wore then and how He was standing in the corner of that garden, 35 years ago!"

Indra Devi, 'the First Lady of Yoga in America', is a Russian born American citizen with an Indian name, having her *Yoga* institute astride the boundary between the United States and Mexico. She learnt *Yoga* in Mysore (India) and taught it in Shanghai, London, and Moscow. She was in Bombay, within an eye's throw from the Gwalior Palace, where Baba was surrounded by tens of thousands of adoring aspirants for grace, for over a week, in 1966. She missed seeing Him then, but she encountered the traffic jams in the vicinity, which the *Bhajan* Sessions and Baba's Discourses brought about, while she was hurrying to fulfil her engagements in the city!

Later, when she was on her way to Saigon (You can never take Sai as Gone, I told her; it is always 'Sai Won'), she peeped in at the Theosophical Society Headquarters at Madras, to meet a friend and ran into the Murphets. Mr. Murphet and his wife were bubbling over with the exhilarating news of Baba and His Love, His Power, and His Wisdom. She came back from Saigon, for the Call was clear and convincing. On her way to the tiny village that has been immortalised by the Advent, she met the Hon'ble Dr. Triguna Sen, Minister in the Government of India, who was returning from the holy place after a long, inspiring

conversation with Baba. Dr. Sen warned her that she might stay on at Prasanthi Nilayam itself, feeling that she had reached the destination. That was what practically happened, for her heart is invested in Baba as a Life Deposit, while she is breathing Sai, talking Sai, dreaming Sai, and resting in Sai, wherever she may wander!

Hilda Charlton of New York spent many years in Ceylon and later, moved on to Delhi, where she was initiated in the worship of the Mother and in meditating on Her. She chanced to visit Shirdi, where she heard that Baba was living and available, 500 miles off, at Puttaparthi!

Another 'for-near', who was drawn by Baba from Shirdi, the arena of His previous life, is Alf Tideman Johannessan of Oslo, Norway, Head of a prosperous company, doing business at Bombay Harbour as Shipping Agents. His rivals attempted to ruin his reputation and income by every foul means that could be devised, including black magic! Some friends of his and a parsi priest took him to (of all places!) the shrine of Shirdi, to invoke Grace to ward off the calamity.

During one of his visits, in February, 1966, while Alf was sitting disconsolate before the Tomb of the 'Previous Body', the present body took over his problems in His inimitable way! A short man in a blue shirt patted him on the back and asked, "Have you ever met Sathya Sai Baba?" Alf had not heard the name before. The short man whispered in his ear, "If God ever came upon the Earth, this is He," and placed in his hand a small locket studded with an enamelled oval piece, containing a portrait of a person wearing a robe and having a mop of hair. "This is Sathya Sai Baba," the short man said, "You can see Him at Bombay, on March 14th," and then, left.

Alf asked all those he knew for more details about this 'God on Earth', but none of them had heard about Him, nor did they know where He could be found on March 14th. In fact, as he came to know later, only a week after the short man in blue shirt announced the date at Shirdi did the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti of Bombay receive information about the date of Baba's arrival, with directions to look for and engage a suitable place in any easily accessible part of the city, with plenty of open space around for devotees to gather.

Let it be said that Baba reached Bombay in the small hours of the night, on 13th March and gave Alf the smile of recognition on the 14th, during the *Bhajan* Session in the morning at Gwalior Palace! In the very first interview that Alf gained, consequent on this divinely arranged contact, Baba said to him, "Do you remember the black magician? I helped you then." Relating to him his triumphs and trials, both in his business and in his efforts at

bridging the gap between despair and delight in the realm of the spirit, Baba told him, “From now on, I shall be your Guide in all matters.” Arnold Schulman, a screen-writer and playwright of repute, favourite of Hollywood and New York, met Baba once at Whitefield and returned to America. “One day,” he says, “for no reason I could discover, I realised that I had somehow developed a compulsion of my own, which I could not suppress, shake off, overcome, or rationalise; I wanted to write a book about Baba!” Later, when he came to India and Baba called him into His room, He told him, “When the time comes, I call all those who seek Me to Me. It was I, who told you to write the book, because I wanted you. Understand! I wanted you, not the book.”

Thus, they come from all the quarters! Many like Hislop have to their credit long years of *sadhana*, guided by adepts in their own countries, in Japan (Zen teachers), in Burma (Buddhist monasteries), in Nepal (Saivite Gurus), in Ceylon (Vihars), and in India (Yoga adepts). In many cases, their appetite for spiritual achievement had been whetted through contacts with the Ramakrishna Mission, the Self-Realisation Fellowship, the Hare-Krishna Movement, the *Kriya-Yoga* Conference, and various other inducements for self-examination, self-mastery, and self-realisation. Others, who feel the thirst for Light, come to Baba, mauled and maimed by quacks and crooks, who promise quick results against tidy rewards. And some others come desperate and sick of catering to pride and greed, and the hardy, brood impulses, in search of a way out, in search of peace. And many have arrived, dazed and confused by the conflicting dialectics of those, whose eloquence served at best to veil their vanity and vapidness; now, at last, to hear the Truth in straight and simple words, to see the Truth in its unadorned beauty, and to know it from Him, who knows All.

“Not all the buds on a tree blossom,” says Baba, “Nor do all the blossoms turn into fruit, or later ripen and enrich the world with sweetness.” The shallow, the supine, the scholastic, the supercilious—these fall from the race. There are different levels of readiness among those, who come for the precious gifts that Baba grants. But, whatever their level, none can escape from or deny the profoundly purifying effect the heart receives from the contact.

Dr. Judith M. Tyberg, of the East West Cultural Centre, Los Angeles, writes, “It is now almost three years that I was in Puttaparthi and had the Divine Blessings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. His help to me on all planes of being is still evident and I am very grateful.” Jack Hakimzadeh of Teheran writes, “When my heart was quite heavy and retrieval of equipoise was well-nigh impossible, I did see Baba. As a result, my life is no longer the same.” Jnani Greene, who has been at Prasanthi Nilayam since ten months, writes, “Baba has

instructed me, 'No more doctors, no more medicine; let go; give up; let Me be your doctor!' And He has proven His efficiency and readiness many times since. One day, my foot was broken, caught in a narrow ditch in the dark. I was carried to my room in excruciating pain. Two hours passed and suddenly, sensation went dead; I attended *Bhajans* at Whitefield, sitting in a perambulator! Then, I noticed absent-mindedly that my foot seemed rather warm; I put it on the ground; it was entirely repaired! The repercussion on me was even more dramatic. For, it gradually dawned on me to turn to Him for every form of pain, for all sense of limitation, mental and physical alike; I discovered that His recipe worked equally well for everything. I am a slow student and I still forget to ask! But, in His boundless compassion, He keeps reminding me.”

Many seekers have found solace and strength, help and guidance from the books written by Baba, from the Discourses given by Him, from the *Bhajans* sung by Him, and from the pictures and photographs of Him, which they use for worship or meditation. John Eversole writes to me from Santa Barbara on the Pacific Coast of America, “Thank you for attracting my attention to Him, so that His pictures might grace the wall in my home, that the taste of His *vibhuti* might remain forever sweet in my being; that my family might have their feet set on the Path of Truth that is Him; that my tears of joy might wash His Feet from the other side of the Earth.”

Hilda Charlton wrote to a student of hers, who came over to India to be with Baba for some months. “Baba wants us all to harmonise, for to be out of love for anyone is to be out of love with Him. Of what use is it to love Him, if we can't be kind and considerate with His many aspects in the world? The best way to overcome reaction to people and things is to think that Baba is giving you a test, when someone is not properly adjusted to you. In your travels, you will find many, who cry ‘Baba,’ and yet, do not do what He says and wants of them. Baba knows the inner thoughts and feelings of all. Yes, Baba is God incarnate upon Earth.”

Hilda wrote to me once, “Baba's Presence is always felt in our meditation classes. One new boy saw Baba filling the room; a student experienced Him as the Infinite. Some of them cannot contain the *Ananda*; they laugh with supreme joy during the meditation. Baba comes to them in visions and dreams, He cures many of their illnesses. The young kids are turning away from drugs and recovering sanity and strength.” In another letter, she wrote, “I look back on those glorious days at Prasanthi Nilayam, when I was in His personal Presence, as days of opportunity. Yet, I now realise more and more, since I returned to the West, that He is omnipresent. I have concrete proofs of this, over and over again. When I left Prasanthi

Nilayam, Baba told me, 'Beyond Name! Beyond Form!'"

Diane Marquier of France saw someone having a portrait of Baba in her room. Underneath the portrait were the words, "Why fear when I am here?" Her reaction was an "Umph! What? Who does he think he is?" she exclaimed. But, when she heard more about Him, she developed curiosity, which turned into inquiry, discovery, and devotion. She writes, "One day, I asked my husband for 300 dollars and when he pleaded inability, I ventured to say, having faith in Baba, 'If you give me the 300, Baba will give you ten times more!' I got the 300. That very evening, for the first time after a year, in the Restaurant where we are still, he made 3000 dollars, to the surprise of everyone except me."

Muriel J. Engle, of Santa Barbara, writes, "Never have I stood so close to God. Will you believe me, if I tell you this Man is Christ? He knows what we are at a glance and why we are seeking Him, without a word from us; but, in His great kindness, He forbears from embarrassing us by not revealing all He sees and knows!"

Howard Murphet quotes a 'woman of Germany', a devout and earnest seeker on the path, telling him, "Baba is the incarnation of Purity and Love." She wrote to him, "I get more and more convinced from within that Jesus has come again, in the fullness of Christ, as Sathya Sai Baba."

June Schuyler writes, "How can one, who has lived 41 years with a good share of frustration, describe the joy of finding the Lord in human form—utterly good, absolute Love itself? I had experienced a great deal of love in my life, through all the normal human relationships—parents, child, friends, marriage. Nothing. Nothing could compare to the purity of the Love, which Baba gave and evoked. This was Holy Love!"

"For 17 years before I met Baba, life's problems had been so intense that I had come to feel barren inside. In Baba's Presence, the dry, inner desert was flooded with life giving water. In His Presence, the fragile tenderness, which seemed totally dehydrated, became fertile."

"On 9th December, 1970, Annalisa Rajagopal, Indra Devi, and I went under His direction into the Place of St. Francis Xavier, at Goa, India. As usual, in Place, where Jesus is worshipped, He touched me with His Love. I knelt before His Statue with mixed emotions. Here I was, a devout Christian unmistakably guided for years by Jesus the Christ—now, with my heart utterly captured by Sathya Sai Baba."

"Jesus! What is this?" I suddenly asked. "Am I trying to serve two masters? You told us this cannot be done. Baba too says the same. You know I love you; yet, my heart is full of Baba. I

am absolutely determined to accept and follow His guidance. Please, please help me!”

“In a flash, I remembered the day, when Baba was speaking to a group of overseas seekers. He used an interpreter that day, although He very often speaks directly in excellent English! When Baba referred to Jesus during the lesson, the interpreter started, “Your Jesus...” “No,” Baba came down upon him and lovingly added, “Our Jesus,” emphasising the word “Our”! The thought flowed into my heart that it was Jesus, who had guided me to Baba. I felt that, although I was too blind to see, Baba and Jesus weren’t two Masters, but one. Baba was teaching us the love, the humility, the reverence, the charity, the soul’s exaltation that emanates from the breath of all faiths. Intellectually, I had agreed; the understanding was slowly taking roots in my heart.”

“During some of my earlier experiences with Baba, my mind tried to raise at times, storms of doubt; but, in each such mental turmoil, a deep, inner Peace asserted itself. I had long ago learnt to know and trust this inflow of peace. It was the God within saying, ‘All is well.’”

“Kneeling, that day, before the Statue of Jesus, I realised that all is well. I am so richly blessed. I left the Cathedral, feeling loved and loving.”

Howard Murphet too speaks of a similar, revealing experience. Writing in his book, “Sai Baba, Man of Miracles,” he says, “Sai Baba has many similarities to Christ, not only in the miracles, but in the style of presentation of the teaching. Baba is far beyond the measure of man. Apart from the miracles, which show His command of Nature, His power to be anywhere and know what His devotees are thinking and doing (“I am a radio and can tune in your wave,” Baba says), and His ability to bring protection and help—apart from all these superhuman qualities, there is the pure, ego-less Love. This, above all, stands as a sign of Christ-like Divinity.”

I remember a few evenings I spent with a group of seven ‘foreigners’, when they read between the lines of the “Revelation of St. John the Divine”. Some of them had the intuitive perception of importance to interpret and understand the Advent of Baba; this was reinforced by their study of Edger Cayce’s remarkable adventures into Biblical realms. They read the description therein, of New Jerusalem as a place where, ‘I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty was the temple in it. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. They shall in no way enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever that bringeth abomination. Let him that is a thirst come and whosoever will, let him drink the water of life free.’ They read this and wondered at the aptness. Then, they read of the Advent

of the Master on a white horse (Kalki?) with eyes like a flame of fire, clothed in a robe of red, as if soaked in blood, with the name 'King of Kings, Lord of Lords' woven in it (Baba wears red, silken gowns: in one, golden letters are woven, indicating He is Sai Baba, that is Lord Father). His name is Truth, they noticed with surprise, as they read the text, for *Sathya* means Truth! Christian seekers, who come to Baba, find many such parallels in the signs and signals of Divinity and they are grateful.

“Many of you come to Me, because you have not known a mother’s love,” said Baba one day, addressing the Americans with Him. One of them had written a song, which was in His hands at that time. “Awaken us to our oneness with You! Dear Mother! Lead us home, into You!” Of course, all, who grope for the meaning of life, for principles, ideals, values, self-understanding, and self-expression, are children and whosoever raises them up in loving sympathy, and guides them through the faltering steps, the stuttering tongues, the wondering eyes, the wavering minds, is verily the Mother. A great Andhra Poet, septuagenarian scholar, *yogi*, and mystic Velury Sivarama Sastry, who spent years with Baba, wrote, “Weigh on one scale the quantity of love that all the mothers of the world offer to their children and on the other, place the Love that Baba showers on fearsome, forlorn, feeble beings; you will find that the scale, with the weight of Baba’s Love, will sink lower!” Christ said, “Allow the children to come up to Me.” Baba moves amongst the children of all ages, for He alone can give each the Love they are pining for.

The love of Christ is so overpowering that He took upon Himself the sins of others. Baba, in His Love, takes upon Himself the illness of others. On Christmas Day, 1970, referring to the travail that He passed through gladly to relieve the pain of a helpless devotee, who could not survive the agony of an inflamed appendix, Baba spoke to a huge gathering at Bombay thus, “To take upon Myself the sufferings of those, who have surrendered to Me, is My duty. I have no suffering and you have no reason to suffer too, when I do this duty of Mine. The entire give-and-take is the Play of Love. It is taken over by Me in Love; so, how can I suffer? Christ sacrificed His life for the sake of those, who put their faith in Him. He propagated the truth that service is God, sacrifice is God.”

When asked by someone why he dined with sinners, Christ said, “It is the sinner, for whom I have come; it is not the healthy that need a physician!” Baba has come for the erring child, the pilgrims gone astray. He says, “To say that you have to be pure in order to win My grace, is as foolish as to say that you have to be healthy to receive the ministrations of a doctor! The pure do not need a Master! The tough do not need a doctor.”

Christ said to his Apostles, “As lambs, I send you forth among wild beasts, but the sacred name of God shall be your buckler and your shield,” and the air was filled with song and every living creature seemed to say, “Praise God! Amen!” Baba calls upon His devotees to act thus: “Tell everyone what you have experienced here. Tell them that you have found that source and spring of joy and peace. Tell them that not one will be left out; all will be saved.”

When M. Trudeau, the brother of the Prime Minister of Canada, along with his wife, came to Puttaparthi with the High Commissioner of Canada in India, Baba gave him a Cross with the figure of Christ on it, materialised on the spot. At Ngorongoro in Tanzania, He materialised for the British pilot of the plane, in which He went there, a lovely little Cross, but finding the recipient not quite pleased, He asked him, “Why? Do you want My portrait?” and with another wave of the hand, the portrait was created and given. Baba does not divert or dilute the faith, which provides sustenance already. He does not insist that people must revere His present Name alone, or adore His present Form alone. No! Be true, be just, be aware, be alert, be pure, be full of love, that is enough ‘religion’, He declares.

John Moffitt from New York (a member of the Ramakrishna Monastic Order for over twenty years) sought out Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam. After meeting Baba, he wrote to me from Bangalore, “I can never forget that talk—ininitely profound, infinitely playful, infinitely simple. I was reminded of what it must have been like to sit at Sri Ramakrishna’s Feet... I just drank in His sweet, loving, playful Self. When I asked for His Blessing, so that I could come there again, He said spiritedly, ‘Why here? There’s no need. I am always with you. I will be in your heart.’ If ever there was proof that Christ is working outside Christianity, it is in Babaji and before Him, Sri Ramakrishna. My mind is clear now; my doubts are resolved; I want to do His Will.”

Baba knows how deeply each aspirant, who comes to Him, has striven, whom he has served and adored, what he has imbibed from each, and when and by which path he will ultimately win his escape from this absurd, but attractive maze. To a young American, who was boasting too demonstratively of his loyalty to Him, Baba said one day, “Your Guru is in Bangalore. Go!” The exuberant admirer was flabbergasted. He protested, “No! He is right here!” But, Baba insisted that He was right and then, light dawned in the youth’s head. He had taken initiation in Transcendental Meditation from the renowned Mahesh Yogi and Baba was telling him that the Yogi had then come to Bangalore. Baba knew that the old roots were green and could be vitalised, with no extra effort.

“Sai Baba, Sai Baba; so kind, so kind! You are father, mother, sister, brother, everyone,” is the refrain of a song on Him, composed by a group of 'foreign' devotees and sung in chorus many times, at Prasanthi Nilayam and other places. Baba is the multi-faceted Avatar—Rama, Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Sankara, Gauranga, Ramakrishna, Zarathustra—all in one.

Coming to Puttaparthi presents its own problems, especially to those who are accustomed to comfort and conveniences; yet, they brave vagaries of the weather, the idiosyncrasies of food, the absence of apartments to stay in, the confusion and complication of communication, and various other discomforts and cling on, snatching every chance to see Him, hear Him, meet Him, and stay with Him as long as they can, for His presence is so enchanting, so near, so intimate, that discomforts and lack of facilities recede beyond cognition.

Mrs. Michael Schultz says, “What merit have we won that You call all of us so lovingly and sweetly?” Eddie Fleur writes, “I have prayed and do pray long, each day to have pure love for Him and total surrender to His Will. Also to be with Him, as Hanuman with Ram.” Gabriella Stayer writes, “His Love removed from our minds all the disruptions and discomforts of the place, all the unwelcome austerities forced upon one by Nature.” “I am a bubble; make me the sea,” is the prayer of Georgiana. Michelle Melvin says, “Here is a consciousness, where love feels no bounds; there is a space free from narrow measurements. There is a truth beyond this delusion, where Myself is known. I pray to the Divine Mother, Baba, May I come Home.” For, according to another of these earnest seekers, Baba has come to take His children home!

Another *sadhaka*, who has named himself as Raman and wiped off his past from attention, writes, “Most of us have come, hoping to accomplish something definite in the way of self-improving, to take at least a few steps up the spiritual pathway with Baba’s help. Baba helps us to progress in *Sadhanas* by means of tests, of which we alone are cognisant! One of His ways is to ignore us completely! Yes! For weeks on end. He will act as if He was totally unaware of our existence. He would smile at the person on our left and give a pat on the head of the person on our right! His glance will pass high over you and He will behave as if He is completely oblivious of your existence. As a result, your ego shrinks to the size of a pea! When you are just about the right size, He would all of a sudden give you one of His looks and a big smile – and all is well again and even better.”

“You have had a shot in the arm that should keep you high for several weeks. When He gives you one of those look-cum-smiles, you feel the eternally close bond; tears fill your eyes; you

are left high up in the clouds. You know in a flash that He had been aware of you all the time, that He has known every word you had whispered to yourself in your despair, every thought you had, everything you have done or left undone, and best of all, that He understands all your weaknesses and has forgiven them already!” Raman adds, “If I ever reach the desireless state, I’m sure the desire to be on the receiving end of one of Babaji’s looks and smiles will be the very last one to go.”

For Westerners, the first chance usually to be close to Baba, says John Hislop, is when He calls them together, either at Prasanthi Nilayam, or at Whitefield: “He sits on the floor with us and invites us to express our spiritual doubts. Then, we see before us what appears to be an Indian man (Baba told Arnold Schulman: “I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am not old, I am not young; I am all of these.”), of a dark brown skin (Rama and Krishna are described in the epics as having dark brown skins), slight in build, with a mass of black hair, with golden highlights framing His face. We are, naturally, as observant as possible, when we meet this extraordinary being; all our senses are alert. Our mind and intelligence are wide awake. We note that His features are sensitive and reflect at once, all changes of mood and thought. He has a sweet and loving smile, like that of an innocent and affectionate child. His eyes are dark brown, soft, and melting and sparkle with intelligence and humour. His voice is sweet and tender, like that of a mother, sometimes gay with laughter and liling wit, like that of a companion, at other times, stern and serious, like the voice of a father. The movement of His body, as He sits, arises, and walks, is graceful, flowing, and extremely light. His hands are expressive. There is a faint perfume in the air, which Magdalena says is jasmine! On our way home from India, in March, I awoke in Honolulu to that same perfume, which lasted some 10 or 12 seconds. Another time, in Bombay, at Dharmakshetra, while Baba was narrating a story to illustrate a point, I was amazed to find a circular blaze of halo around His head. Baba noticed my wondering eyes and explained that I was indeed fortunate to have that vision!”

Let us listen to more of Hislop’s intimate description of how Baba presents Himself to those, who seek Him: “As we sit close to Him, we quickly realise that He is far more than an elegant and charming Indian man! Our perception deepens beyond the senses; we become aware of a subtle, yet total beauty that has quietly filled the room. At that subtle level, where we have awakened, we feel a current of Compassion, Love, and Light and we know that the source is Baba.

Suddenly, our mind is at peace and we sense an up flow of happiness in the heart! All care drops away; our ordinary world has fallen out of sight into the past.”

Arnold Schulman describes the feeling, which came upon him thus: “In less than a minute, I had become a displaced person!” “Only our happy, blissful state with Him, in the present, is real.” This experience is so genuine that tears fill the eyes and some find themselves crying.

This ecstasy felt in Baba’s Presence is heightened, when He answers questions and speaks on spiritual matters. The delight and depth of His words of wisdom carry such a thrill of truth, that it almost seems that one cannot bear the joy that fills the hearts.

Baba gathers people from far and near and speaks to them, in stories and parables, on the age-old remedies for the disease of desire and distress, which He has come again to re-install in the estimation of the human community. Hislop writes, “Let me glean a few sheaves from the harvest stored in the memories of these brothers and sisters: Don’t waste time moaning over the past, dwelling on the negative, injurious, tragic, morbid experiences. Every fleeting moment of time can be a lifetime for the spirit! Discard trivialities. Be steady as the stars. Be on the look out to discover new ways to express your love to all. Do not talk too much, to too many, your real Friend and Companion is God. Act as you perceive: when you see distinction between rich and poor, healthy and sickly, act accordingly; help the poor and the sickly. Ridding the mind of impurities, delusions, egotisms, vices, sensual impressions, and karmic imprints is the same in effect, as “Diemind”: but, the more you do it, the brighter and clearer becomes the effulgence of what remains; it is like the diamond; you have to cut off bits and flakes to make it really precious. “Baba” means the Super-Soul, which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, *Sath Chit Ananda*. B is Being – *Sath*, A is Awareness – *Chit*, B is Bliss – *Ananda*, and the final A is *Atma* – inner core of Reality. You can also become Me, when you throw off the coils of delusion and desire.”

Baba declares that His Life is His Message. So, being in His Presence, observing His Compassion, His simplicity, His earnestness, His insight, His love, is itself a valuable opportunity for the aspirant to gain Fullness and Freedom. Every word of His is fraught with significance to the person He addresses. And He deals with each one as a separate, special problem. He does not vend cheap panaceas for the multifarious deficiencies of man; the goal is within you; the cure is in your hands; where the illness is, there the remedy is provided. To achieve the goal is to open the eye, to awake, to light a lamp, to deny a nightmare. It is all so simple; seeing the truth is as simple as speaking it, He says. Why make the road long and then, earn gratitude by recommending short-cuts? “The darkness of centuries will disappear, when a lamp is lit; you need no gun to shoot it off, no book to argue it off, no tears to wash it off, no pugilistic prowess to push it off,” He says.

For each, Baba has the remedy most suited, in an easily portable form and He dispenses it with affection and sympathy. Baba makes each one realise, says Hislop, that he is a reflection of His Reality. It is our *Dharma*, our duty to reflect and express His Nature, which is Truth and Love, for that is our real nature also. And it is our primary duty to free ourselves from the illusion of separateness from God, to merge into God, just as the droplets of spray, flung into the air by wind and storm, fall back and are no longer separate from the sea.

Hilda Charlton, in a letter to her pupils, delineates the *modus operandi* for meditation in her own way, thus: "In the heart centre, visualise a still lake of water. See a lotus arising. See a flame in the lotus. See Sai Baba in the flame. Install Sai Baba in the heart. With each breath, feel you are breathing in Baba's Divine Love through the heart centre. Let this Love spread to all parts of the body and overflow all around into all beings." In another letter, she advises, "You ask, how can I merge in Baba? Well, just keep loving Him. Think of Him as the whole world and Universe. His hair the sky, His body the earth, and all of us little atoms in it. Baba is God and God is in everything and in every one; we have to be at-one with all in our heart and then, we are at-one with Baba." And a pupil replied after a few months, "I feel like talking to the trees, leaves, and the sands, for He is in all these." Baba sometimes transfers spiritual power, by a touch or an exercise of His Will, to aspirants, who deserve it. One young *sadhaka* wrote to me, "...And then, before I knew it, the Master reached over and pinched me right between the eyes, in the region of the 'third eye' and I felt something nearing Bliss and immense ecstasy that lasted nearly five hours."

Other *sadhakas* were guided through dreams, which, to them, were as real as lessons granted face to face. One *sadhaka*, in bed with intestinal illness, came to me asking what *Visuddhi* meant! It seems Baba told him in a dream to concentrate there! I had to give him a long lesson on *Chakras*. I found that *Visuddhi chakra* has profound, curative influences!

I have glanced through the notes taken of 'dreams' such as these and found the directions concise and precise, consistent with what Baba gives to others in the wakeful stage. Look at this, for example: "Freedom or Liberation is not gained by the perfection of the small self, but by indifference (*Upeksha*) to both perfection and imperfection. If you are not ready to relinquish the relative, limited identity, then spend your energy well in perfecting it; that way, time will be best utilised. But, that is not the ultimate. In God, perfection or imperfection do not exist. *Vibhakti* or division, divergence, confrontation of opposites is not *Bhakti* (Union, At-one-ment)." Again, let us listen to this: "Do not *want* to understand. Do not *ask* to understand. Relinquish the imperative that demands understanding. Silence is not a matter of

resolve! It is always there. Silence is the endless flow of pure God into you, into the world.”

This type of instruction, clear before the eye and resonant in the ear, is given by Baba to many all over the world. For, Baba is ever eager to solve doubts and plant the seed of faith in the furrow of inquiry. To get His lessons, across the oceans, around the world, you don't have to be someone special, or an expert in some unusual *sadhana* taken from a prestigious textbook. Cherish the doubt sincerely. Pray intensely. Call out from the heart for the Supreme Preceptor; that is enough. Baba once asked Charles Penn, “How many times, Charles, have you called! And have I not answered, every time?”

One day, Charles Penn in *Dhyana* sank into the silent depths of Baba's *Vahini* (Stream), asking Baba, “East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet! Why twain, Baba? If this saying be true, then why do I yearn for You, who are in the East? What of the wall that stands between the West and East—is it unscalable?”

And Baba answered, “From early childhood, the mind is filled with half-truth (like, for example, this misconception), seemingly sound ideas and even deliberate fabrications. Babies are sometimes isolated from the adults, to avoid contact with adults suffering from contagious diseases; I wish they were isolated from the adults, for My sake, that they may get to know Me better! The sun knows no East or West. Tyrants prefer not to let the hot coals in man's mind cool down; they fan them white-hot and create easts and wests, and put them against each other for pride and profit. Everyone must fight such truthlessness with truthfulness, fight misconception with the factual, hate with love, temper with understanding. Man must fight with these things in himself. When anger arises, quieten down; when in fear and doubt, pray to Me. Tune in to My mighty Power, which, compared to the power of the sun which I have placed in the heavens, is what a baby's breathing is to a typhoon. Tune in, Charles, to this soothing, gentle breeze you are enjoying now!”

The urge within the seekers, who come to Baba for guidance and grace, is an agonising thirst, arising when they traverse the wasteland with an incipient awareness and not just blindly, as most people do. As Norman Mailer writes, “They suffer from that corrosive sensation in the chest and the gut, so much of the time, that they sense the body going empty within, the sensation of psyche pierced by a wound, whose dimensions keep opening, that unendurable conviction that one is hollow, displaced, without a single identity at one's centre.”

One of the Westerners described a few of his compatriots to me thus, “Kerry has spent a year of exile in the Canadian woods and another in a little island in the Aegean Sea. Janet has been

a clairvoyant, telepathic to a great extent, but consistently keeping it a secret under every conceivable circumstance—which is an amazing thing indeed! When they saw Baba, Janet cried, 'He is God; I know it.' Her sister got sick of the civilisation of the West and has come over. Martin Stamp, this boy here in his teens, denied himself both Oxford and Cambridge, although representatives from both tried to bag him, for even while he was in the preparatory school, he proved a precocious mathematician; he is hankering after God, so that he may immerse himself in Him. Raman was a teacher of Yoga, carrying the message of the East into the prisons of America. He receives letters from his 'pupils' behind the walls."

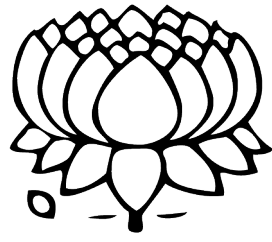
Like Indra Devi, whose *Yoga* classes always centre on the teaching and glories of Baba, Raman too has given Baba to these temporary misfits, along with his lessons on *Yoga*. One of them, Steve Win, writes from Lompoc in gratitude, "The vibrations here seem to be strongly negative. Without a strong positive guide to help me and the others along, we just sort of flow along and pray for the best. When I do get out, I am going to discipline myself more rigorously and work towards self-awareness. It seems to me that Sri Sai Baba is laughing at the cosmic joke we are all seriously living and He is patiently waiting to guide us. I am really hoping and praying that, very soon, I shall be able to meet Baba and learn of life at His blessed Feet! I am convinced, He will take me through the hazy veils of worldly thoughts, to the pure light of *Samadhi* and *Brahma-Consciousness*. I am spending hours, looking at Sai Baba's picture, so that I may be released from the real imprisonment I suffer, at the hands of worldly thought, desires, and senses."

Baba is announcing His Advent through signs and wonders all over the world. When Penn was high up in the sky, encountering inexplicable problems in the petrol tank of his plane, Baba appeared by his side in the cockpit and directed him to the defect spot with instructions for the repair! When terrible forest fires broke out in the Chunchuma Ranch, Tecate (Mexico), where Indra Devi has her *Yoga* Institute and a place of retreat, called 'Sai Nilayam', Baba responded to her prayer and turned the flaming conflagration back, right on itself, in a trice, and saved the men and property! The Cowans were disappointed, because they could not get, while in India, a copy of a particular photograph of His. It had on it the impression of the symbolic clock at Dharmakshetra, the 'hands' moving from one spiritual discipline to another, until "12" is indicated by "Total Surrender" at the Lotus Feet. When a photographer casually clicked, he got the picture of Baba with the picture of this clock, as if He wore a badge. When asked the meaning of the appearance of this impression, Baba said, it meant that "I shall press on My Heart in Love the *Sadhaka*, who accomplishes the steps

indicated on this clock!” Moved by their genuine disappointment, Baba placed one under the clock in their room at Santa Ana, California, behind the chest of drawers. As the Cowans didn’t notice it, the clock in their room banged itself on the wall to draw their attention to His gift, lying below it unclaimed! They prayed that *Vibhuti* might appear from His picture in their shrine; instead, a Star Sapphire with eight rays formed itself on the picture, looking as if Baba was wearing a necklace with the gem at His throat centre! To Indra Devi, He created a rosary of pearls, with the assurance that she can heal, in extreme cases, the sickness of sufferers by prayers, with its help. He has given her also a jar of *vibhuti*, which could be given as a curative for sick people and the jar has been blessed by Him, so that it will never be rendered empty. And thus, the cures, the healings, the cleansing of hearts, the refining of character, the amelioration of habits, the rescue from drug addiction, the winning of internal peace through the discipline of *Japa* and *Dhyana*, and other Acts of Divine Grace go on, minute after minute, from the minute to the manifold; for, Baba is determined to lift up all *sadhakas* into the Supreme Bliss.

I shall conclude this array of outpourings of the heart, with the first fruits of that teaching and guidance as garnered by Jerry, one of the many sharers of His Grace:

“I have been with Sai Baba for one year, now. During this time, I have seen many with little faith, much disease and discomfort come to Him. By the time they leave, they have more faith, ease and comfort, and peace of mind. For me, Baba has worked His miracles. As I stay longer and longer, I face, as in a mirror, all my *samskaras*. They strike me as intangible and unreal. The mental impressions fade into powerlessness; first, the more recent ones and then, gradually, those that stretch back to early childhood. Then, as they tend to finish, there are increasingly long periods of entering into Eternal Bliss of living in the Present! Baba burns the ego, with its innumerable potencies for mischief. Being in the Presence, the present is experienced by me as living in the Bliss of Love, when the mind is at complete rest, free from all thoughts of the past and future. The only impressions coming across the screen of the mind are the overtones of God, or the outpourings of Love and Peace to all. With some efforts, we can still the mind and empty our cups, so that Baba may pour into them the nectar of His Grace!”







Chapter 8

The Shirdi Feet

Baba said, "Why My Feet? This day, I have installed here the Old Baba. I shall give you Feet of the Old Baba Himself," and then, He stood on the silk cloth. When He stepped aside, the impression left was not of the slender, soft, rather teenage Feet of Baba, but the long, heavy, ponderous Feet that walked the lanes of Shirdi, 32 years ago!

The *Bhajan* continued constantly, during *Mahashivaratri*, the Divine Night. The next morning, Baba spoke on the significance of the vigil, of the fast, and on the value and auspiciousness of *Bhajan*. Then, He Himself distributed the consecrated food, with which the fast is to be broken. The morning marks the close of the celebrations. But, the crowd of over 25,000 persons does not depart so soon, as they wait for the chance to touch the Lotus Feet and to get a share of the Holy Ash, which had been miraculously created for *abhisheka* on the Sacred Day.

So, Baba goes through the meandering lines of squatting men and women, slowly and smilingly, giving each one a packet or two of the curative ash! He autographs a portrait of His here and there, when some ardent seeker stands up to get that sign of Grace; He touches at the big packets of *Vibhuti*, which devotees desire to take home, charged with curative potency by that contact; He pronounces the welcome word, '*Santhosham* or *Accha*' or 'Very Happy', so that they could move away, satisfied that they have had *Darshan*, *Sparshan*, and *Sambhashana* (seeing Him, touching Him, and listening to His Voice).

Many have travelled in crowded trains from long distances, into a State which speaks a different language, and undergone huge expenses and gone through physical strain. But these, as well as the sun and the cold, the open sheds and the tree shades, where they had to spend the days at Puttaparthi, were forgotten of or even welcomed, when Baba looked at them,

smiled at them, patted them, or gave them the precious lump of food or the coveted pinch of *Vibhuti*.

Others stay on, hoping that Baba will call them for a private talk! They spend the whole day, sitting in front of the Nilayam, in lines facing each other, for the off-chance that Baba might come any moment and call them in for a private interview.

Baba is considerate. He spends more hours than usual in a task of ministration. He selects at first the patently ill – the paralytic, the polio-affected, the arthritis patients, who sit on chairs, the wheelchair occupants, those with crutches, artificial limbs, plasters, and bandages, and those suffering from chronic illness. He also selects the old, the blind, the defective, and the feeble minded. This takes at least two or three days and so, one evening, Baba usually announces that those who have urgent work in their own places, either in offices, factories, commercial establishments, or farms need not wait for His formal permission to go, but can take the announcement itself as permission with blessings. Since He is travelling home with each of them, remaining with each of them, and working with each of them in farm or factory, they need not feel that they are going away or that Baba is not by their side.

This announcement persuades a large number to leave, but many wait on! “They are all My people; My Kith and Kin, come for Me,” Baba acknowledges. From early dawn, till deep into night, Baba is busy for more than ten or twelve days, curing, consoling, and counselling either individually as families, or in groups from each town or state, so that the gathering gradually melts and leaves in high spirits, light, full of courage and joy, with a confident gait and a firmer step.

The number of visitors gets lessened in about a week and after bestowing His blessings upon them all, Baba leaves for Brindavan, Whitefield, 12 miles away from Bangalore.

The summer months of March and April He spends there, so that devotees may not suffer the piercing sun at Puttaparthi. Brindavan is a cool, comforting garden, with an imposing bungalow situated at one end within an inner gate. Devotees gather here too and engage themselves in *Bhajan* under a vast, shady tree. Baba comes out of the bungalow – a beam of charming sunshine – whenever He realises that people have been waiting too long and slowly moves among the lines of adoring, anxious, avid aspirants for Grace. He sheds benediction and joy on all. From dawn to dusk, here too, Baba gives time and energy to those, who seek health, happiness, and wholesome, spiritual guidance from Him.

Dharmakshetra was established in Bombay on May 12th, 1968. It is the centre, where

Sanathana Dharma as well as its off-shoots and progeny, *Buddha-Dharma*, *Jaina-Dharma*, *Islam-Dharma*, *Zoroaster-Dharma*, and *Christ-Dharma*, are respected and their followers find friendship and fellow-feeling amongst each other. It has also proved to be a source of joy to the devotees in Bombay, as Baba visits Bombay during the second week of May, every year, when the city celebrates its epochal event, conferring the boon of further, spiritual advice.

Baba arrived in Bombay on the 8th May and until the 12th, He was the cynosure of all eyes, the Figure on whom all affixed their minds, the subject of conversation in thousands of homes. The *Bhajan* sessions at Dharmakshetra were thrilling experiences for tens of thousands of eager participants, both in the morning and evening hours. Baba met sizable groups of teachers and principals, one evening, Rotarians and Lions another day, and of *Sadhakas* another evening.

To the *Sadhakas*, He spoke of such matters as how to hold and roll the rosary, the significance of the number 108, the chanting of *Soham* as a continuous, psychic discipline, and the Verity inherent in Variety. To the Rotarians, He spoke of the utter ridiculousness of imitating the culture of America, a malady that is fast spreading its magnificence in India, rich in her own, invaluable traditions. “Some people hear through American ears, see through American eyes, and think through the American brains that they have transplanted into themselves,” He said. History, climate, vegetation, language, neighbouring cultures, alien influences, and foes – all shape and mould the cultural trends of a people. Indiscriminate adoration and limitation tend to destroy individual and social peace, He warned. To the teachers, He spoke of the spacious mansion of Religion erected by the sages to provide peace, prosperity, and contentment. He exhorted them to study the basic principles of religion and apply them in their own lives. “A teacher must be an example of happiness and joy, chiselled by attachment to God and detachment from worldly greed. Then alone can he be a person worthy of his job,” He said.

Dharmakshetra is a *Gnyana Vahini*, in brick and mortar! The entrance door of the Sathyadeep, the Prayer Hall, has embossed on it in polished brass, the symbols sacred to every religion: the *Pranava*, the Cross, the Crescent and Star, the Conch, the Wheel, the Flame, the mystic letter Sri, and the Chalice. It proclaims, “Every religion is a lamp that illuminates the Path of Truth; every religion traverses the *Kshetra* (region) of *Dharma* (Righteousness);” that is the message, with which man is greeted here. As you enter, there shines facing you the Lamp, in answer to man’s eternal prayer, *Thamaso maa*

Jyothirgamaya: From darkness, lead me unto Light. And on both sides of the Lamp, held aloft by the hands of devotion drawn as a fresco on the wall, we have symbols of the Five elements, the components of the Universe, the primordial substance of *Brahman*, *Prithivi*, Earth, cognisable through all five senses, having smell, taste, form, touch, and sound; *Ap*, Water, cognisable through four senses, having no inherent smell; *Tejas*, Fire, cognisable through three senses, having no taste; *Vayu*, Atmosphere, cognisable through two senses, having no form; and *Akash*, Ether or Sky, cognisable only through one sense, having only sound. On the other side, we have symbols of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Santhi*, *Prema*, and *Ahimsa*, the *Gnyanamudra*, the Oil Lamp, the Lotus, the Moon, and Palms folded in Prayer. In the Prayer Hall, half way up the ridge, Baba has got painted the *Atma* Ramayana and the *Atma* Maha Bharata, re-interpreting the great epics into lessons on the fundamental steps, in the *Sadhana* for self-realisation.

His discourse, therefore, on the Anniversary of the Inauguration Day, was on the message that the building trumpets forth: “The human body is the *Kshetra*: it has to be transmuted into the *Dharmakshetra*! When the owner of the body discards desire, passion, injurious impulse, and pernicious propulsion, then the body is *Dharmakshetra*.”

On the 15th, Baba flew to Ahmedabad, the biggest city in the Gujarat State. The Chief Justice of the High Court, Gujarat State, had arranged a reception, to which the Governor, the Chief Minister, and other Ministers had come; they got a chance to know Baba’s universal outlook and His emphasis on the fundamental unity of all faiths. In the evening, Baba addressed a mammoth gathering for over an hour. “*Yoga* and *Tyaga* are two chief instruments of spiritual progress. By *Tyaga* (Detachment), you escape from pathetic entanglement with the objective world; by *Yoga* (Self-Control), you attach yourself to the Divine Principle that is immanent in the Universe, in Truth, Beauty, and Goodness wherever found,” He said. “I bless you that you succeed in the *Sadhana*, in which you are engaged; if you are not practising any now, I advise you to take up the simple, preliminary step of *Namasmarana*, reciting or singing the Name. Also, reverence towards parents, teachers, elders, and service to the poor, the sick, the deserted, the distressed, the defectives. See in everyone God, in that disguise, come to accept the offering of Love you place at their Feet,” Baba declared. Gujarat, already resounding with the sweetness and purity of Sai *Bhajan* in every village and town, received a great, big spurt by this visit.

On the 14th June, during a meeting at the residence of the Minister for Agriculture, Sri P.K. Sawant, when the members of the Maharashtra Branch of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha

had gathered to solve from Baba, many dilemmas encountered during *Sadhana* and study, the Editor of 'Nava Kaal', a Gujarati newspaper, was also present. His paper was then running a series of articles on 'Miracles' and he desired to ask Baba about them and publish His answers. Baba graciously permitted him, even encouraged him by His replies. "I know the background of your questions," He said with a smile, in order to put him at ease.

We must be thankful to the Editor, as well as to Sri P.K. Sawant, Sri T.S. Bharde, Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, and others at that meeting, who prodded Baba through appropriate questions, so that we have from Baba an authentic analysis of the meaning and significance of these 'miracles'. Many amateur *Sadhakas* and half-baked monks declare that miracles are sacrileges on God and they provoke Divine anger and invoke Divine punishment. One such person, when asked specifically about the 'miracles' of Baba, replied in writing, "I do abhor the performance of miracles, be it Christ, Krishna, or Sai Baba." "This opinion is shared by all the sensitive beings," he wrote, implying that those who do not share his abhorrence, like *Shuka*, for example, are not 'great' *Rishis*. He continues his purblind pronouncement, "An integrated human being has a lot of power over the cosmic happenings, but to interfere with the law of the divine is a sin."

Dr. S. Bhagawantham, D.Sc., F.N.I., Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence, spoke of this 'interference with the law' at a meeting in Madras, in April, 1967. He said, "Professor Gokak read a poem before you at yesterday's session, wherein he described Baba and His activities: He 'comes like a storm,' He 'pours kindness like a shower of rain.' All that was very nice; I liked them. But, towards the end, he trespassed upon my field. He said, 'Baba defies the laws of physics and chemistry.'

Having learnt physics and chemistry for many years, during my youth and having practised physics and chemistry for many years later, and taught them and learnt them while teaching for a number of decades, I cannot understand any individual like you and me, or even like the best of men on this planet defying the laws of physics and chemistry and getting away with it!"

Perhaps, it is this line of argument that made the person, who 'abhorred miracles,' to write further, "There are historical moments, when we have to interfere with the divine law and for this, according to the law of the cosmos, the individual suffers." "You cannot get away with it," as Dr. Bhagawantham said!

The man, who abhors miracles, is a popular exponent of Krishna's teachings. But, that does

not hinder him from writing, “Krishna died of an arrow wound and Christ died in great agony on the Cross.” So, the author seems to say, “Sathya Sai Baba! Beware!”

Let us listen to what Dr. Bhagawantham has to say. Does he accuse Baba of ‘interfering’ and warn Him of ‘dire punishment’, as the arrow killed Krishna in vengeance for the Govardhangiri miracle and the Cross, for the loaves and fish, or the cures and visions? No. He is wiser than the monk.

Dr. Bhagawantham says, “Baba went on breaking one law after another! I have asked His permission to tell you one or two of these happenings, for they are essential to establish my bona fides. I was an eye witness to a surgical operation, which He performed. When it was over, He turned to my son, who was present, and asked, 'Have you got a length of bandage?' as if He, who produced from nowhere the knife and the needle, could not produce the bandage cloth! My son replied, 'Yes! Father is the head of this Institute of Science; there is a dispensary here; I can telephone to the doctor and get a bandage strip in two minutes.' Bhagawan replied, 'Oh! Two minutes is too long! Don't worry.' Then, He waved His hand and the bandage was ready for use!

With due respect to the expertise of Professor Gokak in the use of the English language, I would have preferred him to say, instead of, ‘He defies the laws of physics and chemistry,’ ‘He transcends the laws of physics and chemistry.’ Now, arguing further, with my training in the laboratory and in logic, I cannot accept that He is like you and me and yet, He is transcending the laws of physics and chemistry. No, how can it be? The fact is, He is a Phenomenon... He is transcendental. He is Divine.

This is a well-known feature of science. Science develops from stage to stage. Skeletons of discarded theories mark the road, along which science progresses. A law is enunciated to explain known laws, the scientist takes that experience too, and that becomes another law. Since what I have seen of Baba does not come under the known laws of science, I simply enunciate the law, 'Bhagawan transcends the Laws of Science,' and this becomes another Law of Science.”

Baba Himself has referred in some of His discourses to the alleged ‘sin’ of breaking the Laws of Science. Addressing the All-India Conference of the Office-bearers of the Units of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Baba said, “Some elders try to confuse you. Krishna showed many wonders, with an amazing disregard of the laws of Nature and so, according to them, He had to meet death from the arrow of a hunter! Jesus, they say, suffered crucifixion, for He,

too, manifested many miracles! Their argument is that, since I am defying the laws of nature, I, too, will suffer likewise! They hope to create panic and spread alarm. But, these are the prattling of weakness, ignorance, and envy. They cannot understand this Glory, nor do they desire to tolerate it!”

On Christmas Day, 1970, He declared at Bombay, “There are many, who cannot bear or tolerate the splendour that emanates from Me, the Divinity expressed in and through every act of Mine. These people label them as acts of mesmerism, miracles, or feats of magic! Their vocabulary is small. Their experience is limited. They hope by these words to cast a slur. Let Me tell you this: Mine is no mesmerism, miracle, and magic! Mine is genuine Divine Power. Small minds and limited intellects cannot comprehend them. They have no strength or stamina to grasp the magnificence and the majesty. God can do anything. He has all Power in the palm of His Hand. My Body, like all other bodies, is a temporary habitation, but My power is eternal, all-pervasive, ever-dominant.”

Sri Bharde, who was in the group present when the Editor of 'Nava Kaal' interviewed Baba on this subject of Miracles, had himself written a few weeks earlier, in the same paper, “I have not so far seen any person, who does miracles as naturally, as spontaneously as Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He stood before the idol of Rukmini at the famous shrine of Pandharpur and waved His Hand, saying, 'The most important jewel is not found on the idol!' As He said so, a necklace of gold, the auspicious jewel, appeared concretised! That jewel, which He then placed round the neck of the idol, is still there!

Sri Bharde asked Baba that day, “Is your power to create things inexhaustible?” Baba answered, “It is limitless. It is as the ocean, inexhaustible. Every one, wherever he is, whoever it be, can take from it whatever he needs, to his heart’s content.” At this, Hon’ble P.K. Sawant was emboldened to put in a query, “If it is inexhaustible and limitless, why is it not used to cure the poverty and misery of mankind?”

At this, Baba laughed outright, records the 'Nava Kaal': “You equate poverty and misery with the non-possession of things! Sovereigns can command all things that confer happiness and joy; but, are they content? Are they having mental peace? My task is to confer mental equanimity. I do not give things to people in order to make them richer; I give, in order to foster devotion and faith in them.”

Yes! A very rich business man told me, while showing a diamond ring created by Baba and placed by Him on his ring finger (it fits exactly), “Mr. Kasturi, whenever my eyes fall upon

this ring and this big-sized diamond, I am reminded of the pregnant words, with which Baba put it on my finger. 'This is not a diamond; this is an *upadesh*, a constant warning for you: Die Mind! Let the mind with all its likes and dislikes disappear, leaving you in Peace.'

Baba told Sawant, "A sick person comes to Me. I give him something I create, *Vibhuti* or some other article. He becomes conscious of Divine Power. He acquires mental peace that cures, that comforts, that consummates his wish. It is not that I give these things only to those devoted to Me; I give, whenever it is necessary to turn the afflicted towards God."

The Editor asked, "What is the power, which works these miracles?" Baba answered, "It is wrong to call them miracles or *chamatkars*. Or to say that *chamatkars* are done to earn *namaskars*! It is only *Nidarshan* (evidence), not *Pradarshan* (exhibition). It is just like a play, sport—My natural behaviour. It is a sign, which helps to turn men into faith, devotion, inquiry, and realisation of their own *Atma*. As the intention or the will arises in the mind, the thing is made! It is ready, when I want it. The moment it is willed, the thing comes to hand or happens, where I will it to happen."

The Editor asked, "It is said that, by miracles, things that are already somewhere are transported. Are they transported or created?"

This is a question that many have longed to ask. Dr. K.M. Munshi, the Founder of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a famous lawyer, statesman, and writer, says, "Baba happened to perceive that my right hand was slightly trembling, as it always did on account of Parkinsonism. He rose from His seat, held my fingers, covered them with His own fingers, and rubbed them with sacred ashes, which came out of His hand. Then, He waved His hand with a sweeping gesture and materialised a ring, which He slipped on to the little finger of my right hand. I immediately perceived that the stiffness of the fingers had considerably disappeared; so had the slight trembling in the right arm and leg! When we bade Him goodbye, He again created sacred ashes and rubbed them over the right hand. Bringing a ring by apport did not surprise me; however, the sacred ash applied and produced by Baba must have weighed a pound a day and could not have been stored somewhere else. If so, it is not apport, but something more."

Dr. Munshi did not know that the *Vibhuti* created is more than a pound a day on busy days, when Grace flows profusely; it is also of many grades of smoothness, of many colours from white to dark brown, of many tastes, sucrose to bitter, and of many smells from rose to camphor and iodine! You cannot have all these varieties stored in such quantity somewhere

and produced, when willed!

And what exactly is apport? It is a word that only means, 'mysterious'. By using it, one can feel content that the miracle has been explained and understood! Howard Murphet, in his book, "Sai Baba, the Man of Miracles", writes, "The theory behind apports is that the object, which is already in existence somewhere, is dematerialised and brought in that state by psychic force to the place, where it is re-materialised!" Very facile, indeed! As if that explanation is clear and convincing enough!

I believe it is easier to produce a thing ab initio, rather than go to the bother of dematerialising, transporting through long distance by psychic force exercised upon the dematerialised substance, and again, re-materialise it! All in a trip, quicker than the speed of light!

Therefore, Baba answered the question of the Editor thus: "They are all created newly. Transporting means, they should come from somewhere else, isn't it? That would be deceit. Things are created at the very moment I will them. I give also things that are found nowhere. This Power is impossible to comprehend."

I know many occasions, when He created such new materials, as Sri Ramakrishna's portrait with Baba's own picture at the four corners and in the centre; the miniature portrait of the Guru of the father and grandfather of Dr. Gokak, a Pantji of North Karnataka, created for him, as soon as Baba saw his photograph in the shrine room of Dr. Gokak.

The Editor asked further questions, too. "From when have You begun to give these signs of Divine Power?" The answer was, "From childhood." "At school, I used to create chocolates, marbles, and other articles for the children around Me." To make things clear, the Editor ventured to ask, "At what age did You acquire this Divine Power?" Baba said, "From My very Birth," and after a pause, He added with emphasis, "From before that," for was He not at Shirdi as Sai Baba, in the years before He incarnated in the Raju family at Puttaparthi? And was He not Krishna long before that?

Naturally, the Editor was struck with wonder. He exclaimed, "That is to say...?" And Baba continued, "That is to say, I resolved upon My Birth. I decided who should be My Mother. Mere humans can choose only who is to be wife or husband: the Mother was chosen by the Son in the Rama incarnation and in the Krishna incarnation. Then too, the task, for which the birth was decided upon, was conferring *Prema* on all and through that *Prema*, foster righteous living."

“My acts are evidences of Divine *Shakti*, signs and signals of Divinity. I am granting things out of *Prema*. My *Prema* will never diminish. I have no desire of any kind. I talk of Love, I guide you along the Path of Love. I am Love.”

Returning to Bangalore and Brindavan (Whitefield), Baba was busy with the Arts and Science College affiliated to the Bangalore University. The College was inaugurated on the 9th day of June, 1969. On the 18th, a gathering of poets met at Brindavan from all parts of Mysore, men who had attained renown as inspirers and interpreters of the Kannada-speaking region. Dr. D. R. Bendre, a fiery mystic emitting more light than heat, echoing in verse the tears and tragedies that soften the hearts of man, was there. He translated Whitefield as Panduranga, Pandu meaning White and Ranga meaning Field! That line sent a thrill among the thousands, who heard him. Dr. V.K. Gokak, who stands in the front rank of Kannada poets and is a great name in English poetry too, was persuaded to read his poems. There were Dr. R.S. Mugali, a doyen of classical studies and romantic poetry; Professor G.P. Rajarathnam, an ardent student of Buddhism and Jainism, a popular poet delineating the feelings and aspirations of the common man; Professor R.G. Kulkarni, saturated with Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, Dr. G.S. Sivarudrappa, mystic and *sadhaka*, following the footsteps of the medieval saints of Karnatak, but nevertheless in touch with the heartbeats of Tagore and Gandhiji, and Sri K.L. Sivappa, a warbler of the woods, free and bold, sweet and strong. When they had finished reading their poems, Baba sang a beautiful poem composed by Him on the *Thandava* Dance of Shiva. It had all the rhythm, power, and cosmic sublimity that words can describe about Him, about that sempiternal leela, which swings worlds in space. Baba is the '*Kavimkaveenam*', the Poet of Poets, an appellation ascribed to God in the *Vedas*.

In the last week of June, Baba visited Madras. Devotees in their thousands flocked wherever He went and drank in the nectar of His discourses. Baba, in His teens, had mysteriously appeared at the bedside of a certain Loganatha Mudaliar, in Madras and cured him of a brain malady brought about by black magic. “You are God,” he said, holding on to the Feet of Baba. He decided to build a temple for Baba on his land at Guindy, a suburb of Madras, but he had a dream, wherein he was instructed to install, instead, the idol of Shirdi Sai Baba, the previous Body of Baba, therein. Baba too wrote to him, confirming the dream. So, the temple was built and in 1948, Baba Himself installed the idol! Howard Murphet, who visited the temple and saw the idol in 1968, writes, “Like Michelangelo’s marble Moses in a little church in Rome, it gave me, personally, the immediate impression that it was alive.”

On the Day of installation, the Mudaliars had the unique privilege and pleasure of washing the Feet of Baba and placing flowers upon them. They prayed that they may be given an impression of the soles on a piece of silk that they had brought for the purpose. Baba agreed and they applied sandal paste mixed with turmeric powder on the soles, and asked that He stand upon the silk cloth. Baba said, "Why My Feet? This day, I have installed here the Old Baba. I shall give you Feet of the Old Baba Himself." and then, He stood on the silk cloth. When He stepped aside, the impression left was not of the slender, soft, rather teenage Feet of Baba, but the long, heavy, ponderous Feet that walked the lanes of Shirdi thirty two years ago!

Baba visited that temple and addressed a large gathering of people there. "This is a temple," He said, "where I have installed twenty one years ago, the idol of My Shirdi Form. The word Vishnu is used for God, since it means, 'present everywhere at all times.' When people are told about an Idol of God, who is Vishnu, they laugh and condemn it as a foolish superstition. But, when it is desired to drink the ambrosia that is God, don't you require a spoon, a cup, or glass? The idol is a contrivance, by which you can consume the Bliss. The cup can be of any shape, or size, or design; it is just a container of the Joy "Raso Vai sah"-God is Ambrosia. He is sweet, sustaining, and strength-giving. You can imbibe Him through a cup designed as Nataraja, Durga, Krishna, Ganesa, Linga, Christ, or Sai Baba. Many of you yearn for a cup shaped like this idol, designed as Sai Baba; so, I allowed you to have this idol here. This is the Sai Form, which sat and taught at Dwarakamayi Mosque at Shirdi."

On the Guru Purnima, 29th July, Baba sent a message to the *Samitis* all over India and to devotees overseas, where He quoted the prayer of Prahlada as an example to be adopted. "Grant me, O Lord, the adoration of Thy Lotus Feet and give me Compassion, deep, vast, unlimited towards all beings in all the world." "Start the day with Love, live the day with Love, fill the day with Love, spend the day with Love, end the day with Love, this is the way to God," He wrote. During the discourse that He gave that evening at the Prasanthi Nilayam, He warned against institutionalising religion and compartmentalising society. "It is good to be born in a church, but it is not good to die in it," He declared. "One must travel beyond the limits set by mind and reason and reach the boundless expanse of the Absolute and the Eternal *Atma*," He advised.

The Birthday of Sri Krishna was celebrated in the presence of 'Sai' Krishna, at the Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba has incarnated in order to re-vitalise *Dharma*, and this is done through a variety of means and methods. As a matter of fact, every minute of Baba is being spent in

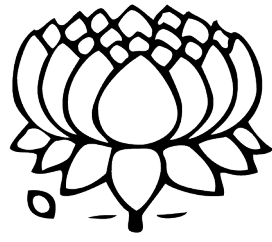
correcting some misconception or other that has led man astray, or curing some optical defect, which dulls or diverts the vision of man away from the Truth.

Krishna is the most misunderstood of the *Avatars* of God, thanks to the innate lasciviousness of ordinary man and the acrobatics of erotic poets, who have disregarded even patent facts in order to paint the luridness they coveted. Baba takes hold of every chance to inject sense into *pundit*, poet, and *sadhaka*, so that the mind of modern man may become as pure and as saturated in the Divine, as the simple cowherd maids of Gokul. “Krishna is in you,” He said, “He is *Sarvabhutha-anthar-Atma*, the Inner Core of all beings. If He is not in you, how can you exist as an entity?” Baba asked. “He is in you as power, strength, love, happiness, enthusiasm, passion, and compassion. Go into the deeper, esoteric meaning of all the parables and metaphors. Brindavan is the jungle of Life; individual beings are the ‘go’, the cattle He tended, Go-kula is the herd of *Jivis*, Krishna is the Divine Principle that shines in every being, craving for the purity that is churned in, full of good thoughts and feelings. He guides and goads, He blesses and showers benedictions.”

The *Vedas* describe the Divine as the streak of lightning, flashing through the thick, blue clouds! In Telugu, this streak is known as ‘*Gita*’. The *Gita* activates, illumines, and spreads splendour and wisdom. Since Baba has declared often that He is the indweller in all, listeners saw before them the Krishna Principle Itself embodied in the Sai Form and bearing the Sai Name. It was an exhilarating realisation.

Hilda Charlton of New York expresses it as follows:

*From out Thy lips doth blow the mighty winds
That sway the trees in dancing rhythms;
And yet again, Thou art the very trees
Whose swaying boughs whisper the ancient Om.
Thou art the beginning and the end of all
And, even before the beginning, Thou wert.
Thou art the ever-ending ever-beginning life;
Thou art the Light, the Love;
And, I am Thine Own, Thyself!*





Chapter 9

Delta Of Delight

“I am yours, whether you like Me or not; you are Mine, even if you hate Me and keep away from Me. Therefore, what need is there for impressing and attracting, exhibiting My Love or Compassion to win your adoration? I am in you. You are in Me. There is no distance or distinction.” He declared, “You have come to your own home. This is your home, not Mine! My home is your heart!”

Lucky are the seekers of Love and Light, who get the privilege of seeing Baba, the perfect embodiment of Being, Awareness, Bliss, *Atma*; witnessing His Divinity, hearing His Teachings of Universal love and on pursuit of absolute Truth. Luckier still amongst them are those who implement His advice and ever remain in the consciousness of the Divinity, pervading the entire manifestation. They consider His Advent as a chance for their own adventure into heaven. They celebrate His Birthday as their own. Charles Penn exclaimed, “Our Lord’s Birthday! 1965 was the year of my birth, for I came to know Baba that year. Now, I am only three years of age,” he wrote in 1968.

The 43rd Birthday was celebrated all over by groups of devotees in rejoicing and in thankfulness, with a variety of programmes dear to Baba. In Kakinada, they had *Bhajans* for forty two days prior to the auspicious day. In other places, the celebrations included *Bhajans* in Hospitals, Jails, and Homes for Disabled and Defectives, mass feeding and giving of clothes, Plays and Entertainment Items by Children, Discourses, Musical Recitals, Special Worship, Processions, Gita Recitation Contests, and a number of other, spiritual items. *Vedic* Schools, Sanskrit classes, Telugu lessons, Libraries, Service Homes, Eye Treatment Camps, *Seva Dals*, and Study Circles were inaugurated that day. Baba blessed them in their own places, by various signs of His Presence and sometimes, by appearing in His Own Form for

all to see!

At Prasanthi Nilayam, the Conference of the Office Bearers of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Andhra Pradesh met on 21st and 22nd November and so, the atmosphere was full of consecrated faith. "Everyone," He told the delegates, "has three sources of power: as an individual, as a shrine where God is installed, and as the *Atma* which God is Himself. Hanuman once told his Master, Rama, 'When I feel I am this body, You are my Lord: when I feel I am a *jiva* among many, impelled by the Grace of God, I am the reflection and You are the Original; when I know I am the *Atma*, I am You and You are I.' God walks along the Road of Truth; Man, His shadow, if he holds on to His Feet, can safely traverse fire and water, dirt, hollow and hill and reach Truth." He told them that the Organisation was intended as an arena, where they learn the value of cleansing the mind. "Whether it is meditation that you are encouraging, *Bhajan* you are organising, a discourse you are announcing, or clothes you are offering, or worship that you are conducting, the object to be achieved is cleansing the mind of the tarnish of egoism, greed, hatred, malice, lust, and envy. In place of all these, fill the mind with Love. That is the sign of the Sai Devotee."

During the Discourse that Baba gave, prior to hoisting the Flag on His Birthday, Baba spoke about devotees, who develop and demonstrate fanaticism when speaking about Him or adoring Him. "I have no wish to draw people towards Me, away from the worship of My other Names and Forms. Perhaps, you guess from what you call the 'miracles' that I am attracting and trying to attach you to Me and Me alone. They are not designed to demonstrate or publicise, they are spontaneous and confirmatory proofs of the Divine, which can change the sky to earth and earth to sky. I am yours, whether you like Me or not; you are Mine, even if you hate Me and keep away from Me. Therefore, what need is there for impressing and attracting, exhibiting My Love or Compassion to win your adoration? I am in you. You are in Me. There is no distance or distinction," He declared, "You have come to your own home. This is your home, not Mine! My home is your heart!"

The Birthday Celebrations, which began virtually with the Conference on the 21st, continued until the 27th. Dr. V.K. Gokak said, "If we want to see truth with a capital T, where can we see it and realise it, except in Him? If we want to experience and realise beauty with a capital B, where else can we have it, except in Him and through Him? He is goodness incarnate, showering succour on humanity and healing it in distress. He is Love incarnate. Love that fosters and protects even those, who have not visualised His Divinity and Power! He has come to transform the rampant disorder of the Present into a New World Order. For our

guidance and benefaction, He has put on the robes of mortality. He bears on His Atlantean shoulders the burden of humanity.”

A dramatic instance of the succour and healing that Baba showers was noticed by over 20,000 people, on the 23rd, at the huge auditorium, during the morning session.

Baba was taken in procession from the Nilayam to the auditorium by devotees; there were students of the *Vedic* School, reciting the invocatory hymns; there were *Bhajan* parties; there was the beautifully caparisoned elephant, Sai Gita, intelligent, sensitive, and even, one can venture to say, ‘devoted’. Above all, there was the mother of Baba, revered Eshwaramma, by His side, for this was to commemorate the Day of His Incarnation.

At the auditorium on the dais, Baba seated Himself on the silver chair, amidst the acclamation of the immense gathering. Then, Baba graciously allowed some devotees to place a few drops of consecrated oil on His Head: they touched His Feet and placed flowers on them. The mother, who has won the gratitude of the world for ages, placed the oil, first. Then, a few others followed. Begum Tahira Sayeed, a Persian and Urdu poetess; M. S. Dixit, a revered old devotee, who had served Baba even in His Previous Body, while He was at Shirdi; the Rajmata of Jamnagar, the Rajmata of Sirohi, Dr. Gokak, and Indra Devi.

While Indra Devi was placing a few drops of oil on His Hair, with a flower dipped in the cup I was holding, Baba saw a certain Mrs. Anderson, who had come from the United States. She was a chronic invalid, unable to walk or use her lower limbs, being helped around by her husband, in a wheeled chair. As soon as she came to Prasanthi Nilayam, she was admitted to the Hospital, so that she could be nursed there by professional hands. Baba presented her, and all other ladies from beyond the seas, saris on the 22nd, so that they could wear them on His Birthday; He deputed some ladies to help this one to wrap it around her. On the 23rd, she was brought down from the Hospital Hill and allowed to watch the Function from the far end of the dais, where she sat on her inevitable wheel chair, which had become more or less a part of her anatomy!

Baba turned to me and said, “That lady in the wheel-chair will be happy, if you take the cup to her and get a flower dipped by her in the oil, which can later be placed on My Head.” I was thrilled by His Compassion, but there was more to follow.

Before I could turn to the left and proceed towards her (the distance from the Silver Chair of Baba to her wheel-chair was over 40 feet), Baba stopped me and said, “Wait! I shall Myself go to her!” People were astonished, when they saw Baba descend from the Chair and proceed

towards the invalid lady, with me holding the oil cup. Baba bent His Head before her, so that she could place a few drops of oil on His Halo of glorious Hair! The gathering was overwhelmed with grateful joy, when they saw this spontaneous flood of Divine Mercy and the happy glow of ecstasy on the pale face of a foreign invalid! She applied the flower three times. The third time, Baba held her hand, saying, "Stand up"... and she stood!

The gathering was amazed with delight! "Come with me!" Baba said. And she walked the forty feet, towards the silver Chair, keeping pace with Baba! I was so overcome with joy that I ran towards the mike and announced to the entranced gathering, that Mrs. Anderson, who had not walked for years, was cured of her illness and that she has risen from her wheeled chair at the bidding of Baba and got her limbs back in perfect condition. Everyone was thrilled by this miracle of healing. "Normal feet" was the Birthday Gift she received from Baba.

Speaking on His Birthday, Baba said that, children are born for five ordinary, unnoticed reasons. There are *Nyasaputhras*, born in order to realise the value of some deposit that they had made with you in the previous life, which you had misappropriated and misused. There are *Runaputhras*, those born in order to recover undischarged loans given by them to the man, who has now come as the father. There are *Suputhras*, those born as a consequence of the blessings of God and there are *Upekshaputhras*; these are the *Avatars*, with no sense of attachment towards the parents, kith, or kin, with no sense of obligation of them, with love and compassion for all. This was a revelation of Baba's attitude towards the parents, which has puzzled many, as different from the attitude of even Rama and Krishna.

On December 4th, Baba left Prasanthi Nilayam for Bangalore, where He spent about a month with devotees from America and other places, helping them in their spiritual exercises. He was in contact personally with the arrangements to open a Boys' College in the premises of Brindavan, where He stayed.

On Christmas Day, He blessed the Christian devotees with gifts and on *Vaikuntha Ekadashi*, which came five days later, He created *Amrita* (Ambrosia), which He Himself distributed to about 4,000 people who had gathered for *Bhajan*. On New Year Day, he gave a discourse on "The Spiritual Resolutions" one must make for the New Year, and the practices and attitudes one has to ring out with the old! January 13 saw Him back at Prasanthi Nilayam, for *Makara Sankranti*, the Day of the Tropic of Capricorn, when the Divine half of the year begins, with the northward movement of the Sun in the northern hemisphere. Baba said, "The Sun

journeys north from today. But, be concerned more with your own journey from birth to death and then again, to birth from death, until you set yourselves free working out your sentence, through good behaviour.”

On the 16th of January, '69, Baba was at Rajahmundry, on the Godavari River, a river dear to Him since Shirdi Days, on the first lap of a whirlwind tour of the Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh. The Godavari flows near Shirdi and it has saturated itself with the Glory of the Previous Body of Baba, and learnt to love the Name. Everyone, who went to be blessed by Baba while in His previous abode at Dwarakamayi, in Shirdi, used to take a bath in the Godavari. Now too, by some trick of Divine dispensation, the East and West Godavari Districts are studded thick with *Bhajan Mandalis* and *Seva Samitis*, heralding the New Sai Era of devotion and dedication. Someone from the East Godavari District wrote to Baba, “There is no house here, without Your picture in the altar; there is no house that does not resound to the chanting of songs on Your Glory!” And Baba replied to him, “Reserve your joy for something grander! My Name and Form will soon be found getting established everywhere. They will occupy every inch of the world.”

On the 17th and the 18th, mammoth gatherings assembled at Rajahmundry to hear the discourses of Baba. Sri V.K. Rao, I.C.S. and Swami Karunyananda of the Gouthami Jeevakarunya Sangham, spoke on the great good fortune of the present generation in being contemporaries of Baba. Baba spoke on the conquest of the mind as necessary for liberation from the world of change. Know the One; attention must be concentrated on the One. Alternations of acceptance and rejection, affirmation and negation are but appearances on the One. Let nothing move you; be still. Be detached, be but a witness. The world is but a play enacted and directed by Him: “Let your love and longing, desire and search be directed towards God.” He asked them to give up inflammatory assertions, malicious talk, and angry negations. “With the twenty six letters of the English alphabet, all English books in existence are written, composed, and printed. The letters themselves are without attributes, they are neither good, nor evil, but out of their combinations in various ways are made either dull, insipid, trashy books, or books with cosmic revelations of the highest order. So too, the operations of the same mind can make or mar the career of man here or hereafter.”

On the 18th, Baba visited the Andhra Paper Mills and gave a discourse to the staff and labour, in which He emphasised the sacred partnership and the mutual love and respect that must govern all dealings between them. That evening, Baba inaugurated a school named after Him and run as per His message and teachings. Baba felt great pity, such as God feels at rare

intervals, when He sat facing the children. He said, “The spacious mansion called *Sanathana Dharma*, erected with great toil and travail by the sages of the past to enable succeeding generations to live in peace and prosperity, is, alas, being condemned today as uninhabitable and fit only to be given up as dilapidated! The peace, which those sages had envisaged, is noticeable in the faces of these children, having no envy, no greed, and no hatred in their hearts. When they grow up, the joy is turned into grief and the peace peters out into anxiety and fear. The elders have lost the art of regaining, retaining, or transmitting peace and joy.”

“Children must grow up in the atmosphere of reverence, devotion, mutual service, and cooperation. Now, they learn only copy-book maxims, devoid of any sincere urge to put them into practice. Parents drink, gamble, scandalise others and utter blatant lies in full hearing of these tender flowers! Do not sow hatred or contempt of any caste or class, faith or cult in the virgin minds of these fresh blossoms. Parents first, teachers next, playmates and companions later, and the leaders, who command the allegiance of a community or region last, have to be on the alert, constantly examining themselves, whether they are fit examples for the children of the land. This school bears My name; so, it has a high responsibility; it should inspire all schools in this region, to treat little children with love and care and fill the atmosphere with the fragrance of Divinity.” Words that announced the advent of the new era of Truth, Virtue, Peace, and Love!

For five days from the 20th, Baba moved on a merciful mission of Love along the roads of the Delta and a few beyond, showering Grace on nearly a million souls gasping anxiously to secure it; the visit to more than a hundred villages and a score of towns has transformed the viewpoints of everyone, whom He rewarded with a smile or a glance, a pat or a word, a gift of holy ash or a precious memento. Like the many canals that emanate from the Dhowaliswaram Anicut and take the waters of the Godavari into a million fields to confer the life and vigour to the crops, Baba went along the roads on the banks of these same canals, taking with Him the infinitely more sustaining waters from Heaven itself to grant Immortality and Infinite Bliss.

The Godavari of Grace consisting of a caravan of over twenty cars moved out of Rajahmundry, very early in the day; tidings carried delight and exaltation throughout the Delta; for, the *Darshan* of Baba, listening to His enthralling Discourse, and perhaps, getting the rare chance of touching His Feet are benedictions, for which even the remotest villagers were pining. Every yard of road was lined on both sides with men, women, and children in their best clothes; the roads were swept clean; miles ahead of every village, designs were

drawn with rice flour by devoted women; inside the village, decorated sheds were put up, so that Baba may ascend the dais underneath them and give *Darshan* to the vast concourses that sat there, doing *Bhajan* for hours, in expectation of the golden moment. Festoons, flags, lines of green leaves were hung across the main roads; hearts were beating faster this day in the hope of Divine *Darshan*. Sometimes, elaborate and even costly arches of welcome were erected on the roads that lay through the towns, or that led into them, the townsmen spending hours on end to make the arch a picture of exquisite charm.

Baba's car led the way. At Kesavaram, Baba directed the other cars to stay on the main road itself, while He drove into the hamlet, for, as He said, there was not enough parking space there. The deltaic region utilises every square foot of land for cultivation and so, open spaces are hard to find. Baba was received by most of the villages with the piping of primitive instruments, the blowing of long, brass horns, and the vigorous beat of drums, expressing folk delight! Baba moved slowly up the passage between the men and women and ascending the dais, spoke a few words on *Namasmarana*, the efficacy of *Bhajan*, and the necessity of continuing it sincerely, with deeper faith. Then, the cars moved on to Palathodu, a bigger place where all the cars could find space to drive in and halt. Here too, Baba emphasised in a short speech the need for *Bhakti* and *Shraddha*, the two wings of the bird *Gnyana*, which flies towards Realisation of the Reality.

On the 21st, the caravan took another road and every human habitation accessible by that road and its tributaries throbbed with delight, for He had chosen to bless them that day! The entire population of the countryside seemed to be ranged as a never-ending Guard of Honour for Baba; they shouted, "Jai," when they espied the cars; Baba slowed down His car, so that they may have *Darshan*. His Hand could be seen waving to them, long after He had passed the place where they were standing. Halts were made often and Baba condescended to open the door and stand on the footboard, so that the surging masses could have better *Darshan*, for only then they could imprint that portrait on their hearts, for worship in the silence of their altars.

The Delta is acclaimed as the granary of Andhra Pradesh. And it is full to the brim with populous villages, barely a mile or two apart. Baba alighted at most of these on the way and even a little afar – Gummileru, Pinapalle, Gangavaram, Pamarru, Narasapur, Rapurpeta, Rajupalem, Anaparthi, Kuthukulur, Someswaram, and finally, Sampara tobacco barns, rice mills, locks, and pump houses were the landmarks that raised their heads over the level green. At Sampara, the entire village was in the mood of Gokula, welcoming Gopala back home! As

a matter of fact, this village has lived on the *Bhagavatha* for many years, since a great exponent of that ancient text on *Bhakti*, Sri Kadiyala Seetharama Sastry kept the village conscious of its teachings and message for years, through his heart-touching expositions. Baba stayed there for some hours and discoursed on the practice of the constant presence of God. He also sang a few *Bhajans*, to arouse in them the ardour to glorify God. Then, the party returned to Rajahmundry itself.

On the 22nd, the road led towards Tamarada and Peddapuram. At Peddapuram, Baba went to Challa Appa Rao, a devotee since many years and there happened a miracle restoring him to health. He was bed-ridden since three years; his condition had worsened eight months back, "But," says, Dr. G. Kesava Rao, "he relied solely on Baba and refused to take any medicine. He had acute anaemia, due to bleeding piles. His body was swollen. The haemoglobin percentage had gone down to as low as 30; urination was affected. Many doctors and I advised blood transfusion and warned that his chances of survival without it were one hundred percent nil." When some anxious friends approached Bhagawan to persuade him to resort to medicine, Bhagawan retorted, "Why? Do they not die, the people who take medicine?"

When He visited Peddapuram, Baba went to his house and sat by his bedside. Baba created a linga while seated there. He directed that it be bathed in water ceremonially, with appropriate rites. The *thirtha* or consecrated water was to be given internally to the patient, daily. "Wonder of Wonders!" writes Dr. G. Kesava Rao, "The patient was transformed the very next moment, into health. The swelling oedema completely disappeared. Evacuation and urination became normal. Bleeding stopped dramatically. Exhaustion was overcome. Within a month, he was quite refreshed, shining with new youthfulness." Appa Rao described the blessing thus: "Before the visit of Baba, I was a corpse; after the visit, I was the victor over death."

After addressing a public gathering, Baba laid the Foundation for a Centre, for the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti at the village. He then moved on to Kotapadu and Medapadu, where He inaugurated a Sathya Sai Mandir. Reaching Vadlamuru, He laid the Foundation for a Sathya Sai Mandir and proceeded to Kothapeta, where a mammoth gathering engaged in *Bhajan* was waiting since hours for *Darshan*. The College Campus was full of people, who had trekked miles on foot or by cart, cycle, omnibus, or country boat. Baba turned aside a mile and a half from the highway, to bless devotees at Palivela. He reached Ambajipeta, where too a big gathering brightened, when He gave *Darshan* and spoke a few words of advice and

exhortation.

Emerging into the main road, the flood of Divine Compassion moved on towards Bandaralanka, a famous centre of weaving as a cottage industry. Here, the community of weavers, with great enthusiasm, heralded the arrival of Baba. They had put an imposing reception structure with arches and greeneries and flowers, adjacent to the road itself. Baba alighted from the car to bless them and spoke a few words of encouragement, so that they may earn peace and understand the purpose of life.

Then, Baba motored to Amalapuram, where nearly fifty thousand people had gathered to hear Him and fill their eyes with His Charm. Baba chided the person, who made the welcome speech! Really, this conventional item on the programme of public meetings has no bearing, for how can Baba, who is present everywhere at all times, be either welcomed, or taken leave of? And the welcome speech was in the English language! Baba said that, the region with Amalapuram as the focal point was known geographically as Konasima (Delta), but lovers of Bharatiya Culture knew it as *Vedasima*, the region which was the nursery of *Vedic* scholars and the Academy, where *Vedic* science and *Vedic* research were pursued with avidity by generations of scholars. “Why thrust down the ears of these simple people and the *pundits*, learned in ancient lore, a language they do not know?” He queried.

On the 24th, Baba left Amalapuram very early, for Manipalli. After visiting an aged devotee on his sick bed at Tatipaka, He moved on to Razole, where elaborate arrangements were made for a Public Address and a sizable gathering had assembled. After satisfying their thirst, Baba proceeded along the main road towards the next destination. While driving fast, Baba noticed an insignificant token of adoration hung across the road, near a village, which is barely mentioned in maps, Poathumatla. It was a thin festoon of a dozen mango leaves, strung from one coconut tree to another with a piece of paper pinned in the centre, waving in the wind, with the word 'Welcome' inscribed on it by a hesitant hand. The car had gone on about fifty yards, when He wanted it to stop and turn back to where that paper 'Welcome' called Him. There were two old women standing there, with garlands in their wrinkled hands. Baba opened the door, so that they could touch His Feet, leaned forward, so that they could put the garlands round His neck. He invited them to do so without fear. “Here is your Swami! Quite near you! Come on, garland Me!” That was the happiest moment of their lives and Baba too appeared equally happy! One lady extended her hand and asked, “*Prasadam*, Swami?” She wanted something to treasure from the Divine Hands. Baba plucked some petals from the flowers of the garlands they had offered and placed them in the hands of both, and moved on.

While driving on, Baba noticed two very old women, tottering forward with the help of sticks held in their shaky hands. His Divine Pity flowed towards them. He asked the car to stop near them. When the car pulled up, He inquired where they were going to. They said in quaking voices, "To see Sai Baba." Baba laughed and said, "I am Sai Baba, don't you know!" They thought someone was ridiculing them and they walked forward. The others in the car got down and persuaded them to retrace the few steps they had taken and have a good look. Baba created *Vibhuti* for them, filled their hands with fruits, and told them to return home.

Lakkavaram was reached soon and after a mile or two, Baba turned into a sandy, fair-weather road, a road that was rambling wildly across the fallow wastes into what appeared to be no man's land; the party wondered where Baba was leading them, but Baba told the nervous interrogators that there was a devotee in the village, Kaththi Manda, that lay a mile ahead. His wife had died and he had married again. She lost a number of children, when they were quite little babies, a tragedy, which superstitious villagers ascribed to the machinations of the deceased wife's ghost! Baba allowed the next child to be born in the seventh month of pregnancy, at the Sathya Sai Hospital, Puttaparthi, so that she may be rid of the fear that was haunting her... and the son had grown, now, into a chubby boy of three! Baba was going to that place in order to bless that boy and his parents!

Returning to the main road, Baba proceeded to Kadali, a small village set in the midst of coconut trees. They had erected a dais and decorated it with sincere artistry. Baba addressed the peasants, who had come in large numbers. He visited the house of the Principal of the Veda Shastra Pathashala, Prasanthi Nilayam, an unrivalled reciter of the *Vedic* hymns, a master of the complicated styles of rendering the *Vedic* syllables in the orthodox complex of permutations and combinations, who recognised the Divinity of Baba, the day he first officiated at a *Yagna* he was asked to supervise at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Baba sent all the cars that were trailing behind Him to move on and wait at the Canal Bank, a few miles off and He went to Sakhinetipalli, to the home of Sri Ramalingaraju, Minister for Religious Endowments in the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The cars waited for full four hours, exiled from His Presence, with ears attuned to the horn of Baba's car, so that they may catch the signs of His arrival to restore joy in their hearts! At midnight, Baba's car was spotted proceeding towards them. The caravan then returned to Rajahmundry on the Godavari.

The 25th day of January was a Day of Delight for the devotees of Rajahmundry. Towards

evening, about three hundred of them boarded three motor launches and went over the Godavari with Baba, to the sand dunes on one of the islands formed by the Godavari, when its waters subsided after the monsoon floods, which make the river one vast roar of raging waters. Baba sat on the sands surrounded by *Bhaktas*. *Bhajan* was sung; stars listened intently from above. Then, Baba answered a few questions on *Sadhana* put by some *Sadhakas* and while elaborating the directions He gave while quoting from the *Bhagavatha*, He drew forth from the heap of sand before Him a golden idol of Krishna, crawling as a child, with a ball of butter in His Hand.

Baba was at that time speaking of the inner meaning of butter; the purity of intention attained after the churning of *Sadhana* and of the theft of such butter committed by Krishna.

The questions then turned towards Shiva and the *Linga* symbol, with ramifications of conversation into the various types of lingas, the Earth Principle *Linga*, the Water Principle *Linga*, the Fire Principle *Linga*, the Wind Principle *Linga*, and the Sky Principle *Linga*.

Then, He spoke of the places sanctified by the installation of these *lingas* and referring to the *Akasha Linga* in a temple, He explained that the *Linga* there hangs in mid-air with no support! Devotees stared in awe, for they could not understand how this could happen and continue to happen. Baba explained that the *Linga* is of some ferrous material and that two magnets, one on top on the underside of the roof and another fixed on the floor, exercise equal and opposite pulls on the *Linga*, so that it remains in the centre, in mid-air, without support. Then, He asked, "Do you desire to see it? I can dislodge it from the pulls and bring it here!" Saying so, He waved His Hand and Lo! The egg-shaped, ferrous ball was in the Hand. It was passed from one person to another, until all had the feel of it and the thrill. Then, Baba wrapped it in a kerchief and gave it to a young man to be kept with him. The entire group of three hundred sat for dinner on the sands, with Baba in their midst, joking and keeping everyone in the best of spirits. It was about eleven at night, when the launches returned to Rajahmundry. The young man was shocked to find the ferrous *Lingam* gone!

On the 26th, Baba addressed the Lions Club. "You are members of a club that bears a great name, the Lion. The lion and the elephant are natural enemies, according to poetic convention. There is a great lesson latent in this fact. The elephant wanders free and furious in the thick entanglements of the jungle; it is the symbol of the mind, which rambles, goaded by whim and appetite. But, it surrenders before the superior skill and sinew of the lion. The lion is the intellect; the elephant is the mind; the intellect distinguishes between the real and

the unreal, the transient and the eternal. When this winnowing is neglected, man moves from one illusion to another. If the intellect is sharpened and sublimated, peace and harmony will reveal the one Basic Reality behind all the apparent contradictions and confusions. So, mere compassion and the passion to do service are not enough; they may even be dangerous, if no enquiry is made into the causes of suffering and into the safest and surest means of alleviating the suffering,” Baba advised, “It must be understood that the root cause of suffering is due to the lack of wisdom, which enables you to realise the indwelling unity amongst apparent diversity, and the safest and surest means of uprooting this sufferance is by removing ignorance, resulting in the Realisation of the Real.”

Baba then left the Godavari and began His return journey, with a halt at Eluru, where the Office Bearers of the various Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations met Him and received His guidance and Blessings. Leaving Eluru, He reached Gudivada and addressed a gathering there. Resuming, He went to Vijayawada, into which city trains and buses, cars, scooters, and cycles had brought thousands of people. On the 27th, He went on a short visit to Aukiripalle, near Vijayawada and from there, He left for Madras after a hectic week of beneficence and benediction.

Howard Murphet, an Australian *Sadhaka* and writer, exults in this strain: “How inexplicably fortunate are we—the few—who have found here in physical form One, who can say as Christ said long ago, ‘I am the Way.’ This statement soon becomes a self-evident truth for those, who can accept it. We see in Him qualities we have always associated with the idea of Divinity. Love and Compassion flow from the heart, which hitherto had been no more than a dream. When in His company, we are elevated to a golden world, where the atmosphere vibrates with inner joy and all mundane things are forgotten, or at least take their correct place well down the scale of values.”

“Only India, through ages past, has been able to provide a suitable land for the birth of *Avatars*, such as Rama, Krishna, and Sathya Sai Baba. It is only in India that Buddha can be born to attain Nirvana. The spiritual heart of India is the heart of the world. It is my spiritual heart, as an American, for were it not there, surely life would be a living death of ashes and despair,” writes John Hislop.

One fact is interesting and may be mentioned here, since it has provoked many into very profitable line of thought. I shall quote the letter written by one such inquirer, R. Ganapathi of the ‘*Kalki*.’ “Sri Aurobindo, who by the power of his integral yoga delved into the Cosmic

Mind, was suddenly absorbed in an intense awareness of the Supramental Light's descent into earth-consciousness. On page 208, of the book, 'Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother' (1953 Edition), it is said, '24th November, 1926, was the descent of Krishna into the physical. A power infallible shall lead the thought, in earthly hearts kindle the immortal's Fire, even the Multitude shall hear the Voice!' It is almost certain that the Descent noted by Sri Aurobindo was the Incarnation, the previous day, November 23rd, 1926, of Sri Sathya Sai Baba."

John Hislop, on *Shivaratri* Day, prior to the hoisting of the *Prasanthi* Flag by Baba, said, "What an amazing thing has come to happen! This slender body walking so gracefully amongst us, the charming personality exhibiting all the qualities of God, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, with boundless power to create, maintain, and destroy." Hislop's words meant more than he anticipated! For, that evening, the unique *Lingodbhava* acquired a still more unique importance; it is beyond the power of words to describe!

Shivaratri, as Baba expounded that morning, means that man must transform by *Sadhana* the '*ratri*' into '*Sivam*', the night of darkness and fear, doubt and delusion into the day of wisdom, courage, the certainty of faith and realisation. *Ratri* means night; *Sivam* means auspiciousness, victory, triumph. The vigil that is prescribed for the festival and the fast, relate not to the eye or the stomach, but to the senses, which have to be starved and the intelligence that has to be alerted against complaisance and the tactics of casuists.

The atmosphere of *Prasanthi Nilayam* becomes vibrant with the Flag carrying the symbol of the Ascendant *Sadhaka*, who has overcome Lust, Anger, and Hatred, who has broadened his Love and universalised it, who has established himself in *Yoga* and ascended through the various stages of *Sadhana*, resulting in the blossoming of the Lotus in his heart and thereby, attained *Pra-kanthi*, Higher Illumination, *Prasanthi*, Highest Tranquillity, and *Param-jyothi*, the Higher Splendour of Realisation, merging his 'imagined self' into the Universal Self; conquering sleep, sloth, *Tamas* and the clamorous demands of the senses, *Rajas*, winning the unshakable equipoise of the wise, *Satwa*.

The *Vedic* recital, the procession from the *Mandir* to the Auditorium, the astonishing emanation of *Vibhuti* from an empty pot to consecrate the silver Idol of Shirdi Baba and fill the area with fragrance and ecstasy, and the evening gathering of 25,000 people facing the *Santhi Vedhika*, where Baba sat on the Dais while *Bhajan* was sung by devoted souls – these incredible experiences injected the atmosphere with vibrations of supreme purity.

The *Lingam* that had been growing in Baba's stomach, since some days, was to emerge in a few minutes. '*Lingam*' means that, in which all things merge and out of which all things emerge. The Absolute, the Ultimate Reality, *Brahman*, or God has no opposites, no polarities, no contradictions, so it is represented by the most perfect, mathematical symbol, the sphere. When the basic desire, *Ekoham bahusyam*, 'I am One, let me become many,' disturbs the perfect balance of the One, the sphere divides itself into two, we get the ellipsoid. The *lingam* is ellipsoid. The One *Brahman* has become *Shiva-Shakti*, the primary, polarity principle of the positive and negative.

Cars and buses were speeding up from Bangalore, Madras, Bombay, Hyderabad, and other places to reach Prasanthi Nilayam in time, for witnessing the emergence of the *Lingam* from the *Brahman*. And, Baba was with each of them, for it was due to His Grace that they were present in that sanctified atmosphere. "We yearned long to witness the *Shivaratri* Festival," says Dr. A. Ranga Rao, the renowned ophthalmic physician and surgeon of Madras; he came in a car that gave continuous trouble! The engine got too hot every ten miles! When the Flag Hoisting took place, they were at Ranipet, 250 miles off; when *Vibhuti Abhishekam* took place, he was at the border of Mysore, 180 miles off! 60 miles away from Puttaparthi, the car came to a dead halt! While the chauffeur was tinkering with its entrails, says Dr. Ranga Rao, "To our utter consternation, petrol got ignited! Big tongues of flames shot up. The poor fellow jumped off in the nick of time and saved himself. His clothes were on fire; he managed to scotch the flames. He threw some handfuls of sand from the road on the fire, calling out, 'Sai Ram, Sai Ram!' And the miracle happened! The fire became extinct, the car was saved, though the tank was three quarters full and it was petrol! I went back to Chikballapur, by bus (12 miles), and got a mechanic from that town. At 3.30 p.m., we were still at the place of mysterious fire. Cars coming from Bangalore stopped and sympathised, and some even offered lifts. But, I said, 'No, we will be there to witness the *Lingodbhava*, you can move on; Baba will bring us to Him.' At 5.30 p.m., we were 50 miles off, with that rickety car! I sat at the wheel, the mechanic sat in the 'dicky', shaking the pump whenever it struck work! We raced and rushed. When we stood gasping at the Lotus Circle in front of the Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba was slowly proceeding from the Nilayam to the *Santhi Vedhika*! While passing, Baba smiled at us and said, 'O, you have come! *Santhosham! Santhosham* (happy, very happy)!' With tears of gratitude welling from my eyes, I said within myself, 'Lord! While thousands of devotees were adoring You here, You heard our anguish! You quenched the fire and drove the car safe, to bring us in time to witness Your Glory. Here is

my heart, my life, my hopes, my everything at Your Feet!”

Dr. S. Bhagawantham and Dr. Bhaskaran Nair, both Doctors of Science, one in Physics and the other in Zoology, one the Vice-Chancellor of two Universities and the other the Director of Collegiate Education of a State studded with colleges (Kerala), spoke to the gathering on the *Avatar* of the Age. Dr. Bhagawantham spoke on the implications of Baba’s statement, “My Life is My Message.” “It has astounded me to see that, though He has no wants, nor is He ever in need, He is so busy at Prasanthi Nilayam or elsewhere, at all times, with a multitude of problems concerning the devotees! Not only does He expound *Nishkama Karma*, but He also practises it Himself, setting the best example.” Dr. Bhaskaran Nair confessed, “My life has acquired a richness and a validity as a result of my surrendering to Baba’s Lotus Feet. I still continue to be a student of science. I know where science has to walk warily and where it can walk in confidence. I cherish the culture of this land, which bowed to the might. Sivaji placed his Empire at the feet of his guru Ramadas; the Kerala Monarch, Marthanda Varma dedicated the entire kingdom at the altar of the God installed at Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram). Asoka renounced war, when his conscience was torn into shreds as he witnessed the blood, the fury, the falsehood, and the agony that war caused! And he ruled more than twenty years over a peaceful, prosperous empire, even after publishing the fact of his having renounced the use of the army, publishing it on pillar and rock, all over the land, from the Himalayas to the Kaveri, from Kandahar to Kamarup!

Today, when values are being lowered and the infection of wild excitement and depressing drugs is attacking youth in all countries, the traditional values of *Sanathana Dharma* have to be asserted, for they have perennial value. The advent of Bhagawan is positively significant in the history of the world.”

Baba spoke for about forty minutes on the mind and its manifold tactics to confuse and confound, and how man has to discover the strategy, by which it can be controlled and made subservient to the intellect, thereby leading to the realisation of the *Atmic* reality. Suddenly, the gushing stream of superb eloquence and supreme guidance was interrupted by gasps and gutterings – premonitions of the emergence of the *Lingam* – which Baba endeavoured to put down a little while; then, He signalled for *Bhajan* to start and Himself sat on the chair, behind the table. No one heard the *Bhajan*, though they were mechanically uttering the words in the tune allotted to them. For, the crucial moment was fast approaching and no one in the gathering wanted to miss it. All senses were now concentrating their efficiency on the eye, so as not to miss the Divine Event!

Baba was under the flood lights, squirming, turning, twisting, sitting forward and leaning backward, sipping water, and showing signs of exhaustion, all parts of the amazing Drama that He was now allowing these thousands to witness, so that they may stand witness in their own lives to the glory of being contemporaneous with the *Avatar!* Fifty thousand eyes were focussed on that serene Mouth - for over fifteen, long, laborious minutes! “Ah! It has emerged, in one leap; a blue shaft of light, was it? No, it was the blue *Lingam*, oval shaped, oval sized gem, celebrated in the *Shastras* as especially sacred on account of the colour and the size.” It has fallen from His mouth into the cupped palm of Baba. He held the Wonder in His Hand, high in the light, to be seen better by the vast gathering, now in the height of Bliss.

Baba continued sitting in the chair. He would, usually, descend from the dais on the *Santhi Vedhika* and move into the Nilayam; but, He sat in the chair and remained motionless. We thought that another *Lingam* may emerge after a little while. But, no! He was getting stiffer and motionless. The right hand was lying flat on the table. The left was erect, the elbow fixed on the table, fingers near the eye, the head was slightly inclined to the left, the thumb held apart, the ring finger and the little finger folded, and the other two straight up—the breathing was slow; it became slower.

Who dare touch Him? Who had the courage to draw His attention away from the place or mission, on which He had gone? I was sitting on the left of the chair and Dr. Bhagawantham and Dr. Bhaskaran Nair on the right. Five minutes sped by – I expected Him to return from wherever He had gone. For, this is a special occasion, where anxious souls were getting alarmed. At no time previous had He left His Body on a transcorporeal journey, when so many were looking on!

But, His Compassion knows no limitations of festivals or gatherings. When the devotee calls out in agony, He rushes to his side, whoever may be with Him or whatever the work He is engaged in, at that time. On other occasions, He has fallen on to the floor, but this unusual posture amazed everyone; anxiety was imprinted upon each face.

After twenty minutes, I could restrain myself no more. I leaned towards Him on my knees and in a subdued voice, called, “Swami! Swami!” as if He would come back when we call, from where He had gone in response to the sincere yearning of someone in pain. His mission of *Bhaktarakshana* knows no bounds of class, creed, or nationality. He blesses, whatever be the name by which He is called.

Thirty minutes... all eyes were now watching the face for the slightest sign of any movement;

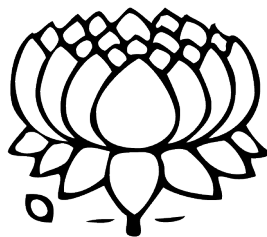
they prayed as never before... The fortitude of the devotees was being transformed into nervousness... the hand was stiff, upright, the finger did not jerk or come together... the angle of the head was the same, since the past fifty minutes. One or two from the *Bhajan* party came on to the dais... a few began to weep, here and there... courage faltered before the onslaught of concern!

Fifty Five... Ah... a slight movement of the fingers... of the left hand! The hand came down... I broke into tears... His eyes opened... He saw! He smiled! Fear and doubt vanished shamefacedly from the gathering.

Baba rose... the fateful minutes were over! Baba went into the Nilayam and when some of us, including Dr. Bhagawantham followed Him, He said that, He had gone on a *Manasa-sanchara* round the World! He went in order to give signs in every home or hall, where *Shivaratri* was celebrated that hour, that the Lord is here, that His Grace is available in plenty for all, who need it and pray for it with pure and sincere faith. He showers mercy and they become humble, wise, and victorious.

What we were privileged to see that night was the sight of Baba journeying far and wide to confer Peace, to foster the erring brood of wilful, peevish, half-blind children into ways of Justice, Peace, Love, and Righteousness. He was converting the *Ratri* of *Rajas* and *Tamas* that was darkening the horizon of man into the *Sivam*, the splendour of Love and Joy. We saw two *Udbhavas* (oncomings) that day—the *Lingodbhava* and the *Premodbhava*.

"Can this be true?" the sceptic may ask! I can only give the answer, which Baba gave to another such question put to Him by a celebrated sceptic, hailed by many as a redoubtable doubter. Baba told him, "How can you understand Me? Can a fish know the sky?" It may see the reflection in the water of the lightning flash; it may hear the echo of the rumbling thunder, but what can it know of the mysteries of the ethereal region, being sunk in an element, from which it cannot escape and survive. We are bound by *Maya*; how can we gauge the glory of One, who controls *Maya*?





Chapter 10

The All, In All

“My mission is to raise the consciousness of man to a level, at which he neither rejoices, nor mourns over anything. In that supreme state, one is going through re-birth and redeath each moment, for these acts are one and the same, emerging from the formless into form, merging from the form into the formless. Then, there is no success or adversity, no joy or pain.”

Ayn Rand, Editor of the magazine, Objectivist, writes: “Conventional morality does not teach or show the child what kind of man he ought to become and why. It is only concerned with imposing a set of rules upon him – arbitrary, bewildering, contradictory, and more often than not, incomprehensible. The child grows up with nothing but resentment and fear, for any concept of morality. Ethics appears to him only as a phantom scarecrow, demanding the drab performance of dry duty. The examples set by adults are not meaningful enough to point the proper yardsticks of behaviour.” No wonder the children are attracted towards Baba, who bestows pure love upon those who seek it. “The Americans come to Me, since they do not know a mother’s love,” said Baba, one day.

“Baba is Shiva and Shakti, Father and Mother.” Velury Sivarama Sastry states thus: “No one can understand, but everyone can benefit from Him. Science cannot define. Logic dealing with cause and effect cannot grasp. Its pristine glory is unique. It overshadows the fleeting shadows. Only the wise and the pure in heart can abide in it. Matter seems less material, mind less mental, only *Atma* prevails. Each one sees an aspect of its innumerable facets. Enough, if we know a little, but we never have enough. This is so near us and yet, so far away. The love that Sai manifests pales into insignificance the love of every mother in the Universe, gathered together.” Sivarama Sastry is no ordinary observer; at the age of 16, he rose to fame as a

prodigy, a poet of dazzling merit. He was one of the few prodigies that have blossomed. He was an outstanding scholar, critic, and teacher, versed in the intricacies of *Yoga*, *Tantra*, and *Vedanta*. He wrote bold and brilliant treatises on the *Adhyasa* Conception of Shankaracharya and the Integral *Yoga* of Aurobindo. Universities competed with each other in honouring themselves, by including his name on the Boards of Studies in Sanskrit. At the age of 75, he came to Baba, enjoying close contact for more than 6 years, before he dropped, like a ripe fruit, from the Tree of Life. Sastry attained renown as a writer, who weighs every word of his in the super electronic balance of Truth. So, when he says that the Love of Baba as a Mother supersedes the love of all mothers, he must be speaking with genuine sincerity.

Therefore, the Mother Festival or *Dasara*, when it is celebrated in the immediate Presence of Baba, is supremely sanctifying. During this Nine Day Festival of the Mother, the first three days are devoted to worshipping the mother as Guardian, the next three days Mother is worshipped as Provider, and during the last three days, Mother is worshipped as Teacher. Victoria Mills addressed Baba significantly, “This is Your Dream. Mother! A dream of purple flowers and blue skies; a dream of pleasure, a dream of pain, a dream of bodies moving in the passing hours, a dream of minds churning desires—in Thy Love, let us live again.”

Dasara is the occasion, when the Mother as Baba, or Baba as the Mother provides us various inducements to progress spiritually. *Sanathana Dharma*, of course, has the entire armoury required to conquer the foes on the path and help us march towards the final triumph. One day is spent in celebrating the Annual Day of the Hospital, so that the vehicle of the Soul may be kept trim and efficient, to enable it to cross the ocean of duality and merge into the One. On another day, the distressed and the destitute are given clothes and feasted. Baba has assigned to each one of us a role to play, designed and directed by Him, on the stage of life. On some days, the compositions of the great singers of India are sung, granting to the listeners a state of unclouded exaltation. On other days, we get a chance to witness plays based on age-old tales of gods and goddesses, full of ecstatic incidents enacted by little children and so, they can taste innocence flowing from innocent lips. These plays are written by Baba Himself and so, they convey to us the lessons He prescribes for the cure of our mental ills. We are inspired to preserve, despite odds, the moral ideals in the confusing conflicts of our lives. On the stage and the screen away from the Nilayam, we only see crime, perversion, and pollution dramatized, whereas in the Abode of Peace, everything is designed to elevate, sublimate, and save. There are musical recitations and expositions of philosophical

parables and mystery tales. Discourses on *Veda* and *Vedanta* are given by pundits, who had believed that they had comprehended what is beyond comprehension, until they met Baba!

On the *Mandap* or sacrificial enclosure at one end of the Auditorium, the adoration of *Vedapurusha*, the Deity extolled in the *Vedas* continues for seven days without break. The Fire is adored as sacred, for it ignites and illumines; it destroys and purifies; it burns and burnishes; it spreads and shines. It moves fast from one victim to another. So, it is praised and fed with hymns of praise. The Sun is the giver of life and energy; it nips a day off from our allotted span of life, with every sunset; so, it is worshipped by continuous prostration, repeating each time hymns of extolment. Others can visualise God in an expansive Banyan Tree, timeless, self-propelling through roots dropped from every branch, providing shade and shelter for bird and beast, and conferring beauty and health to the entire region. Hymns are also uttered to the Spirit of Trees.

Some of us prefer as the symbol of God, neither Fire, nor Sun, nor the Living Laborious Brother called Banyan Tree, but the *Linga*. During *Dasara*, a *pundit* can be seen on the altar at the Auditorium, shaping 1000 *Lingas* every day and after worshiping them with the utmost devotion, rolling the black clay back into a ball for use the next day! The permanent, static base, pure existence, is Shiva. Its projection as dynamic energy is *Shakti*. Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi used to write an O at the beginning of the letter he sent to people, says Yogi Shuddananda Bharathi. Maharshi explained it as the *Lingam*, the Symbol of the Ultimate Principle, which is beyond the triple entities of Life, World, and God!

Others might be thrilled by more elaborate representations of the Might, Majesty, and Magnificence of God. For them, Baba arranges *Puja* for Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati with flowers, incense, camphor, sandal paste, silk, and gold. A few might be elated by the recital of the most mystic sound Om, with all its undertones and hidden possibilities. This joy persuaded us to take the first step in *Sadhana* (spiritual endeavour), facilitating our pursuit till the goal is reached.

Baba Himself announced, on the Opening Day of *Dasara*, “To celebrate *Dasara* at Prasanthi Nilayam is indeed a rare chance, replete with wonder and joy, ensuring peace by the extinction of the six inner enemies.” His Mission is to put mankind again on the rails of peace and joy. So, when the Hon'ble Minister for Transport, Andhra Pradesh announced that he would shortly initiate steps to improve the road to Prasanthi Nilayam and make it a tarred highway, Baba said, “The body looks forward to a smooth drive over a tarred road, but the

heart prefers the road of tranquillity and humility, so that it may reach the Goal, God and merge in that the Ocean of Glory. I am more interested in that Road. I am not enthusiastic about tarring the road, for that would make even the little discipline of 'slow and careful driving' superfluous for people coming here! Life is not all smooth sailing. It is full of ups and downs, sharp turns, and sudden diversions. India has always taught the first lesson in safe travel, here and hereafter: 'Start early; drive slowly; reach safely!'"

Since thousands of devotees had to sleep under the sky, piling their belongings around their beds, the rains that poured during three nights caused a great deal of discomfort and dislocation. Referring to these, Baba said, "Some people came running to Me, saying, 'Swami! Stop the rains!' Well, getting a little wet is a trivial bother, when compared to the benefits of timely rains. The Vedapurusha *Yagna* is celebrated to persuade the gods to shower rain, that is its *raison d'etre* as *vedas* assert, while the rite is on, the rains have come: it demonstrates that the *Pundits* did the *Yagna* on strict, *Vedic* lines. The rains will ensure a good harvest and prosperity for the countryside."

On the 20th of October, 1969, the valedictory Rite of the *Yagna* was performed. Baba created a nine-gemmed necklace for the Chief Priest, who officiated; he was a scholar in *Vedanta* and *Vedic* Grammar. During the *Abhisheka* or ritual bath of the Image of the Previous Incarnation, the Sai Baba of Shirdi, Baba created a sparkling, eight-starred jewel of gold and placed it on the forehead of the silver idol; it stuck! Dr. S. Bhagawantham and Mr. Tideman Johanessen, who were among the audience, wondered at this: How could gold stick on silver, without adhesive? Baba knew their thoughts. He told them a few hours later, without their asking Him, or anyone telling Him, "If I can create the jewel, can I not make it stick, too? When you doubt one incident, you start doubting all. Accept Me for what I am. Then, no doubt can interfere with your faith."

"You complain that God is hard-hearted; that He does not respond to prayer, or give signs from His portraits, or speak from 'nowhere' to assuage or assure; but, let Me tell you, God is Love, Love is God. When there is no response, you have to infer that the cry from your heart is insincere, it is mere play-acting. It is set to a pattern, addressed to someone alien to you, someone accepted by you as a faraway tyrant or a taskmaster. Know that God is your nearest and dearest kin."

On the 21st, when Baba was on the floral *jhula*, a number of poets recited the poems that He 'painted' in their hearts – Deepala Pichayya Sastry, Begum Tahira Sayeed, the writer,

Vidwan Rama Sarma, Vidwan Seshama Raju, and others. They were in a multitude of languages, English, Urdu, Kannada, and Sanskrit. Baba advised them to see the handiwork of God, the greatest Poet of all, in every grain of dust, every twinkle of light, every drop of rain, every whiff of air.

“Great poems deal with the eternal thirst of man for God; they are rich in the ambrosia that quenches that thirst. They satisfy and build up strength to laugh at life’s fortunes. Without spiritual *sadhana*, the expansion of the consciousness, the broadening of sympathy, the sharpening of vision, the deepening of contacts with the springs of wisdom within oneself and within others, poetry is but a purposeless, pallid pastime.”

The 7th of November will be remembered as a landmark in the history of the Women’s College at Anantapur, for on that day, amidst colourful scenes of Grace and Glory, the Vice-President of India laid the foundation for a magnificent building. Dr. S. Bhagawantham welcomed the Vice President Sri G.S. Pathak, as well as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh Sri Khandubhai Desai, who laid the Foundation Stone for the College Hostel and said, “I have considerable experience in raising Colleges, all over the country; I am wonderstruck, when I consider how, within a year and a half, this College has gone ahead with three hundred students and the full complement of library, laboratories, ancillaries, and a gas plant too!” Baba says that, no task, on which He sets His Heart, can fail. His will is supreme...

Dr. V.K. Gokak said, “At a time when disorder has become the order of the day, this College will transmit, under the guidance of the Master, the Lesson of Order.” The Vice-Chancellor of the Venkateswara University said, “The Sathya Sai Trust managing this College has a symbol, which reveals the core of Indian culture, the kinship and closeness of manifold philosophies, religions, and ideologies formed by the aspiring mind of man.” Sri Khandubhai Desai also appreciated the symbol, as a sign of genuine secularism, “Secularism does not mean irreligion; it means real religion. And real religion recognises all faiths as facets of the Truth.”

The Vice-President said that, the Day was a Day of Devotion and Delight for him. “I am happy to find that the Trust has taken note of the need of the nation. The next generation has to be shaped straight and strong, so that it efficiently bears the burden of this vast country. We want disciplined, enlightened people to assume national and international responsibilities.” Baba spoke of His Resolve to establish such Colleges in every State of India, “My *Sankalpa*, plan of action, is to provide youth with education, which, while

cultivating the intelligence, will purify the impulses and emotions, and equip them with the physical and mental disciplines, which can awaken the springs of calmness and joy in their hearts. Their higher nature has to be fostered and encouraged to blossom by means of study, prayer, sadhana, contacts with sages, saints, and spiritual heroes and heroines of their land; they have to be led on to a path of self-knowledge.” Baba blessed the College with these words, “May this College educate generations of noble mothers, who will live *Dharma*, raise heroes surcharged with dedication to God and devotion to Truth.”

November 23 is the Birthday of Baba. But, as Baba told Penn in one of His trans-oceanic lessons, “It is not My Birthday that you celebrate. It is your own.” And again, “My mission is to raise the consciousness of man to a level, at which he neither rejoices, nor mourns over anything. In that supreme state, one is going through re-birth and re-death each moment, for these acts are one and the same, emerging from the formless into form, merging from the form into the formless. Then, there is no success or adversity, no joy or pain. When the devotee attains this Oneness, his journey towards Me ceases, for he will be with Me endlessly.”

The 1969 Birthday was marked by another event, namely, the 3rd All-India conference of the Office Bearers of the Units of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. The delegates were happy that the Conference was to be at the Nilayam, in the very Centre of Prasanthi (Higher Peace) and the Host was no less a Person than Bhagawan Himself. At Madras, during the First Conference, Baba had allowed the delegates to share His Gracious Presence during most hours of the day. At Bombay, during the World Conference, Baba moved around the Hostels, where the delegates were accommodated and was present at the Dining Halls on most of the days. Besides, Baba had invited them to Dharmakshetra and He took groups of them round the building, explaining to them the significance of the numbers of steps, pillars, concrete wind-cups, etc., to the happy edification of the uninitiated. The number was nine, multiples of nine, adding up to nine, as was necessary in a building that symbolised Sathya - Truth or *Brahman* - the ultimate Truth, whose numerical symbol is 9. Now, the Third Conference was being held in the lap of Prasanthi Nilayam, under the loving and watchful eye of Baba Himself.

The Conference began on 20th November, with more than 2,000 delegates from all the States of India and also, representatives from Ceylon, Australia, Fiji, America, Europe, and Africa. The Presidents of the Organisations of each State gave short summaries of the various lines of activity in their area. It was a heartening and instructive recital, for each State could

contribute some fruitful ideas of service and *sadhana* to the rest.

Baba explained that the Sai Organisation is unique in more respects than one. It does not seek donations and patrons. It works under a Master, who is present everywhere, at all times and so, the Organisation is only a name for a group of people, who carry on work that would win His grace, in a spirit of worship. There is no scope here for malingering, personal rivalry, or the virus of vanity or envy. Baba said, “These are associations of aspirants. Pay attention to your duties and responsibilities; do not infect yourselves with caste affiliations, personal prejudices, or political predilections. I can see you through and through, wherever you are! Do not carry your head high and taunt people. Stoop, so that you can lift the burden on to your shoulders; serve, so that you may be an example and an inspiration. Follow, so that you can lead seekers into the heart of God. Be humble, be cordial with all. Devotion should not be publicised. It does not end with the acquisition of a badge, which decorates the shirt. It is a secret gain, a precious boon.”

While the Conference was considering the recommendations of the four sub-committees, which dealt with Organisational matters, Spiritual activities, Publication of Sai Literature, Mahila vibhag (Women’s section), and service activities, Baba counselled that devotees should not seek concession and exemptions from participation in the activities set out by the *Samitis*, but, on the contrary, look forward to the chance provided by the Sai Organisations for *Satsang*. It was resolved that members must attend at least sixty percent of such meetings. It was also emphasised that there must be unanimity in the choice of Office Bearers. The Office Bearers should behave as Torch Bearers, reflecting in their behaviour the light of His Wisdom. “The Sai Organisations should try to reduce and remove the hurdles and handicaps in the way of spiritual progress, its members should be ennobled by tolerance, truth-speaking, and compassion and saturated with love for all. Whoever neglects his parents and allows them to languish in poverty or sorrow does not deserve to be a member. Carry the message of self-realisation through the *sadhana* of service, among the women, the youth, and the children. Encourage the formation of active groups of women, who will take up the teaching of children. Develop *Seva Dals*.”

Addressing the Valedictory Session of the Conference on the 22nd of November, Baba said, “Let Me end on this note: Do not doubt your destiny: it is to merge in the Highest Wisdom, Power, and Love. Do not waver or stay away. At every step, inquire, discriminate, and search for Truth. Be self-reliant, bold, and free. Know that you are the instruments of God in a Divine Task and so, there is no justification for weakness or vacillation. Be an example to

others in humility and devotion. Do not scatter advice, without the authority of practical experience. Love, co-operate, serve. Your Office is a call for spiritual exercise, a reminder of your being under My care and direction.”

The Conference was a baptism of faith for the participants: it revealed to them the Divine Love, of which Baba is the embodiment. He was the Person, on whom all eyes rested, all ears were focused, all minds dwelt, and all hearts poured adoration. He sat among the members of the subcommittees, during their deliberations and shed light and laughter on suggestions pompously placed and assiduously argued upon. He moved among the delegates, scattering Grace; He met the representatives state-wise, for hours at a stretch and amidst roars of laughter and brilliant banter, He smoothed rivalry, suppressed factionalism, softened fanaticism, and sweetened bitterness. In spite of being concerned with every detail of diet, agenda, seating, and discussion, He was the very picture of freshness and light. To see Him was to learn the lesson of selfless activity, to hear Him was to yearn for Grace and for the chance to share His Task, to touch His Feet was to charge oneself with strength and courage to face the world and its challenges.

The delegates stayed on for the birthday celebration on 23rd and 24th November. “The Day I am born in you as Love, that Day is My Birthday for you,” Baba announced on the 23rd. He reminded the 15,000 people, who sat before the Nilayam to witness the hoisting of the Flag, that there is the Shiva Shakti, born in human form, to lead mankind towards Him. When Baba declared that each individual is a flower in the garden of God, drawing strength from the earth and beauty from the sun, one was reminded of the poem sung by Sri Das Ganu Maharaj, while expounding the life and teachings of the ‘previous body’ of Baba: “The Bakul, Lotus, Chrysanthemum, Rose, Mogra, Malthi, Jayee, Juyce, Chamelee, Dawan, Marwa, Panch – such a variety of flowering plants bloom together in a garden and make it grand. All flowers spring from the earth and return to the earth, from which they sprang and after they re-enter, there is no more distinction!”

“Religion is a perpetual encounter of the individual with the Universal, a persistent invitation, which insists on acceptance,” said Baba. Those, who have tasted the sweetness of that Invitation from Baba, know that He is the Lord, who, as He Himself sang in the introductory verse of His Birthday Discourse, “commands the sun to illumine, the stars to lend brilliance to the sky, the wind to blow and bolster life, the rivers to meander murmuring on, the fire to reduce everything to irreducible ash, and the million species of living things to populate the earth and sea, proclaiming the might and majesty of the Lord.” We have heard of gifts being

given to a person on his birthday, but to the Lord, who is amidst us, what can we give? Therefore, Baba gives gifts to us, on 23rd November. We sit in long lines all over the grounds of Prasanthi Nilayam and He gives each one a packet of sweets, with a loving word or a charming smile as a keepsake forever.

During these Festivals, after every discourse, He sings a few *Bhajan* songs, with which He activates devotion and faith among the thousands. His songs are genuine Muraligana, that is to say, replicas of the magic music, which flowed from the Flute of Krishna on the Banks of Yamuna. The water of the Yamuna forgot to flow and halted in ecstasy, when the Flute conveyed the breath of the Lord to them. It is in the nature of water to flow! So, the Chitravati at Prasanthi Nilayam has freed itself of water, so that it can listen to Baba's voice, without the bother of halting and holding still!

A devotee writes, "In the blissful joy of listening to His melodious Voice, extolling the glory and majesty of Divinity, one forgets all the cares and distractions of living; one is released from the prison of time and space."

On 31st December, 1969, Baba was in the midst of delegates from all the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in Mysore, and called them lovingly as instruments of His Divine Mission of *Dharmasthapana*. While the Presidents from each District were presenting their Reports, Baba was standing at the farther end of the *shamiana*, instead of sitting on the Chair placed for Him on the Dais. In explanation, He said, "My place is among you, with you, and wherever work lies! Do not believe that I am on a special seat apart, distant on a pedestal. I am part of you, partner and partaker, inspiring, instructing, when you ask Me or need Me for inspiration and instruction." "Do not exude pride," He advised the workers, "Spiritual pride is the most poisonous variety of pride: it is the highest of hypocrisy. Fear, too, is spiritual poison, for when you have in your heart the person, who declares that you need not fear, why should you fear? If you do, your lips belie your heart. An uneasy conscience is a torment."

"If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character," said Baba, "If there is beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home; when there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation; when there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world... So, be righteous in speech, thought, and action. Avoid all prejudices on the basis of caste, creed, colour, status, or degree of scholarship or affluence." That was the directive, with which the delegates returned to their place of work.

Within a few days, Baba inaugurated a *Mahila Satsang* under the auspices of the

Organisations and the advice He then vouchsafed to the women workers, has far reaching implications. Baba has come to clarify *Dharma*, mark out the bounds of behaviour, prescribe laws and limits of conduct, so that vagaries may be controlled and sublimated. He said, “Let the *Satsang* start with your homes! Let your homes be happy, harmonious, with no friction, faction, frills, fanfare, or fanaticism. Let the different generations, living in the home with varying levels of intelligence, experience, growth and attainments, earnings, tastes, or prejudice, learn to live together in mutual co-operation, tolerance, and loving kindness. Each one of you must do your part, in ensuring that your home has the fragrance of the *Satsang* charged with the Sai atmosphere. Learn to put up with different opinions, different temperaments. Develop the desire to understand others, be sympathetic towards them, be happy when others are happy, be compassionate when others are sorrowing. Engage yourselves in *Seva* – go into the slums, the hospitals, and the jails, the remand homes, where delinquent children are housed. *Seva* is better than even *Dhyana* as a *Sadhana*. ‘*Dil me Ram, hath me kam.*’ Perform your duty with God installed in your heart.”

Mahashivaratri, 1970! A flood of devotees flowed into Prasanthi Nilayam. There was tremendous rush, but absolute silence. Baba told the young men and women of the *Seva Dals*, selected by the Sathya Sai *Seva Samitis* from the different States of India, “You yearn to do some *Seva* in My name, don’t you? Well, I have a thousand heads, eyes, and feet! The *Vedas* proclaim that God is ‘*sahasra seersha Purushah*,’ He has a thousand heads! The thousands, who have come here, the aged, the children, the diseased, the afflicted – they are all Me. Serve them, you serve Me!” Baba hoisted the flag on the Nilayam and said that, loyalty to higher truths has to be built up from childhood, even through the lessons learnt while in the mother’s lap. At noon, the creation of the huge stream of *Vibhuti* caused wonder and amazement, even to those, who know that it was part of the *Shivaratri* Festival. In the evening, Sri Nakul Sen, I.C.S., Lt. Governor of Goa, Dr. Gokak, and Dr. D. Venkatavadhanlu, Professor of Telugu, Osmania University, addressed the gathering.

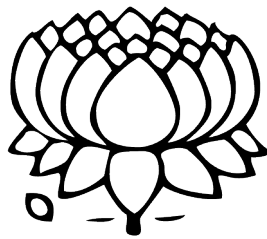
Baba’s compassion led Him to begin His discourse with a Sanskrit verse, meaning, “I am not a human being, or a god, or a superman. I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaisya, nor a Shudra! Then, you may ask Me who I am. Well, I am the Teacher of Truth; I am Truth, Goodness, and Beauty!” During the Discourse, the *Linga* that was growing in the stomach of Baba since about a week, announced itself as ready to emerge and so, Baba sat on the chair. The huge gathering sensed the cosmic under-tones of the movement and sang with eager excitement a song in praise of Shiva, the God represented by the *Linga*, for whom

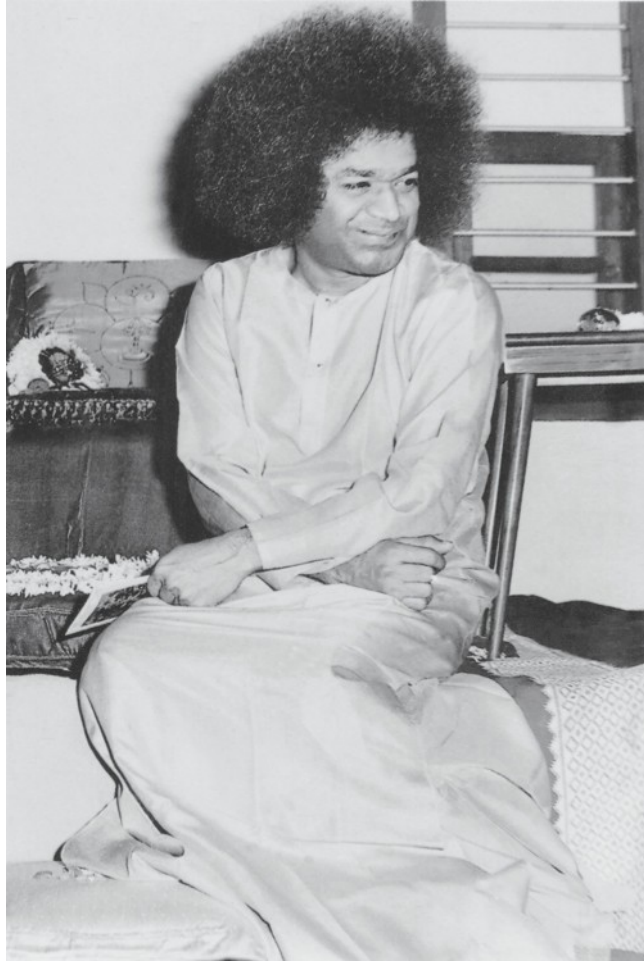
Shivaratri was dedicated.

Fifteen minutes later, a heavy oval *Linga* of a substance akin to an opal came up and out; the enormous gathering shouted *Jai* in adoration and uncontrollable bliss, when Baba held it in His hand for all to see. Throughout the night, the *Bhajan* continued; the Divine Offspring was placed in full view of all, so that it may inspire them in their vigil and fast.

The next day, when the *Bhajan* ended, Baba Himself gave consecrated food to the devotees. He spoke of the *Gita* and its Message. He said that, the Song Celestial recommended Action, *Karma*, first; then, in subsequent chapters, it wanted that the *Karma* must become untainted by any desire for fruits. Later, it recommended Righteousness, *Dharma*; a few chapters later, it advised that *Dharma* has to be given up, so that Liberation, *Moksha*, can be attained. Finally, it recommends that the *Moksha* desire has to be given up, for even that is bound. It declares that one is free, all the time, even when he imagined he was bound, “Awake from ignorance, you know that your bondage was unreal; it was a dream, which was denied when you woke. You are always free, liberated. You are always the *Atma* that can never change or suffer.”

Baba left for Brindavan after a few days, so that He could expedite from there the construction of the college He had planned.







Chapter 11

Unearthing The Light

“Although with modern speed, the continents of the world have been closer to each other, yet mankind has not learnt the art of living as one human family in the Universe. With the advance of science, man has obtained higher techniques for controlling outer nature to a large extent, but has yet to learn to control his inner nature. This he can acquire through study and practice of the ancient way of life.”

Early in the afternoon, on 9th May, 1970, Baba left Brindavan for Bombay. Three cars formed the ‘Caravan’, the last one being a carefully reconditioned one brought by two members of the *Seva Samitis*, who had come to escort Baba and His party. I was in that car and I was a victim of the poor quality of that reconditioning process! Baba had questioned the *Samiti* members, at more than usual length, on the details of the repairs done and the two had assured Him that all was well.

When about 30 miles had been traversed, something from the car fell on the road with a thud; the vigilant chauffeur stopped the car, retrieved the part, and quietly put it under his feet, as if it was a superfluous gadget! Fifty miles off, he heard a squeak; he stopped and lifted the bonnet to peep inside, and assured himself that all was well. A few miles off, he stopped again and sniffed a little... He got out of the car and went around it, and with an expression of audacious courage, hopped in again and started off! The friends from Bombay, who were with me, were unconcerned. But, my nervousness increased with every interruption.

Very near the seventy-fourth mile, he stopped again! The bonnet was lifted for another casual examination and I could see the man recovering a “something” that had got loose and quietly putting it under his foot inside the car! My fears mounted. A little distance away, luckily for me, we found Baba parked at a lonely spot by the side of the road, awaiting us. I ran forward

and pleaded with Him that I may be shifted to another car, for the car carrying me seemed to be fast disintegrating. Baba replied with a chuckle of amusement. He described an item given by the clowns in circuses, where as they go round the ring in a car, the parts fall off one by one, until they find themselves squatting happily on the ground!

I looked pathetically at Him, so that He might take pity on me; but, the only remedy He proposed was, “Don’t worry! If you fall out, we shall ensure that someone picks you up and puts you in!” We reached Dharwar, 250 miles further off, at 1 a.m. The car behaved well. We drove merrily through the evening hours into the hours of dusk and darkness, between avenues of trees, until midnight came, when we found the trees relaxed and rested in profound silence. At the bungalow of Vice-Chancellor Adke, Baba asked me, “After you reported to Me, was there any trouble?” I answered, “How could there be, Swami!” Thereafter, we proceeded in the same car to Poona and thence, to Bombay, without a squeak or a spasm! At Bombay, when it was sent to the workshop for servicing, the mechanic asked the chauffeur, “How did those, who came in this car, reach Bombay alive? The spring plates of the front wheels are cracked!” While relating this miracle to Baba, the owner, Java said, “The driver is a devotee,” and I added, “The occupants are also devotees, Swami!” But, Baba said, “Not you; the car is the devotee, a great devotee!”

That car had a personality and it prayed for Grace, and got it! In fact, every artefact has human feelings, Baba announces so. He affirms what Jagdish Chandra Bose discovered, that machines get tired. He goes further and asserts that mountains weep. And that ‘Saris’ weep! At Bombay, later, He asked someone to bring for His selection and purchase, some saris, to be given as gifts to the women labourers, who helped build the Sathya Sai College at Anantapur. He selected 96 and rejected four! He kept the rejected ones apart, so that they could be returned!

When Baba returned an hour later, to the table, on which they were kept, He found signs of tears. Calling our attention to this, He said, “Poor things! They are sorry I kept them aside! All right. I shall take them also, to Anantapur, with Me.” Months later, He repeated this incident at a meeting at Prasanthi Nilayam, when He was describing the *puranic* story of the Govardhan Hill. When Rama decided to build a bridge over the sea towards Lanka, the Divine monkeys in His army pulled huge mountain peaks up by their roots and passed them along the conveyor belt from shoulder to shoulder, until they were finally dropped into the sea. After the construction of the bridge, the mountains were not required any more. At this, each monkey kept aside whatever peak it had with it and hurried to the bridge head, with the

result that one mountain, that had been plucked from its native spot and brought pretty far, started weeping!

Rama heard its wail and consoled it, saying, “Stay! I shall use you, when I incarnate next and hold you as umbrella, to save the *Yadavas* from the anger of God Indra.” “The hill that wept was Govardhan,” Baba announced.

At Dharwar, Baba expressed concern that a large number of persons were waiting, until the small hours of the next day, to have His *Darshan*. He moved among them and quenched their thirst with a gentle glance, an affectionate pat, a word scarcely heard or a look of recognition, a questioning brow, and sometimes, a pinch of ash created on the spot for a person found ill; or the acceptance of a bow, a letter, a flower, or a prayer.

That night, people slept on the ground that had been consecrated by His Feet. Dawn found them at *Bhajan* or with rosaries. Baba spoke to the Office Bearers of the Seva *Samiti* Units about the immense significance of *Nagara Sankirtana*. I felt that this choir movement was really more profound than the Dandi march to the sea, for the imperialism of the six passions that rule over men is much more insidious than the imperialism that the Salt Satyagraha was designed to destroy. This movement, where good men march into the nooks of hate and greed in every village with the name of God on their lips, along every lane polluted by anger and avarice, was the thin end of wedge, destined to put a stop to the decline of *Dharma* among mankind.

Baba was present at the dais in the *Shamiana*, for some time during the noon *Bhajan* and started off towards Poona, soon after lunch. Passing through Belgaum and Satara, where devotees had *Darshan*, the cars sped on, Baba keeping every one fresh and happy! Baba stayed at Jamnagar House, on the outskirts of the city of Poona, but that did not discourage those, who had tasted the sweetness of the Sai Name. The lawn of the house was dotted with devoted groups, sitting in meditation during the early hours of the next day and by about 7, it was no longer a lawn! It was a multi-coloured flower-bed of bright eyes, looking up in ardent plaint towards a room on the first floor, where they knew Baba was. Baba went down among them and rewarded them for their earnestness.

Dr. Adke and his son Manohar, an engineer at Bhadravati, accompanied Him to Poona. Baba was conferring on the son a sign of His Grace at Bhadravati itself, for *Vibhuti* was showering from the portrait of Baba, which he worshipped at home! While father and son were taking leave of Baba, Manohar held before Him the ring He had materialised for him, months back,

at the end of the unforgettable, Karnataka tour. Its yellow gem was a little chipped in one corner. “Do you require Me to repair it? O, you want My Form on it, is that it?” He said, taking it in His hands. “No! You are an engineer. Your hands are ever busy handling machinery, or ought to be. If I give you My Form on it, it will get scarred and grated. Poor fellow, you will have no peace then. I shall give you My Form on the ring, when you go for higher studies overseas.” With that, He held the ring between the thumb and forefinger, high for all to see and blew on it once, a little hard. “You are lucky,” Baba said.

Yes, indeed! His ring had disappeared. In its place, shining in Baba’s hand, was a brilliant ring of burnished gold, with no gem, but with the letter M embossed most charmingly, by some skilled artist. “You get more gold, now,” Baba said, putting it on his finger, “And it is not Morarji gold.” That is to say, it is not 14 carat, as Morarji Desai wanted all ornaments of gold to be, when he was Finance Minister of the Government of India! It was 22 carat gold! Baba left Poona at about 10-30 a.m.

Dharmakshetra was called over the phone and informed that Baba would be arriving only at about 1 p.m., and the huge gathering there was advised to go home, since they had been waiting for Baba from 10 in the morning. He had stayed on at Poona and did not want them to stay hungry. But, no one stirred! No car out of the hundreds parked in the broiling sun budged! A Parsi gentleman, who had been waiting since 8, seated in the front row near the dais, was asked by his wife whether he intended to leave, for she had persuaded him to come after herculean efforts, to take the *Darshan* of Baba. He did not want to miss a chance of witnessing this strange phenomenon that fascinated millions in the world. So, he decided to stay, though the sun was burning the top of his head and the ground underneath him was hot. He was thankful that he had worn two pairs of socks, for he was warned early that shoes had to be removed at the gate itself. At ten minutes past one, Baba came. His car stopped at the gate and Baba walked slowly up the gruelling, hot pathway, rising sharply when it neared the dais! The Parsi gentleman cast a look at Him, his first, and tears gushed and hid the next look. Baba was barefooted! Yes! Baba’s feet, soft and tender, sweet, silken, and small, were moving over the hot, sand strewn pathways between the squatting thousands! He could have driven on straight to the apartment, on the first floor of Sathyadeep at Dharmakshetra! But, He demonstrated the truth that he, who seeks to lead, must share the travail with those, whom he calls to follow! He blazes the trail, goading others to aspire. The gentleman went home and came back soon, to attend the evening *Bhajan*, after which he hoped Baba would give His Discourse!

The teachers of the Sathya Sai Baba *Vihars* of Bombay City had arranged an exhibition of Children's Art and Baba went into the Hall, where it was held. The exhibits revealed the lispings of the New Age in Education, which is being inspired all over the country, the child being oriented towards God to discover the mystery of existence. The answers discovered so far by sages are not being understood today, because those questions are not being asked. Now, Baba is offering a synthesis of those answers of the ancient seers.

The children knew that trees blossomed, because Krishna leaned against the trunk! Cows were happy, since Krishna patted them. A boat was worth drawing, because Rama and Sita and Lakshmana used it to cross the Ganga. A horse is a good subject for painting, since it carried Siddhartha from palace to forest, on his historic journey to discover the remedy for human grief. Many tried to make models of Prasanthi Nilayam, which they enshrined in their hearts as the abode of God. Others took delight in drawing Baba, as He was at Shirdi or as He is now. Reverence and care were evident in every line; they are enough credentials for receiving Grace. There were models and drawings of Dwarakamayi, Dakshineswar, Govardhan, St. Peters, Jama Masjid, and other places associated with man's undying yearning for God. That night, the children enacted a play in the Divine Presence. Toddlers of six and seven expressed emotions of poignancy, surprise, resentment, triumph, pity, and pride so clearly and genuinely, that the play gripped attention and won appreciation.

There was not a dry eye in the hall, when two children enacted the scene where Lakshmana, under orders from his elder brother Rama, took Sita, unsuspectingly, into the thick forest and deserted her there, leaving her to the care of the sylvan deities. The scene, where Lakshmana retraces his steps to the capital and Sita discovers that she is left alone to the tender mercies of the forest and its denizens, pulled the heartstrings of everyone in the audience, until they nearly broke. Baba, whose presence inspired the children beyond measure, caressed them and blessed them, and appreciated the teachers, who had trained them and directed the play. He wanted that the play be enacted during *Dasara*, at Prasanthi Nilayam, a great occasion, when thousands from all over the world could be thrilled by their innocence and charm.

12th May was the day, when Baba inaugurated Dharmakshetra in 1968; it is a red letter day in the calendar of Bombay and in the chronology of the Sai Era. No wonder, therefore, that the city celebrates the Day with "Thanks giving". The multi-lingual, multi-credal, multi-State population of Bombay gathered in massive numbers and chanted *Bhajans* continuously, for ten hours, as their offering of adoration. When newspapers were carrying banner headlines on the Bhiwandi riots, fanned by fanaticism and fed by fear and falsehood, this celebration was

an assurance, a promise, an oasis of faith and strength.

Baba referred to the surgence of communal riots and the sudden emergence of faith in violence as a solution for the problems of life. “Look at a tree! The roots, the trunk, the branches, the twigs, the bark, the timber, the pith, the sap, the leaf, the bud, blossom and fruit, the seed—each has a distinct taste, colour, feel, smell, and shine; but, you do not deny that they are all from the same seed. Each has its separate use and function. All have been fostered by Earth and Sun. *Beejam mam sarva bhoothanam*, says the Lord in the *Gita*; I am the seed of all Creation! It is a pity that man is indulging in the arts of slander and faction, mudslinging and character-assassination, hatred and war, so that his ego might be satisfied. Love is the best balm to quieten anger.” It gave the listeners good cheer and an armour against fear.

Sri M. M. Pinge, State President of Maharashtra for Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, is the founder and administrator of a very efficient chain of institutes known as Pinge’s Classes, which prepare thousands of students from offices, factories, fields, and homes for various technical and other examinations, helping them to improve their skills and abilities. The Silver Jubilee of this vast network of schools was celebrated at the Rang Bhavan Auditorium, on the 13th May, in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan. The cream of Bombay’s intellectual and artistic elite were there, as well as a large number of students and teachers from many colleges.

When He was led to the dais, where a special chair had been placed for Him, Baba quietly turned towards the audience. He moved among the people, with His heart-warming smile and the loving look of one’s dearest kinsman and friend. While the Invocatory Verses adoring Him were being sung, He was busy with His mission of showering *Ananda* on parched eyes.

Later, He ascended the dais and stood for a few minutes, leaning forward on the back of a chair. Then, He sat on the carpet, a picture of Divine Charm, to the delight and amazement of the spellbound gathering. When Dr. Gokak, Sri Bharde, Sri Sawant, and other distinguished guests came upon the dais, Baba rose and occupied the special chair, and bade the proceedings to begin. Dr. V.K. Gokak, a clear and forthright thinker on educational and allied problems, who had been Principal for many years and who was the Vice-Chancellor of the Bangalore University, addressing the gathering, said, “I shall only draw upon the educational ideals put before us by *Bhagawan*, for they alone can save us from the sad state, into which the system had landed itself. Baba has laid down the cardinal principles that should be the

very basis of education – unquestioning loyalty to Truth, faith in righteous activity, cultivation of serenity, and the spontaneous upsurge of Love. Baba has put *Atma Vidya* in the very core of the system, for where the centre does not hold, where there is no soul-sight, things are bound to fall apart. Baba has emphasised that education must impart knowledge, develop skill, confer balance, and implant insight. The student must become a useful member of society, earning not only his bread, but bread for others in the community. Destructive attitudes are prolific in the soil of imbalance; the vibrant energy of youth must be given constructive outlets, so that the balance is set right. Their emotions have to be chastened, not by reading moral texts, but by means of contact with men of mature minds, integrated personalities, and impartial but beneficent servants of mankind.”

Baba, in His Discourse, referred to the four cardinal principles, Knowledge, Skill, Balance, and Insight, about which Gokak had spoken, and said that, knowledge is gained through the senses, inference, and observation. At some unfortunate periods of history, this knowledge is used not for integration, but for the disintegration, not for the well-being of man, but for the skilful destruction of man. So, the skill gained through knowledge turns out to ‘Kill’, consequently disturbing the balance; hence, ‘insight’ turns into ‘outsight’, the pursuit of sensual pleasure in the outer world.

Continuing, Baba observed, “Sri Rama, paying heed to flippant scandals, respecting public opinion, sent His queen to exile. Socialism was observed in practice, considering that the peasants and workers were honoured during the age of Rama and Krishna.” “Krishna tended cattle; His elder brother, Balarama (an incarnation in His own right) had, as His constant companion, a plough. They both declared that agriculture and cattle-rearing were consecrated occupations.”

“Although with modern speed, the continents of the world have been closer to each other, yet mankind has not learnt the art of living as one human family in the Universe. With the advance of science, man has obtained higher techniques for controlling outer nature to a large extent, but has yet to learn to control his inner nature. This he can acquire, through study and practice of the ancient way of life.”

Therefore Baba exhorted all to plan and establish a new educational system, “which will discipline, canalise passions, control emotions, and equip youth for mutual co-operation, compassion, and comradeship, calm deliberation and constructive service. At present, education equips youth only with a begging bowl, entitling them to clamour for jobs!” Baba

said that, He would establish a College in Bombay City, if “you first prepare students worthy of entering its portals.” “Teach them spiritual truths and the discipline that promotes their translation into daily life. Intellect without integrity is infructuous and injurious. Politics without principles, education without character, and science without morality are positively poisonous.”

On the 14th, Baba blessed hundreds of children, who are being prepared with devout care to enter the portals of His Grace, through *Bala Vihar* classes all over Bombay. Later during the day, Baba proceeded to Jamnagar in Gujarat, by a specially chartered plane. The scorching heat was unbearable; the tarmac was a trail of fire. And yet, thousands greeted the plane and rushed to have the coveted *Darshan*. At this, Baba willed shade and breeze and as He stepped out of the plane, the change in weather was miraculously sudden and satisfying. Everyone felt a thrill of joy from head to foot at this sign of Grace. The *Rajamata* of Nawanagar was the happiest of all.

At “Amar Vilas” Palace, Baba was received by a Guard of Honour, provided by the Home Guards (men and women) with the Police Bands in attendance. In the evening, more than ten thousand people had the long-awaited chance to listen to Baba’s discourse and the enchanting *Bhajans*, which He sings in order to initiate man into the path of faith. Baba said that, congregational singing of the Glory of the Lord will fill the atmosphere, internal and external, with Love.

On the 15th, Baba left for Dwaraka, 150 miles away, with the *Rajamata* and members of His party. All along the route, in the busy squares of cities, on quiet suburban roads, or in the midst of flat, treeless wastes, clusters of families had gathered to catch a glimpse; they had inscribed Baba in their hearts and taken His pictures into their shrines. As we drove along, the pages of the Bhagavata unfolded before our eyes: Lord Krishna was re-entering His ancient homeland, we felt.

The people of Dwaraka and Sai Devotees from other towns had filled the wide corridors of the Krishna Temple, long before Baba arrived; while He could go smoothly in, through the thick mass, we were pushed, jostled, and pressed; so, seeing our plight, Baba came out of the temple to draw those Gopas and Gopikas into a wider space. When we were inching our way to have a *darshan* of ‘Krishna’, the inhabitants of Krishna’s City were swarming around the Sai Krishna. They feasted their eyes on Baba and congratulated each other.

Baba left for Mithapur, where the employees of the chemical and allied factories, established

by Tatas, were having a *Bhajan Mandali* for years. On the way to Mithapur, Baba inquired from a devotee accompanying Him, if he would like to go back and see the Shrine of Dwaraka and have a *darshan* of the idol of Krishna installed there; the devotee affectionately prayed that he may not be sent back to Dwaraka, as he was very happy to be in the presence of Sai Krishna. A continuous stream of men, women, and children flowed on to the lawns around the Guest House. Baba moved among them, showering compassion and charm.

While returning to Jamnagar in the evening, Baba was full of sympathy with us for the confusion and congestion inside the temple, which deprived us of *Darshan* of the Lord of Dwaraka, Krishna, as installed in the temple. Suddenly, He said, "O! The sea is here!" and the cars stopped. We came upon a wide patch of sandy shore, with a temple on a heap of rocks at one end. The place was called, we learnt later, Kuranga, meaning 'the deer'. The Sea and the Wave always elicit the playfulness inherent in Baba. For, His Play was first evinced, when a tiny, titillating wave appeared on the deep calmness of Fullness. He walked along the watery edge, gleefully daring the mischievous cohorts of waves. He laughed, when others were drenched with the saline stuff. He picked shells and searched for more, and sat on the sands at last, as Krishna must have sat some fifty centuries ago.

He heaped the soft sand to the height of a cubit in front of Him, putting us all into a state of extreme expectancy. He flattened the heap and drew on it with His finger, a three slanted line. He drew a rough circle on top; He added a small triangle over it. He drew a short line across a circle. "It is ready," He said, wiping the sand from His Palms.

We were unable to guess what exactly was ready, though the line must have been for the "*Tri-bhangi Body*," the Circle, the Head; the small triangle, the Peacock feather and the line across, the Flute! "It is ready," He said and digging His Hands deep into the pile, He drew forth a bright, golden image about 15 inches high, of Lord Krishna playing Flute, the very acme of the goldsmith's art and craftsmanship. "You did not get *darshan* of Krishna in the temple; have it, now," He invited us. It was a moment of supreme ecstasy.

The image was iconographically perfect; we could see a captivating smile playing around the golden lips. We do not know how long we sat contemplating the majestic beauty of Krishna before us. It was Baba, who awakened us, "Come let us go." The chauffeur of the Jamnagar Palace was the first to rise: Baba noticed his wonder filled eyes. He asked him, "Which is your favourite God form?" He replied, "Amba-Bhavani." The divine Hand went through the circular wave twice and a flat, round, gold plate with the figure of Amba-Bhavani embossed

on it, was ready for him.

Reaching Jamnagar at 9 a.m., Baba saw thousands still engaged in *Bhajan*, hoping that He would approach them and move along the lanes they had set apart. They were not disappointed. A few were even lucky to receive *Vibhuti*, created to alleviate their particular ailments.

On the 16th, Baba drove to the Ayurvedic University, established and endowed by the Nawanagar Royal Family, the only one in India devoted to the teaching of that ancient science of healing. It lays great emphasis on the hidden springs of strength in man and the vast reservoirs of well-being, which can be tapped through *Yoga* and *Mantra*, meditation and detachment.

“*Ayur Veda* or the Scripture of Living.” To promote research, to unravel the intricacies of *Ayurvedic* texts and discover the ancient remedies for modern illnesses, the University has a band of devoted experts. Baba blessed each of them in his own laboratory and work-table. He passed through the entire complex of the University, bringing cheer with every word and look of His.

Thence, He drove to a bungalow called Indraprastha, where members of the Sathya Sai Seva Dal were receiving advanced training in “Service as Spiritual *Sadhana*.” He spoke to them of faith and fidelity, obedience and surrender, love, renunciation, and service. “Remain always ready to receive the rays of the sun, imparting illumination, health, and joy.” “Religion springs not from the intellect, but from the will to love.”

In the evening, Baba addressed the Rotarians of Jamnagar at the Town Hall. He warned them against the futility of speeches and dinners. He told them about the fatal consequences of resorting to artificial methods of birth control. Contraceptives will lead to mental disorders, to increased irreverence and irresponsibility, and deterioration of the moral standards upheld by Indian culture. “Spiritual discipline, intensification of *Japa*, *Dhyana*, *Seva*, and *Sankirtan* - these can achieve the same end, without landing the human community in the morass of animality,” Baba said.

Well! The sea prayed for Baba’s Presence again! About 9 at night, Baba drove to Balachchdi sea-shore, near the Sainik School. The staff of the Sainik School joined the party at *Bhajan*. Baba sat on the soft sands by the side of murmuring waves. In the midst of the *Bhajans*, Baba inquired from Dr. V.K. Gokak the implication of the letters V and K, and when he started telling, “V for Vinayaka,” Baba created, out of the sand, a “silver” idol of Vinayaka and

handed it over to him.

He related the story of the birth of Vinayaka and explained the meaning of Vinayaka, as the Great leader or as the One without a bigger leader, whom He has to follow. Then, He asked those around Him, “Ask for anything you want from Me, now.” Most of us asked for Grace only, but He insisted we should ask for some concrete article He would create. While brains were busy formulating the needs, He created a picture of Vinayaka, an exquisite calligraphic marvel, each line, big or small, being an Om—the ear, the mouth, the eye, in fact, the entire picture was a composition of a 100 Oms, drawn with skill and care to represent Vinayaka, the Elephant-headed God. One person wanted a ring and he got it—made of gold with Baba’s portrait in enamel. Another asked for a rosary and she got it, 108 *rudraksha* beads, encased in gold. The Principal of the Sainik School—blessed be his name—prayed for some auspicious gift for his school! Unhesitatingly, Baba played with the sand, pouring it through His fingers and there was in His hand, for all to see, a beautiful, five-inch, silver idol of Annapurna, the Goddess of Plenty, who confers food on all Her children. “Keep this in the Dining hall. The boys will eat with relish and flourish amazingly,” Baba announced. “*Anna*, the food, which she gives. *Poorna*, to the full, is not only for the Body; *Anna* means ‘intake,’ through the mouth, the senses, the brain, the nerves. So, this Goddess will grant sustenance for the body, the mind, and the spirit of the teachers and the taught in your school,” He blessed. Two hours of mystery, suspense, and divine delight were spent there.

The 17th was an epoch-making day. Baba ‘charged the Somanath Shrine’ that day with Divine Potency. He also fulfilled the prayers of the Late Jamsaheb of Nawanagar, the person primarily responsible for the renovation of that historic temple, by visiting the place and allowing His Name to be associated with a structure that is a limb of that complex. The *Rajmata* succeeded in persuading Baba to inaugurate the imposing, architectural gem, called *Dig Vijaya Dwar* after Sri Digvijaya Singh, the late Jamsaheb, the Gateway of Victory.

This temple is situated on a spot celebrated in the *Vedas* and *Epics*. The shrine is of Shiva, as *Sa-uma* (with Uma) as *Shiva-Shakti*. Baba has come as *Shiva-Shakti* in Human Form to charge the ancient shrine with Divine Potency. The *Shivayogis*, who specialised in *Soma Vidya* and the followers of the Pasupatha cult, founded by sage Lakulisa about 200 A.D., spread the fame of this Temple from sea to sea. They established Somanaths with Someshwara Shrines all over the land, in Ratnagiri, E. Godavari, Purnea, Jodhpur, Mysore, and South Kanara Districts.

Somanath was one of the richest temples of India. When the Muslims conquered and ruled over the Punjab and Sindh, it attracted the plunderers. Depredation, desecration, destruction, reconstruction, and rededication became recurring chapters of its long history. The infamous raid by Mahmud of Ghazni, in 1026 A.D., was the third in the long list of catastrophes. The fifth temple too met with a similar fate at the hands of the rulers of Delhi.

On Diwali Day, 1947, when the Indian Army entered the Nawabdom of Junagadh and liberated the pathetically dilapidated pile of stone, recognised by many as Somanath, it was rescued from those, who could not appreciate the value and validity of idols, images, and symbols of the Unknown and the Unknowable. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel announced that day, amidst the joyous roar of the waves of human and saline seas, “We have decided that Somanath should be reconstructed. This is a holy task, in which all should participate.”

The new temple (named Mahameru Prasad, like the previous one) was planned closely on the basis of the earlier temples and now, the *Gopuram*, the Main Gateway, through which seekers would enter into the portals of *Jyotirlinga*, was to be inaugurated by Someswara, come in human form: Shiva-Shakti come as Sathya Sai!

Baba declared that He would reveal that day, the genuine Somanath! This declaration filled us with wonder and enthusiastic exuberance. So, all roads converging from Jamnagar to Somanath were shouting *Jais* in exhilaration. Baba was received at the decorated *Shamiana* in front of the Digvijayadwar, by the Trustees of the Somanath Temple, as well as by the high officers of the District and States. Amidst strains of temple music, He walked on the red carpet laid on the steps and opened the lock on the artistically carved and silver embossed door with a silver key. Then, He proceeded along the festooned pathway, between rows of fresh banana trees, to the main shrine of Someshwar, the focal point of the faith of millions for millennia!

He entered the Holy of Holies; Brahmin *Pundits* were reciting *Vedic* Hymns, which reverberated from the arched and conical roof, from the final 150 feet above the ground! He directed that a plate be brought. He spread the fingers of His right Hand and shook it over the plate, 108 silver bilva leaves and 108 golden flowers fell from His Hand in a clinking shower. They were reverentially touched by devotees, for it is on their behalf and for their sake that the process of charging the 3 feet high *Lingam* was being undertaken by Him. This *Lingam* had been recently installed, when Babu Rajendra Prasad, President of India, inaugurated the temple. He poured the leaves of silver and flowers of gold on the *Linga*, as He had done at

Srisailam, when He was set on revitalising the *Linga* there. It was like Ganga water being poured into the stream of Ganga.

Within seconds, He waved that Divine Hand! Lo and behold, a Ball of Brilliant light manifested in His Palm. I was at that time reciting within myself the *Dwadasa-Jyotirlinga-Stotram*, the verses in praise of the twelve “Lingas of Light”, which every Hindu is exhorted to remember reverentially. The twelve include Visweswara of Varanasi, Kedaranath in the *Himalayas*, Rameswaram in the extreme South, Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh, Mahakala at Ujjaini, and Tryambaka in Nasik. But, the very first in the list is “Sourashtra Somanatha”, Somanath of Sourashtra. The Somanatha Linga is the only one of the twelve, which is adored as *Jyotirmayam*, “imbued with the splendour of light”. And Baba had the “*Linga* of Light” right now, in His Grasp! What a great moment was this, I wondered.

Then, I remembered Baba’s announcement: “I shall show you the Genuine Someshwara *Linga*, today!” So, this was It, the Genuine One, installed, as legend says, by Brahma Himself and worshipped by the Moon-God, the God who presides over the Mind of Man.

In a pamphlet issued by the Tourist Department, it is said that, *Skanda Purana* mentioned thousands of years ago that, “The *Sparsa Linga* of Somanath is a *Swayam-Bhu* (self-originated) *Linga*, of great prowess, as bright as the Sun, of the size of an egg of a hen, which is situated underground.” It is a characteristic of *Vayu*, air. These are the other *Lingas*, representing the other four elements: *Akash*, *Tejas*, Water, and Earth.

So, the oval ball of Light in His hand was the authentic Someshwara He had resolved to bring up from its underground niche, kept away since many centuries from depredation and desecration. The *Sparsa* (touch) *Lingam* was nestling for centuries under the *Linga* in the shrine. This information was given to us by Baba, as well as by the Priests and Trustees. Baba waved His Hand again and created a Silver Stand, on which it could be placed. He gave it to the Chief Priest, “Let it be in the full light of day, hereafter! Let pious eyes admire its brilliance and imprint its glory on their hearts. There is no need anymore, to keep it away. The *Avatar* has come to remove all fear,” Baba declared.

To make the triumphant emergence of Someshwara, Baba unfurled the flag on the towering finial over the Central Shrine. Thousands acclaimed ‘Jai Bhagawan’, as He gave *Darshan* on the temple steps. Baba left for Rajendra Bhavan at Veeraval and at 2 p.m., He motored to Keshod aerodrome, from where He emplaned for Bombay. Over 30,000 devotees were awaiting the arrival of Baba at Dharmakshetra, Bombay.

Dr. Gokak gave them an intimate account of His *Leelas* and *Mahimas* (signs of Divinity), at Jamnagar, Dwaraka, and Somanath. Baba also spoke to them of the immanence of God in every being and the need to practise *Sadhana* and *Seva*. “You try to discover God, probing and peeping into every particle of the Universe. Of course, if you have eyes to see, you can see Him there, too, for the Universe is the Body of God. You are a spark of the Divine, so are all, so is everything!” He announced. “Before you experience the Divine in every being, in every cell and atom, you have to experience it as a totality of your being, that is, in your words, thoughts, and deeds,” He advised.

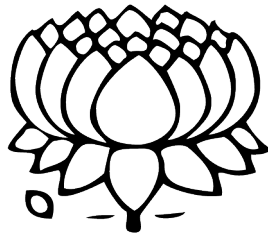
Baba left Bombay for *Brindavan*, on the 20th. While conferring His blessings on the 25th at the Inauguration of the Bharat Engineering Workshop, He spoke of the Bharat employer-employee bond as a loving partnership for mutual strength and joy. On the first day of June, He visited the village of Kalkunte, hidden away behind a belt of trees, accessible only by a tortuous country road twelve miles long. Each hamlet on the hallowed road had erected a *pandal*, where young and old were waiting with flowers to welcome Baba as He drove along. The villagers gathered at Kalkunte noticed a radiance on the distant hill; as Baba’s car came nearer, the radiance around it was fringed with amber and gold. Baba alighted from the car and was preceded by priests chanting hymns from the ancient scriptures, followed by a band of temple musicians with pipe, drum, and cymbal, and groups of peasants singing in chorus the glory of God. He walked about two furlongs towards the Sri Ranganatha Temple, where the form of God installed shows the Deity reclining in ease and directing, unconcerned, the Cosmic Play of Emergence, Sustenance, and Mergence!

There, Baba laid the foundation stone for a building to house the village school. During His discourse, He said, “Make yourselves moving temples. Become aware of the God that resides in you. It is He, who protects you, provides for you, and prevents you from falling prey to pernicious propensities.” And referring to the school, which was to move into the New Building, He said, “I have entered the field of education and established colleges for the New Era, for both boys and girls in different states, for these are temples of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning. Liberation can be achieved through the Awareness of Truth, by learning the Unity that underlies Diversity. Now, teachers and parents, comrades and elders tarnish the immaculate tendencies of children by setting wrong precepts. If they grow in an atmosphere of sacrifice and service, truth and justice, love and light, they will grow into pure, good, brave, and active citizens. Now, they are a perpetual problem to themselves and to the nation. If they are allowed to soak themselves in godliness, they are sure to be invaluable assets to

themselves and to others.”

That evening, the Bangalore Centre of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan had invited Baba to its premises and offered grateful homage. Sri R.R. Diwakar, a keen student and interpreter of *Upanishadic* and Post- *Upanishadic* mysticism and a Gandhian *Sadhaka* honoured by the country for his high-souled patriotism, welcomed Baba on behalf of all those assembled there. He spoke of Baba as the greatest and the most effective moral force in the world, today. Baba pointed out, “It is the responsibility of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and kindred institutions to uphold the validity of *Bharatiya Vidya* or *Atma Vidya* and to demonstrate by precept and example, the lasting benefits it can bestow upon the individual and society. Churn the sacred scriptures and the text books on *Yoga* and other paths for self-realisation and collect the nutritious butter and share it as the sustenance of mankind, which is starving in the midst of pseudoprosperty. Every worker at the Bhavan must shape himself into a perfect picture of the munificence of *Bharatiya Vidya*, that is to say, he must be tolerant of all faiths, patient in the face of odds, reverent towards the old, the sacred, and the historic, and humble in spite of the insidious urge to demonstrate and display.”

On 5th June, Baba reached Prasanthi Nilayam.





Chapter 12

Filling The Emptiness

There is no prayer that He does not hear, no sign that is not recorded in His heart, no tear that He dismissed as unworthy of attention. He is the nearest kinsman, the closest friend, the wisest guide, the fondest mother, the very breath of our being.

Addressing a huge gathering in Kampala, the heart of Africa, Baba said, on the 8th of July, 1968, “Embodiments of Love, cultivate love undimmed by selfish motives and live up to your name and heritage. Learn the international language of the heart and spell it out in action. Your neighbours too pray to the same God in anguish, for favours. They may be speaking in different languages, their pose at the hour of worship may vary as well; but their physical needs are the same as yours and they are satisfied by the same type of food and drink. Try and sympathise with them, when they are in great difficulty and feel happy, when they are joyous. Share their joy; sharing transforms joy into bliss—*Ananda*. Let your love expand towards entire creation. Stagnant water becomes foul, so let it flow. Love is joy, love is power, love is light, love is God.”

“My life is My Message,” Baba says. Being Himself the embodiment of love, He teaches us to love all unselfishly and declares that each one of us can become God, Madhava, through love. He often says, “If you want to label Me, then call Me *Premaswarupa*.”

It is through pure love that Baba transforms us from selfishness to unselfishness, from contraction to expansion. “I am so happy that I am able to be of service to the Lord. It is my joy to be acting as Secretary for the Book Centre. Since learning about Baba, our entire lives have been changed. We never knew such happiness before. It is such a joy to be serving Him even in a small way. On Christmas Eve, Gary and Sharon held a *Bhajan* meeting in their home. The most wonderful thing happened to them, while they were preparing for the meeting. Sharon was packing small packets of *Vibhuti* and all of a sudden, she saw something

odd—sort of hard—in the *Vibhuti*. It was a tiny medal with Baba’s picture on it. Gary was so happy and so was Sharon. They were so happy that Baba gave them this blessing on Christmas Eve! We were so happy for them.

Actually, His miracles that are really wonderful, are the ones He performs in the consciousness and lives of His devotees. He changes you so gently and gradually, that you do not even realise that anything is happening, until one morning, you really take a good look at yourself and see that you have changed. This is the real miracle. One day, you realise that you are much happier than usual and you have lost some of your bad habits and gained a few good ones,” writes Doris Babb, Secretary of Sri Sathya Sai Book Centre of America, Tustin, California.

Swami Karunyanandaji is the founder President of a vast organisation for *Seva* that has grown on the banks of the Godavari, at Rajahmundry. This Organisation, established 45 years back, has set up a Leprosy Hospital and a Home for the destitute and the disabled.

One morning, the Swami came out of his residence and found a young woman in extreme distress; she had been escorted by an unknown sympathiser from Palasa by train. She had a two year-old daughter in her arms. He got her admitted into hospital and took the child to the hostel, entrusting its care to the women inmates. Her condition improved rapidly, for she was due to give birth to a child within a week. There was a portrait of Baba hung on the wall of the hospital, in which He is playfully leaning against a coconut tree. In this picture, Baba appears more as *Shakti*. This pose was known as the Sadhuvamma Pose, meaning Saintly Woman. It was perhaps just the right picture for the patient, whose recovery and her impending confinement were being looked after by Baba from that picture.

One evening, those in charge of the clinic went to see a movie and when they returned, they found that the woman had given birth to a son. The baby was washed and wrapped in white towels and kept in a cradle. The mother had received due attention. They were filled with surprise and on asking her who had come, she replied, pointing to the picture, “She had taken care of me at the critical moment. She has gone to attend to another patient and will be back soon.” That is the measure of His love. To help the helpless is the only way to please, follow, and reach Him.

In February, 1969, four tribals from the villages of Rumgong, Panya, Disi, and Jining, in NEFA, along with Sri Boken Ete, Political Assistant, an Architect, and a Deputy Secretary of NEFA came to Prasanthi Nilayam. Later, in the afternoon, they were selected for an

interview along with some foreigners and some persons from Goa. The party remained with Baba for about two hours. Baba spoke to them on spiritual matters and thereafter, each one was granted a private interview, through which they found solace and were encouraged to replan their future lives.

Deputy Secretary writes, “As we sat on the floor, Baba Himself sat amongst us and not on the chair kept for Him. The room was hot, because the fan did not work due to the failure of electricity. When the wife of the Chief Secretary of Goa attempted to fan Him with her folding fan, He said that, it was not right to do so, when others were suffering that heat. The room was too small to accommodate 22 persons. So, Baba drew us nearer and we found the atmosphere conducive and homely. In the august presence of Baba, language is not a barrier in understanding the international language, which flows from the loving heart of Baba. His spiritual declarations were grasped by each one of us directly and personally, corresponding to the colour of our minds. When an English lady said that, she was unable to concentrate, Baba promptly materialised a red heart shaped article by a wave of His hand, saying, “This represents your heart, it will help you to concentrate.” He also created a diamond ring for the wife of the Chief Secretary, saying that she would be able to see Him in it. He said, “This is die-mind (!), not diamond. Meditation on God results in the elimination of the desires that now make up the mind and its sport.” This was fine, spiritual *Upadesh* indeed! He created a talisman to cure the illness of another woman from Goa and a handful of sweet *Prasad* for all of us. He poured the sacred ash, which He created, into the palm of tribal leader and asked him to apply it on the foreheads of every one of us. Another wave produced 8 pictures of Him, which He gave to each one of us.

Thereafter, He took each one of us aside for a private interview. We were amazed to find that He knew all our problems and ailments and also prescribed remedies for them. Sri Boken Ette sought His blessings and advice for the construction of a Sun and Moon Temple in their tribal area, in response to the wishes of the people there. Baba told him that opinions differed amongst the people as to what should be installed in the proposed temple. As we were standing, He, with a vigorous, side-wise, circular motion of His two hands, materialised a disc on the spot with the Sun and the Moon embossed on it. It was a sheet of alloy of five metals – gold, silver, copper, brass, and iron, the *Panchaloha*, out of which temple idols have to be made. “This disc should be installed in the temple and should be worshipped on every Sunday, as well as on every Full-Moon day. Light a perpetual oil lamp at the altar,” He suggested. “Animal sacrifice does not propitiate God. Subdue animality, sublimating it with

the reason endowed to man by God. If you perform the literal ritual, then do so outside the temple,” He said. Advising on the plan for the temple, Baba drew an outline, drawing a circle in front of the central shrine for the tribal dances. The Architect in the party was pleasantly surprised.

After a private interview, one is left with a feeling that Baba is certainly with you. Being All-Knowing, Baba told Sri Boken Ete that he had halted at Calcutta to get himself medically examined by eminent specialists and seek their help for the cure of a malady that had defied the doctors of Dibrugarh. He gave him some packets of curative *Vibhuti*, which relieved him with the intake of the first packet. Since then, there has been no relapse. The tribal leaders were recipients of the love of God. “Love asked and Love gave.” Baba says: “When father gives gifts to us, he does not give with pride or in the hope of requital.”

It is this ever-flowing stream of love that fertilises our desert heart with faith, hope, and charity and culminates in the experience of Bliss. Dr. B. Janakirama Rao wrote to me about an instance of infinite Love. “At 2 a.m., Dr. K. Bhaskara Rao and I were with a patient, whose pulse could not be felt, blood pressure could not be recorded, and therefore, we felt that he was sinking fast. At this, the patient was removed from the general ward to a room. An injection of coramine was given to him and we slipped some *Vibhuti* into his mouth, out of the packets Baba had given us for him.

Next morning, at 8 a.m., we found that his pulse was normal. The patient told us that at night, he had been helped by someone! Who could it be? The nurse and attendant did not know anything about it, nor had they helped the patient. 'What an inexplicable incident at the hospital!' we wondered... Needless to add, the patient recovered soon and went home, hale and happy.” Dr. A. Ranga Rao, while driving from Madras to Prasanthi Nilayam, noticed sparks of fire emanating from his car’s petrol tank. He cried, “Sai Ram,” and threw handfuls of dust. The flames subsided and he drove merrily to the Nilayam. Col. Raja told me that a huge bamboo cluster near his bungalow at Tezpur, NEFA, had caught fire. The flames were ascending yards high. His wife ran out, in fear that some huts nearby, where Nepalese lived, might be burnt down. She shouted, “Sathya Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Baba,” and to quote the Colonel, “The fire got extinguished in five seconds; even a dozen fire engines would not have succeeded in doing so.” Another revelation of the fountain head of Divinity, which is ever-present everywhere.

“My brother had fractured his thigh bone six months ago. When Baba was due to visit my

house at Trichinopoly, I brought my brother and made him sit on a chair in the rear hall. When Baba came, the *Bhajan* was on in the main hall. But, He quietly went towards my brother knowing that he was still ailing. Baba materialised *Vibhuti* and asked him to swallow it, applying a fraction of it on his forehead. Then, He walked into the hall, came near me, and said, "I have set right your brother's leg." Within 3 days, my brother began moving without help and before the month was over, he resumed his daily, constitutional walk. This letter is from Sri S.N.K. Sundaram, Founder and Director of the Pandyan Bank.

Dr. M.S. Ramakrishna Rao, a talented ophthalmic surgeon, writes about the miraculous effect of *Vibhuti*, concretised by Baba's love. This doctor was treating a friend for conjunctivitis in the routine way. He found in the course of his treatment that his patient had the much dreaded dendritic ulcer in his right eye, which is caused by a virus. IDU, manufactured in America, was the only drug, which could cure this virus. But, unfortunately, it was not available in India. In a few days, the other eye also got infected, which was rather unusual. "Efforts were being made to get the IDU, but in its absence, all that I could do was to pray to Sathya Sai Baba and doing so, I put His *Vibhuti* into both eyes of the patient and bandaged them. That very night, my Professor Dr. R. Suryaprasada Rao was able to procure the precious drug. I felt happy that Baba had responded to my prayers. Next day, when the patient came to me, I opened the bandage, anxious to apply the IDU. But, to my utter astonishment and joy, I found that there was no ulcer in either eye! I examined the eyes under the corneal microscope, but no trace of the disease or even a scar was visible."

John Hislop, a highly educated business executive in America, who could normally be expected to dismiss abruptly any talk about a living *Avatar*, has developed an irretrievable faith in the *Avatar*. He says, "I am a young son in the household of a wise father and a loving mother, in whom I have unreserved trust. The almost incredible personal experiences of Swami's devotees draw the portrait of a unique and beautiful human being, with attributes extending beyond anything we have ever conceived as belonging to man."

In order to awaken man from sloth and slumber, Baba often employs some supra-natural or supra-human methods. Sri Bhagawandas from Unai writes, "I have seen scented ash appearing on a photo of Baba in my neighbour's home. We were thrilled by it and are very eager to have *Darshan* of Baba." This is one of the innumerable ways, in which Baba introduces Himself and manifests His presence, announcing the advent of His Divinity. In NEFA, a far off region, where the sanctity of *Vibhuti* is not generally understood, sweet, thick nectar or honey, or at times, butter, rice grains, or precious stones emerge from the holy

photos, forming a decorative pattern or *Pranava* symbol.

Such Grace is available even to those, who have not seen, heard, or met Baba. Shri J. Gogie, from Shillong, writes, “When flowers are offered at the feet of the photo, *amrit* appears! What a Sai *Leela!*” Shri P. Tshering, from Calcutta, writes, “While my wife was busy cleaning all photographs of Baba for worship, she suddenly saw *Amrit* coming out of the picture of Baba, all over the body.” Dipendra Das of Bhubaneswar writes, “Since the last few days, from the photo of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, some water-marks seem to be appearing. In order to be more confident, I wiped out all those water-marks. To my utmost surprise, two lines of streaming water came down from the knees of the Lord.”

Dr. J. Vighnesam of Berhampur writes, “I have not informed anyone that *Vibhuti* comes from the picture of Baba in my house, but please tell me what I have to do? How am I to worship the picture, hereafter? What are the rules of ceremonial purity to be observed? Food, drink, smoking, etc.?” From Delhi, a telegram arrives, “Honey dropping from Thy Lotus Picture at residence. Pray continue Thy Grace to evoke devotion. H.P. Misra!” At Sonapur Tea Estate, where a *Satsang* or Friendly Rally of the Sai devotees was held, as soon as the party returned from *Nagarasankirtan*, when *Arati* was done, *Vibhuti* and *Amrit* appeared on the picture of Baba. “We were all thrilled, when we realised that Baba was present amidst us,” writes Dr. Barua. “This day, two devotees of Lord Venkateswara joined us in the *Bhajan*. When *Arati* was performed, something fell from the picture of Baba. It was found to be *Sripadarenu*, given to devotees at Tirupati, after the worship offered to Lord Venkateswara there!” writes Sri Muralidharan, the Station Director of All-India Radio, Kohima.

Any sign of Grace, corresponding to individual temperament or to the peculiar predicament, creating the desired impact in awakening a seeker or arousing others towards *Sadhana*, is useful. “Not very long ago, I was almost dead,” wrote Marie to her teacher Hilda Charlton at New York. “Dead, both internally and externally, for I was deeply involved with drugs, mostly heroin. When I managed to give this up, I developed hepatitis and was sick with this disease for quite a while. Then, Marc Scales sent me some of Baba’s Holy Ash from India, which helped to cure me. I was sunk in despair, without a home and seemingly, without a future. But, thanks to Sai Baba, I am really happy now, for I am living at home with my mother and making plans to return to college. Three of my dear friends, who were involved with drugs, have stopped them too. I shudder to think how close to death I was, through over-doses of drugs; I would like to express my gratitude to Baba.”

Pedagottapalem Janakiramaiah had heard of Baba, but was not drawn to Him, as he thought of Him as merely another addition to those large bands of *Sadhus*, with which this country abounds. His God was the idol installed in a temple, 5 miles from his village. This was a *Shivalinga* that had been worshipped for centuries by his forefathers. *Shivaratri* was drawing nearer and the temple celebration was to be held on 15th February. But, while he was busy with the preparations, diphtheria affected him. He had high fever and great pain. There were no facilities for hospitalisation; he could neither swallow food, nor drink. Some kitchen remedies were tried, a few quacks tried their hand, but all was of no avail. On the night of the 13th, he remembered a plaster of Paris bust of Sathya Sai Baba that a relative had brought to the house. He had been told of His miraculous powers. Why not pray to Him? Keeping the little bust by his bed, he gazed at it for long and gradually, fell asleep. In a dream, Baba asked him to drink some water, but Janakiramaiah protested that he could not.

Baba however insisted: his wife appeared with a jug full of water, which he drank down to the last drop. With the last gulp, he awoke; it was 11 p.m. The fever had gone and so had the diphtheria! By the 15th, he was able to carry out all his chores at the temple! With a heart full of gratitude, he wrote to me, requesting directions for the journey to the Nilayam. "He is Shiva; I must fall at His Feet," he wrote.

"It was my third bout of pneumothorax," says Eruch K. Wadia of Madras. "I was advised to consult the doctors of the Victoria Hospital, Bangalore, since I had exhausted all of the other lines of treatment. But, before implementing that advice, I went to Prasanthi Nilayam for Baba's *Darshan*. I prayed to Him from a distance and then, had to come away to consult the doctors. After the consultation was over, the doctor said, 'Who ever told you that you had pneumothorax?' I was sent for a further check-up to the SDS Sanatorium, there I was told, 'Your right lung, the affected one, as you say, is better and stronger than the left. Nothing need be done.'" Says Wadia, "His Blessings cured me completely; *Darshan* is enough."

Holtendour Nicholas had a different type of experience. "Even before I ever saw Baba personally, I had a deep affection for Him; I was working on His portraits; by the time they were completed, I knew I simply had to go to India and see Him. I came to India, reached Puttaparthi three days before the *Dasara* Festival. The Festival itself was full of experiences, but I will not dilate on them. Right after the festival, I had a cold, which grew steadily worse, together with such a high fever that I could not even think straight! The doctor from the hospital, while giving me medicine, exclaimed, 'Sai Ram! Only You can make him healthy!' I heard these words and prayed, 'Baba, give me the chance to do my duty in Europe. I should

not die here, for I can now see clearly that there is work to do.' Suddenly, I saw Baba's eyes and then, the hair around His head; these kept coming and going, something akin to the lights I often see in meditation. At the same time, I heard the *AUM* vibrating all around me. In the morning, I was much better and one of the Westerners, a stranger, came into my room and said, 'Baba was talking of you. He asked me, 'Do you know Nick? (Nick! So, He knew my name) The old man, who sways during the *Bhajans*? Tell him that he had a serious heart-attack last night, but he is now quite safe, for I was with him all night!' My eyes were opened. I understood the vision. All doubts were resolved. Now, I know that Baba will come to us, if we really need Him."

Baba makes His presence felt in a thousand different ways to those in distress. When Dr. Ramakrishna of the Institute of Science, Bangalore, was at Prasanthi Nilayam, he was summoned by a phone call from Hyderabad, at 9-30 p.m. and told that his mother had been removed to hospital in a precarious condition, due to cerebral thrombosis. He managed to communicate this to Baba, even though He had retired for the night. Baba sent the messenger back, "I was at the hospital; she is all right, now; let him have a good night's rest."

Meanwhile, at Hyderabad, about 9 p.m., his father saw her open her eyes and exhibit an interest in her surrounding; so, he anxiously enquired if it was necessary to summon her two sons to her bedside. But, the lady replied, "There is no need; Baba was here, just now and while giving *prasad*, He assured me that I would be quite well." She returned home, quite well, within the next few days!

Baba may indicate His Grace, His Love, in some other manner. Sri K. Dutta Gupta writes, "At Rangia, 30 miles from here, Principal Biren Bardoloi has two small photographs of Baba under the glass of his dressing table. Baba has caused to appear on one of them, in His own hand-writing, the words, "Blessing—Sri Sathya Sai Baba." Sometimes, outlined in *Vibhuti*, He leaves a footprint or two – an indication that He had come or is present.

The mystic, Moister Eckhorth writes, "The Lord told the people, I stand at the door and knock and wait. If any man lets Me in, I will sup with him." You need not look either here, or there. He is always near, make Him dear to see Him vividly in your pure heart. He is the Reality of your being; you exist, so long as He inheres in you. Baba is ever ready to respond to your sincere prayers.

Baba asked the Sitaramans from London why they had retired for the night, leaving the gas flame alight with a container of oil upon the stove. "What would have happened, if I had not

turned the gas off?” He asked. R.G. Gholap writes from Nandurbar, Maharashtra, “At about 4-15 a.m., I heard a voice asking me to wake up. I heard it thrice, but I said to myself, what will I do getting up so early? A moment later, I heard, 'At least open your eyes and see!' Most unwillingly, I opened them and what did I see? A thief! As soon as I raised alarm, he ran away! Who had aroused me, I wondered. Then, I saw a trail of *Vibhuti* from my room to the outside veranda. I knew it was Baba.”

From Coorg, C.M. Appiah writes, “The electric current had failed; so it was a dark fortnight in August. Kumar finished his frugal supper and went to bed; he was living in a dilapidated building. Lighting a candle and a stick of *agarbathi* (incense), he placed them near Baba’s picture while singing some *Bhajan* songs. Then, he slept. The wind howled and the rain fell in torrents. Suddenly, there was a whisper in his ear, ‘Kumar run!’ Opening the door, he ran out in the dark. As soon as he reached the road, he heard a loud thud. The house had collapsed! In the morning, he found the only undamaged item amid the ruins was the picture of Baba framed in glass!”

One day, Sethumadhavan Nair received a letter written in blood, with the skull and crossbones, which the naxalities parade on their note paper. The letter said, “Stop the *Bhajans*, for you are only cheating and bluffing people. If you do not stop within seven days of the receipt of this warning, your head will be chopped off.” The devotee knew of only one armour against such threats—the name of Baba! Without any fear, he continued the *Bhajans* during the next days and nights. Enraged by this, the letter writer was now determined to carry through his dastardly plot and so, at dawn on the eighth day, he stealthily approached the house and peeped through an open window. Nair was quietly washing his hands at the bathroom tap. Filled with hate and violence, the writer aimed, swung, and threw a heavy chopper at the unsuspecting victim! But, Baba is ever-present, everywhere. All Nair could say later was that a sudden whirlwind of orange-red flashed before him, while a gentle hand held and pushed him into a corner of the room. He heard the weapon clatter to the floor and the sound of fast running footsteps, as the naxalite made good his escape.

Hearing the noise, Nair’s wife and family friend, who had been repeating '*om*', rushed into the room to find it filled with a strange fragrance and air covered with *Vibhuti*. He was unable to speak immediately, but they knew it was the Naxalite chopper and the omnipresent Saviour.

On another occasion, Group Captain Bose, driving with his wife and father-in-law from Ambala to Gauhati in a high powered car with low clearance, was unable to move on the

slushy road near Hariharganj. The entire area was dangerously flooded by serpentine heavy rains; the road was a lake. The back wheels of the car sank completely into the mud, while up front, one wheel was stuck in a ditch! At that late hour of 11-30p.m., no help was available, nor would it have been of much avail, since all efforts to free her only succeeded in making her sink deeper.

The occupants were able to procure shelter in a nearby school and slept on bare benches, at night. Mrs. Bose felt that Baba had spared them a long and hazardous journey, driving through the night, but her husband was determined to reach Gauhati, where he had to preside over a court-martial. "Duty is God. Work is Worship," he quoted Baba.

When dawn broke, no passing car or truck would agree to help, nor would the small crowd of amused villagers lift a finger! Their enjoyment of the pitiable spectacle only fanned the flames of despair. Unfortunately, Mr. Bose had a little bit of ego left in him; he decided to rely on horse power, rather than Sai Power! Ropes were procured, but the car would not move; the engine was restarted, but she only sank further into the slush. Eventually, an exhausted Bose flopped to the ground, saying, "The Lotus Feet of Baba is our only refuge." Almost immediately, a gentle looking man with a strong physique came towards them. No one seemed to recognise him, nor could they guess his whereabouts. Handing his umbrella to Mrs. Bose, he became master of the situation. Bose was asked to get into the car and take the wheel—a sweet fragrance flooded the interior, but before the engine could be switched on, gaping crowd could offer assistance. Mrs. Bose saw the man put his right hand under the bumper and with one lift, he placed the car forward upon hard ground, all wheels safe out of the awful mire. Then, all the occupants were requested to get into the car! Puzzled, they tried to thank him and to ask who and what he was. "Oh, I am a *Chowkidar* (watchman)," he said and walked away. Disengaging itself from the now vociferous crowd, the car moved away and soon caught up with the man, walking briskly down the road. Bose begged the man to accept something, but he refused. Then, He spoke one sentence, "Why did you not call for Me, last night itself?" The Lotus Feet had indeed come to them!

This incident illustrates clearly, how necessary it is to devalue the 'ego', the little personal 'i' and to recognise that the God of our prayers, our aspirations, and highest hopes is embodied in this 'tiny' human frame of Baba. What, after all, constitutes a true 'man'? Only he, who looks up to God and submits completely, giving up all he has, including the little, personal ego, who is perfectly detached, who knows the mystery of God as Man and Man as God! On two occasions, forest fires raged around the farm of Indra Devi at Tecate, on the Mexican

Border. In the first instance, they roared around the Sai Nilayam, where *Sadhakas* have a retreat, consuming trucks and tents, coating the walls with soot, but the inmates ran up a hill; the shrine room itself was left sweet and fresh as ever. On the second occasion, Indra Devi was at home and ran into the prayer room, trusting Baba. The flames rolled back! When next she was in India, Baba gave her, as an expression of His Compassion, a figurine, saying, "No more fires!"

Muralidharan, Station Director of All-India Radio, was with Baba during his tour of Kerala and tape recorded His speeches and *Bhajans*, without omitting a syllable or a note. From these tapes, a newsreel programme was prepared, depicting the ceremony when Baba laid the foundation stone for the Hospital for children, in my native village of Trippunittura, when the Health Minister, Wellington, presided.

He played that reel and felt happy, remembering that Baba, in His speech at the Town Hall, Ernakulam, had promised to tour Kerala again, after *Shivaratri*. He had assured them that He would tour from Cannanore to Trivandrum and stay longer in each place. When a friend came to his office a week later, Muralidharan chanced to communicate to him the good news. Muralidharan said that, if Baba would not fulfil His assurance, he would take the tape containing His promise to Puttaparthi, play it back to Baba, and 'challenge' Him.

The friend was thrilled by the confident tone of Muralidharan; he wanted to hear the assurance in Baba's own voice and the tape was replayed for his benefit. Wonder of wonders: those sentences were not recorded on that tape! The Telugu sentences spoken by Baba and the simultaneous Malayalam translations of the assurance, spoken by me, were not there! And to make the miracle complete, there was no gap either!

It was *Basant Panchami*, but the people concerned did not know this was so. They motored to Lakhimpur to catch a plane to Gauhati, then on to Calcutta, Madras, and Bangalore – and finally, by car to Baba's Feet! Their hearts were burdened by a sorrow, which only He could lighten. While at the airport, they received a phone message from home. It was a Minister of the Government of Nagaland that was speaking. "What have you done to the picture of Baba in our room?" "Why, nothing at all! What has happened?" "You have pasted some red thread and a tassel on to the place, where His left wrist is." "What? I never did anything of the sort! Leave it as it is." "It has grown on the glass and it must have some meaning – He won't do anything without some significance, anyhow I shall..." "The thread is on the picture, not on the glass—underneath the glass—do you understand?" "Ah! I shall keep that in mind." It was

his wife, who said it.

“My hands and feet are everywhere,” He says in the *Gita*. When He has decided to confer joy, then nothing can stop Him.

Beethoven has written in his own hand, on a piece of paper preserved in the Royal College of Music, London, some seminal ideas of his; it includes the following about God. When we think about Baba, these lines strike us as singularly appropriate: “From what we are able to perceive in His works, we conclude that He is eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.”

Baba wrote in a letter to a member of the Governing Body of a College, “Sai *Sankalpa* is *Vajrasankalpa*.” (The Will of Sai is irresistible, like the thunderbolt. It can never miss aim.) It is irrevocable, inexpugible, and infallible. “There is nothing I desire for myself; I strive, I desire, I work only for ensuring and developing the welfare of humanity.”

Sri Laksh Kumar has had a brilliant academic career, having taken his Master’s Degree in three subjects! He is at present the Divisional Inspector of Schools, in the North East Frontier Agency, now named Arunachal Pradesh. One day, the mail brought him three books concerning Baba: “The Life of Baba,” “A Lecture given by Him to the Students,” and “A Collection of His Sayings.” He had heard about Baba and read an article published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, but was not impressed by the portrait, which appeared alongside. He felt the article was not worth reading. Nevertheless, he kept the books among the Sanskrit volumes on his shelf.

While at college, Laksh Kumar developed the habit of rising at midnight to read a favourite book, until about 3 or 4 a.m., before turning in for another bout of sleep. But, why of all books was he now trying to master the ancient Sanskrit grammar, the *Ashtadhyayi* (Eight Chapters) of Panini? “Panini is,” he said, “an absorbing and fascinating writer.” Feeling his works to be the most celebrated on linguistics, he would sit far into the night, in the quiet of his NEFA bungalow, absorbed in this scholastic work. One night, struck by an unnegotiable corner in the grammatical maze, he closed his eyes in order to concentrate. When he opened them, Baba was sitting in the chair next to him, in a red, flowing garment, with an enchanting smile!

“I did not feel fear or surprise, as must happen under such circumstances, when a stranger suddenly appears at dead of night, while you are poring silently over a book! I felt at ease and very much assured. Before I could ask Him who He was, I heard His sweet low voice

speaking, reassuringly, 'Do not be afraid that I am with you.' He repeated the statement twice, but the question still remained. 'Who was He?' Before I could speak, he said, 'I sent you some books.'

Now, I knew it was Baba. I replied, 'Yes. I have received some books,' and would have continued, but He cut me short and said, 'Read them!' I said, 'There is nothing in them; they are trash. There is nothing in them for me.' But, Baba persisted and He spoke with sweet persuasiveness, as friend, with no trace of bitterness, 'Still, there will be something worthwhile! At least read them once!' He smiled a smile that I can never forget.”

Look at the depth of Baba’s love in sending books, pursuing the process of transformation of the recipient by going Himself, and despite his callous cynicism, urging him not to lose the chance of saving himself.

In a recorded interview with Dr. M.V.N. Murthy, Ph.D., Kumar continues, “Then, I felt it was wrong on my part to damn them as trash, before the very person, who had sent them, without a proper reading. I said, 'I shall read them,' and getting up, went into the inner room to fetch them. When I returned, He was gone. I always try to keep my promises, so though this promise was made to a strange visitor, who came to me in strange circumstances, I felt it my duty to read the books. I was, till then, interested only in philosophy, Eastern and Western, and not in ritual or in the lives of religious leaders as such; but, I found those books explaining all the great truths of the *Upanishads* and other philosophical tenets of East and West, in a very simple, sublime manner. Whereas I found in other philosophical books mere words, Baba’s books and Utterances touched me, because they sprang from an eternal experience of the soul and encouraged me to reach those heights myself.

Ten days later, when I was up against another passage in Panini, at about the same hour of night and had closed my eyes to concentrate, Baba came again! He sat in the same chair, quite close to me. 'I know you have read those books,' He declared. I said, echoing Him, 'Yes, I have read the books.' 'I am quite sure you have liked them, I knew you would like them,' He said in a voice of assurance. 'If you read them, you will surely like them,' He repeated.

His voice was full of love and benediction. I must confess that I have never heard such a sweet voice. Then, Baba said, 'Now, why do you not translate them?' I said, 'That would be very difficult.' Baba repeated the statement, 'Yes, it will be difficult, but I am sure you will do it.' So, I rose and went into the inner room to fetch the books and some paper. Again, He had left by the time I returned. Translate, I did not ask Him, into which language – Hindi or Adi?

I was sure He must have meant Adi, the language of the tribal area. So, I started to work without intermission.

Two weeks later, while struggling for a proper word in Adi for an abstract idea found in the book, Adi being not a language to suit the exposition of abstract ideas – and while absorbed in weighing one term against a few others, Baba came again. This was around midnight. It was the same blissful voice, which I loved to hear. He spoke to me from the chair beside mine, 'You have started translating them?'

I raised my head and saw Him in His full glory. I replied, 'I cannot do it; I am not satisfied; it is very difficult.' But, Baba said, 'You can do it very well. Why should you shirk? Anything that is worth doing will of course be difficult. You can do it, you have done it.' Then, He disappeared.

I was much encouraged by this; I finished the translation and decided that I should read it to some Adi speaking friends and villagers, in order to find out whether it was worthwhile. Meanwhile, I found that Baba's three visits and His *Darshan* and *Sambhashan* had transformed me. My attitude towards my work and my subordinates changed. Formerly, I used to get angry and punished people. Now, I appreciate the difficulties of other people and try to help and sympathise with them. I have become meek; the 'i' in me does not assert as much as it used to do. So, I can now declare that while I translated the books of Baba, Baba succeeded in bringing out the best in me."

Grammar is as much Baba's province as any other discipline. You can reach God, the perfect Grammarian, through grammar. As Laksh Kumar pointed out, his study of Panini's works and the translations were both blessed by Baba, who became his *Guru*. Kumar was gently guided through all the eight stages that make up the study of Panini, by Baba, whenever he called upon Him; all the complicated passages were expounded. "I can explain any *Sutra* from any section of the book, in all the eight forms and so can my three children, ranging in age from thirteen to seven!" says Laksh Kumar, now!

Baba is love and it is His Love that prompts Him to select instruments, so that they may feel a sense of participation in the fulfilment of His Mission.

Mr. Tidemann from Norway was told, "You need not look for a Guru anymore; from now on, I will guide you." A disciple of Indra Devi spoke to Baba about the "waves of ecstasy" he experienced, during meditation at Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba told him they were "sample experiences" granted by Him, to make him proceed with confidence. Baba imparts courage,

confidence, counsel, and consolation to all, who yearn. “Be careful what you ask of Me, for I grant what you seek!” Why stand under the heavenly *Kalpavrksha* (wish-fulfilling tree) and ask for the gift of a paltry, petty article? He knows what is good for us. Therefore, He, of His own accord, gives whatever we need or desire. So, it is best for us not to try to interfere with His plan for our destiny.

Mr. Bhatia had three daughters; Baba said, “You will have a son soon,” and so it came to pass, although the pregnancy dragged on well beyond the normal range of nine months, leading to considerable anxiety on the part of the doctors and the anxious father. Baba had declared that the child would be born on the day He arrived in Bombay – leaving everyone more confused than ever! But, during the 13th month, a son was born and Bhatia hurried to the home of the Hon’ble P.K. Sawant, where he was told that he had gone to receive Baba at the limits of Greater Bombay!

His will always prevails. Recently, a sapphire ring was given to Arnold Schulman, the author of the book “Sai Baba”. He was reluctant to accept it, as he thought that such a valuable ring might cause trouble with the Customs at San Francisco; Baba said, “I shall look to it.” The official proclaimed it as “worthless” upon examination. Yet, appraisers later valued it at 125 dollars!

Containers of *Vibhuti*, given with the assurance that they will refill as quickly as they are emptied, refill themselves with alacrity! A Divine *Leela*, usually called a miracle, is supposed to point out that all that we see is nothing else but an object—portion of *Atma* (Consciousness). It is not an exhibition, but is always fraught with profound significance, calculated to bear witness to the advent of the Divinity in the human frame of Baba. It arouses awe and reverence, deepens loyalty, and serves as an eye-opener, removing the fog of pride. The so-called sophisticated civilization has polluted the mind of man completely and helped him to cultivate a lust for power and possessions, deluding him in the belief that happiness lies in their attainment and thereby, leading him to moral and physical degradation.

He has come to disinfect and correct, instilling faith and fearlessness among the wise and the discriminating, so that He may have sappers and miners for His campaign against evil. As Murphet writes, “They build our faith and help us to work with new zeal towards the production of a divine edition of themselves. And this is accomplished not only through the great inspiration of the living examples before us, but also through the silent transforming ray that emanates from the Divine One.”

One *Leela*, for example, has all the value for the person privileged to witness, like the *Viswarupa darshana* (witnessing Krishna as All) vouchsafed by Lord Krishna in the battlefield to Arjuna. One day at Prasanthi Nilayam, while walking with Dr. Y.J. Rao, M.Sc., Ph.D., a Professor of geology, Baba picked up a piece of broken granite, the size of a fist and turning to the doctor, asked him what it contained. Happy that he could reel off his pet technical jargon, he gave the right petrological answers. But, Baba persisted and wanted that he should go deeper into its composition. He was prepared for that question, too and he spoke of atoms, chemical formulae, electrons, protons, mesons, and the rest of the scientific abracadabra. Baba stopped him. He said, “No, deeper still!” Rao was at the end of the technical tether! So, Baba took the rock from the hands of the geologist and blew on it. It became a beautiful idol of Lord Krishna, playing the flute. The colour was slightly bluish; the structure had undergone slight modifications to suit the curves of stance. “See! God is in the rock! You geologists have to be conscious of that; nothing exists without God, apart from God.”

Every *Leela* of Baba is a lesson in spiritual discipline and science. He chides and the chiding strikes a hidden spring of awareness and adoration.

There was a person, who worshipped Baba at home, reciting the 108 Names and on Thursdays, the 1008 Names. At the end of the rite, he fell flat on the ground in front of the picture, imagining that he was clasping with both hands the Lotus Feet of Baba standing before him. There was a gap between his palms, where he imagined the Feet to be! Tears would well up in his eyes, while he enjoyed the thrill of that fancy. Later, when he came to Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba granted him a private interview. “Just look at My Feet as I stand before you! Take note of the width of space I require to place both feet comfortably on the ground. Your palms do not open wide enough; so, I have to keep My feet cramped between them, every time you want me. Keep them a bit wider!”

There is no prayer that He does not hear, no sign that is not recorded in His heart, no tear that He dismissed as unworthy of attention. He is the nearest kinsman, the closest friend, the wisest guide, the fondest mother, the very breath of our being.

He is present in this very moment on all the roads, behind every fast moving vehicle or often with it, ready with His warning and loving Hand to avert calamity. “Driving from Colchester to London, on the afternoon of the 22nd September, my son asked me to lower his seat as he wished to recline. This I did and a truck stopped still in front of the car, almost suddenly and

we ran into it. The steering wheel was completely bent and the car extensively damaged in the front! Neither my son, nor I received a scratch. Baba had asked him to recline! We had the sacred *Vibhuti* with us and were reciting the Lord's name. We bow down to our beloved Lord, who intervened," writes Shri V. Krishnamurthi.

Professor G.B. Pillai gives an account of some interest, of his journey from Trivandrum to Madras with his son. The family had known about Baba since 1961 and had become ardent devotees. While proceeding towards Madurai on 23rd December, 1969, a tremendous downpour of rain mercilessly lashed the train. Alarming reports of the Pamban Bridge having been washed away reached us, so the train was halted at Madurai for three hours, but eventually it was decided that it should proceed. By then, it was 9-30 p.m. and the Pillais, together with Dr. C. K. Gopi, who was in the same compartment, decided to retire for the night.

Suddenly, the lights went out and there was a loud explosion. The coach itself started to tumble into an abyss, while the debris of the compartment fell upon the unfortunate occupants. Professor Pillai was dropped into the roaring river waters below, pinned down by debris – he felt himself gradually suffocating. "Where was my son? I thought of my wife and daughters and cried out, 'Baba, Baba, save me – save my child!'"

So it happened. Suddenly, the waters seemed to recede and the debris were washed away. "I could feel the ground under my feet. My head was reeling, my voice was hoarse, my clothes were washed away. I called out to my son and he answered!"

"Baba had watched over us!" Dr. Gopi, who was also saved, rendered medical aid, for sand and mud had almost choked the Professor. Later, he had to fight for his life against an attack of pneumonia, but Baba's Grace helped him to recover completely.

Most letters to the author start saying, "Another miracle has happened!" "Susan, who was miraculously saved by Baba from suicide, had a son, Kevin, who survived brain surgery as a child, but was left totally blind in one eye. Each night, Susan used to place a little *Vibhuti* in this eye. Finally, when the child's eye was examined, it was found that sight had returned to it—even if he were to lose the sight in his good eye, he could see objects and get around with the vision in his blind eye." This is from a letter from Santa Barbara, on the Pacific Coast of America.

Nearly years ago, arriving one morning at the Nilayam, I found a group of young men from a Bangalore college, praying to Baba to take them to the top of the hill on the left bank of the

Chitravati river. They hoped that once there, Baba would take from the famous tamarind tree, fruits of different species. I too joined in the appeal, but Baba was determinedly silent for a while, then said sharply, “Do I require that particular tree? Any tree can do.” We were filled with hope. He would give us fruit from another tree and make that immortal! But, He said, “Why do you think I want a tree? Sand is good enough.” That meant He would give us something from the river bed! We were soon disillusioned! “Do I need the sands of a river bed? Is not any sand equally good?”

Since the building work was in progress at the Nilayam, truckloads of sand had been heaped to one side. “We shall sit on this heap itself, *Swami!*” I said. “Do you think that the creation of something out of sand is the only miracle? Is sand so essential?” We did not know what to say—we had to be satisfied by the miracle, creation of *Vibhuti* by the mere wave of a hand. “Should I create something, so that you can see a miracle? Is not your existence itself a miracle of Mine?” He asked. Then, He rose and walked away, leaving us aghast at the revelation of His being the Trinity, of His being the Incarnation of the One Universal God.

Every miracle of Baba is a gift of Grace. It may be a pinch of sacred ash, a piece of candy, or a picture created before us; it may be a shower of ash, the emergence of *Kumkum*, fragrant sandal, or nectarine honey on a picture, an *Om* in ash on the floor, a continuous flow of scented oil, or *amrith* from a *linga* or locket. It may also be a series of paper slips, on which counsel or warnings are written in the language you understand, that come from His hands in the portraits you worship. It may be given to you while you are awake, asleep, or dreaming – or come to you as a book or as parcel through the post, in reply for an order that you may not have placed. It may be a vision of Himself, subtle, substantial, momentary or more lasting, but always, it is a sign of His Love and Majesty.

The more you want, the more He gives; the more He gives, the more you grow; the nearer you approach Him, the closer do you approximate to Him. “Come with empty hands,” Baba says. Throw away all the things that you hold in the grasp of your hand; cast away the toys, with which you have been playing the game of gaining and losing, gathering and scattering. Baba delights in giving. He does not relish being adored or admired, because our praise does not add anything to His Glory and criticism cannot minus it either. He delights in filling empty hands with lasting sweetness; empty hearts with lasting joy; empty lives with salutary substance; empty reeds with His melodious breath.

Each gift prepares us afresh to receive yet another, for nothing is given without significance—

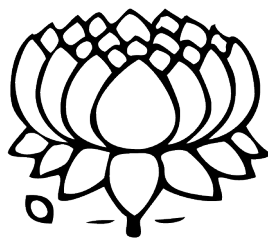
it is to facilitate us to go forward in our search for Truth. He is not rendered less by giving; our capacity for receiving is boundless, too. So, *Manava* (man) negates and needs, hungers and receives, and thus, becomes ultimately *Madhava*, God Himself.

While addressing an audience of Sai Devotees, Dr. Bhagawantham recently said that, about a decade back, good photos of Bhagawan in colour were not available. Therefore, his son prayed to Baba for a picture. His son's prayers were spontaneously answered as *Bhagawan* materialised a *Lingam* and gave it. This is a pointer, revealing the inner core of the Reality or the Real.

Once, a few devotees were sitting with Baba at the foot of a mountain and Baba held a few pebbles in His hand and threw them towards a devotee, converting these into sugar candy. At this, the devotee enquired from Baba that, if He could instantly convert those stones into sugar candy, could He not transform the entire mountain in front of them into sugar candy? Baba replied, "It can be done, but why unnecessarily interfere with its nature?"

In fact, no material or movement is necessary to materialise anything for Him. His Will (*Sankalpa*) is supreme. On one occasion, Baba was talking on spiritual matters to a devotee and all of a sudden, the devotee found on his lap a red apple. The devotee was astonished and Baba told him, "Didn't you say, earlier on, that you did not have any breakfast? Eat it now, for you will be having your lunch only after a couple of hours." This was accomplished without any transformation of any material, or without any wave of the hand.

"Get detached from the transitory pleasure; boldly attach yourself with the One, peerless and perennial, remaining in a serene state of Blissful Awareness," says Baba.





Chapter 13

So Kind! So Kind!

Sai Baba! Sai Baba! So kind! So kind!

He is our mother, sister, and brother –

All in One!

He is the earth, air, and water,

Moon and Sun

Sai Baba, Sai Baba, So kind! So kind!

He is the all we shall ever be –

That we have ever been –

We are here today and tomorrow,

So that He can help us see!

Sai Baba! Sai Baba! So kind! So kind!!

Two conferences were held in Prasanthi Nilayam, during 1970—the *Seva Dal* Conference in October, during the *Dasara* celebrations and the All India conference of office bearers of the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, in November, during the Birthday celebrations. Both contributed much to stabilise and spread the Mission and Message of Baba. Just as all rivers automatically incline towards the ocean, all individuals, for their self-improvement, should voluntarily co-operate with others, breaking the shackles of individuality and reaching the goal of spiritual unity: this is the plan of action designed by Baba for the individual to merge in the Universal. He considers the one seeker, avoiding fellow-men and involvement in society, as a poor *Sadhaka*. A single drop of water gets evaporated soon. It cannot reach the sea, from which it was raised by the rays of the sun, unless it moves with its kith and kin,

joining a rivulet, entering a stream, falling into a river, and flowing on. Baba says, “Do not consider society a trap, a trick, or a tantalising contraption. *Premayoga*, Path of Love insists upon service to fellow-beings as the best *Sadhana*.”

“Service is the natural expression of a person, who has realised that I and He are One, that there is no distinction between That and This, Creator and Creation, Energy and Matter. This Unity of all in the One is the philosophical basis for the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would be done by.'”

“*Prema*, Love is My distinctive mark, not the creation of material objects, or the granting of health and happiness by exercise of Will. You consider what you label ‘Miracles’ as the sign of the Divine. But, the *Prema* that welcomes you all, that rushes Me to the presence of those who seek God, of those who suffer from handicaps on the pilgrim route, where they are, is the real Sign. Fill every act with Love. Let no one suffer the slightest pain as a result of your thought, word, or deed. Let this be your *Sadhana*, for you are all; you injure yourself, when you injure another. You are Sai and all, too, are Sai. How can the hand pluck out the eye of the body, to which it belongs? I have come to light the Lamp of Love in your hearts, so that you can, with that Light, see Sai in everyone.”

Inaugurating the Conference of the All-India Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, Baba said, “Feel that everyone is *Thryambakam*, three-eyed, manifesting as Will-Work-Wisdom, Doer-Duty-Deed, Strength-Sweetness-Light. Feel the God in them and offer whatever service you can with discriminating skill, with no fear of compulsion and no thought of compensation. You need wear no uniform, nor parade a badge. A person in distress need not plead for help. Since it is your nature to give and forgive, look into his eyes with compassion and lend him the hand of a brother. Love is borne in the womb of *Seva*; Love grows through *Seva*; God is Love: Love is God. This is the truth I have come to teach. Scatter the seeds of love in dreary hearts and these will sprout into blossoms of Love, which will fill the air with fragrance; when drops of Love are rained, the river of Love will murmur ecstatically through the vales and every child, bird, beast, and pebble will sing the song of Love.” The 700 young men and women, who heard Him that day, were spell-bound by the Love-charged message of Baba.

An American *Sadhaka*, summarising the mood, declared, “Let us become dedicated workers imbued with the Sai Spirit. Let us become practitioners of *Yoga*, the union of the Individual with the Divine.” Reports were read before the Conference of the work being done by the Service Units in various districts and the Conveners of Sub-committees placed their

recommendations for consideration. Sri Nakul Sen, I.C.S., reminded the Dals of the spiritual ideal of Seva.

Baba insisted that every *Seva Dal* member must have a good grounding in *Dhyana* and an unquenchable avidity for *Japam*. “Without being at peace with yourselves, you cannot be at peace with others. And, is not peace the greatest of gifts, the most precious of possessions?” He asked. Baba said that, the Sub-committees have listed a variety of items of service, which the *Dal* can take up – the donation of blood, literacy classes, slum clearings, cleaning the premises of temples, *bhajans* in jails, classes in remand homes, visits to in-patient wards in hospitals, first-aid, firefighting, assisting passengers alighting from trains in pilgrims' centres, etc. “Each such activity must be undertaken with the conviction that you are serving Sai in all Forms.”

Perhaps, at this stage, it is best to quote from a letter written by Hilda Charlton, “Baba told me – walk this earth with your head held high, your spirits soaring, your heart open to Love. Believe in yourself and in God within you. Then, all will go well. Wherever you look, I am there. Wherever you walk, I am there. Whomsoever you contact, I am in that person. I am in each. From each, I will respond. You cannot see Me in one place and miss Me in another! For, I fill all space. You cannot escape Me, or do anything in secret, for there are no secrets with Me or from Me. Live in perfect accordance with My Laws and wonders will ensue!” This was the clarion call that echoed in every young heart, during the Conference.

The 700 stayed on for *Dasara* and so, had a practical course of instruction from the Master Himself. During the evening gatherings, He spoke about the Self, its Unity, and the Identity of all selves. “Today, every school boy knows about the sun, the moon, the stars, and even the outermost regions of space. But, not even the most encyclopaedic scholar knows the answer to the very elementary query: 'Who or what am I?' ‘I’ is the most frequently used word, it recurs many times in conversation. I saw, I went, I heard, I have a cold, I am a pilot, I am angry, I hate it, I am tall – who is this ‘I’ that has these attributes, these possessions? The *Upanishads* declare that the ‘I’ is not the personalised individual; it is not limited to the body, which it inhabits or operates. It is the most universal of categories, the eternal absolute, the *Paramatma*, it is the omnipresent Universal Consciousness, the *Sath-Chit-Ananda*.” Baba spoke another day in great detail about *Sath-Chit-Ananda*, “There are three desires or urges, which every ‘I’ has to fulfil: (1) I must live. This is the prompting from the core of Immortality, *Sath*. (2) I must know. This is the reminiscence of the omniscience, of which the ‘I’ is a spark. (3) I must be happy. This is the evidence of the *Ananda*, which is innate in the

individual.”

The day after *Vijayadashami*, when the devotees were leaving, Baba told them, “I eat as you do, move about as you do, I talk in your language, and behave as you can understand for your sake, not for My sake. I direct you towards the Divine, winning your confidence, your love, and your loyalty by being among you, as one of you. My aim is to transmute you into spiritual aspirants, so as to enable you to know your true being, becoming aware of the Truth of the Universe, which is but a projection of your own Truth. I am the inner spring in all that moves and exists. I am the energy, the power that propels and impels. I am the knower, the known, and the knowledge. But, I do not display capriciously or confound you. I am an example, an inspiration, an instruction. My Life is a commentary on this message.”

Birthday Celebrations, 1970! Baba directed the Office bearers of the Sai Seva Organisations to assist devotees to organise efficiently, *Bala Vikas*, *Seva Dal*, *Mahila Vibhag*, Study circles, *Bhajan* groups, and *Nagarasankirtan*.

Baba said, “This Organisation has spread far and wide. About 3,000 people participated in the Conference, although only the presidents and the secretaries were invited and no proxy attendance was permitted. Select your path after mature deliberation, then adhere to it to reach the goal. The Sathya Sai Organisation is established to translate the principles of Love and Non-Violence into daily practice. It also promotes inquiry into four basic problems! The Body, What is it? *Deham*. (The Body) Am I it? *Naham*. (No) Then, who am I? (*Koham*) And finally, is this That? Are This and That separate and distinct? The correct answer given by the sages is *Soham*. (That is I) I am That. Instead of identifying yourself with the perishable body and the fleeting mind, know yourself to be a witness to the passing show.”

All religions recommend Love and Nonviolence and encourage this inquiry. The Sai Organisation has to work with persons of all faiths. “If you have love in you, you will be welcomed by all men, everywhere. I have come for ensuring *Lokasangraha* (promotion of the Welfare and Happiness of the entire world) and so, when you live in concord, then there will be no discord and your activity will certainly please Me.” On the final day of the Conference, Baba had with Him a list of questions from the delegates. He spent about two hours elaborating the answers. What is the nature of the mind? How did creation come into being? How can service to others become *Sadhana*? What name is best for *Japam*? Which *Yoga* can take us quickest to God? Are classes in Meditation necessary? How far can a Muslim Office-Bearer share in *Bhajans*? Baba said that, no person should act against his conviction; that

would be hypocrisy, which is a sin against God.

Premayoga would lead man Godward. No one can train another in meditation, or claim so to train! It is a function of the mind. God is one, without a second. He does not change, He is not affected, when the Name, by which you adore Him, is changed. Service removes the veil of the illusion of manifoldness. Sleep causes dreams; *Maya*, the deluding power of the Divine, causes the apparent multiplicity. The mind is a bundle of desires that has formed itself around the ego. Resolve to achieve success in the *Sadhana* of *Japam* and *Dhyana*, *Bhajan* and service. Be an example to others in these matters; that is the way to inspire and lead.

With a rambling, rampant ego, you have to keep your mind balanced. You should not yield to emotion or passion. The attachment to the senses and the sensory world must be transmuted into attachment to the Lord, so that the sweetness of Bliss may fill the heart.

"The conviction that I am everyone and watching everything must keep you on the straight path of *Sadhana*, through service and study. I would like every active member of these Organisations to bubble with joy at the work ahead. Love, respect, tolerance, mutual co-operation, forbearance, these must flow from the hearts of all towards all. You are all limbs of one body—the Sai Body."

No wonder the devotees from across the seas were caught in the mood of Divine Adoration and sang in chorus, during the Dasara Festival:

“Sai Baba! Sai Baba! So kind! So kind!

He is our mother, sister, and brother –

All in one!

He is the earth, air, and water, Moon and Sun,

Sai Baba, Sai Baba, So kind! So kind!

He is the all we shall ever be–

That we have ever been–

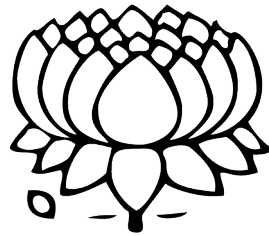
We are here today and tomorrow,

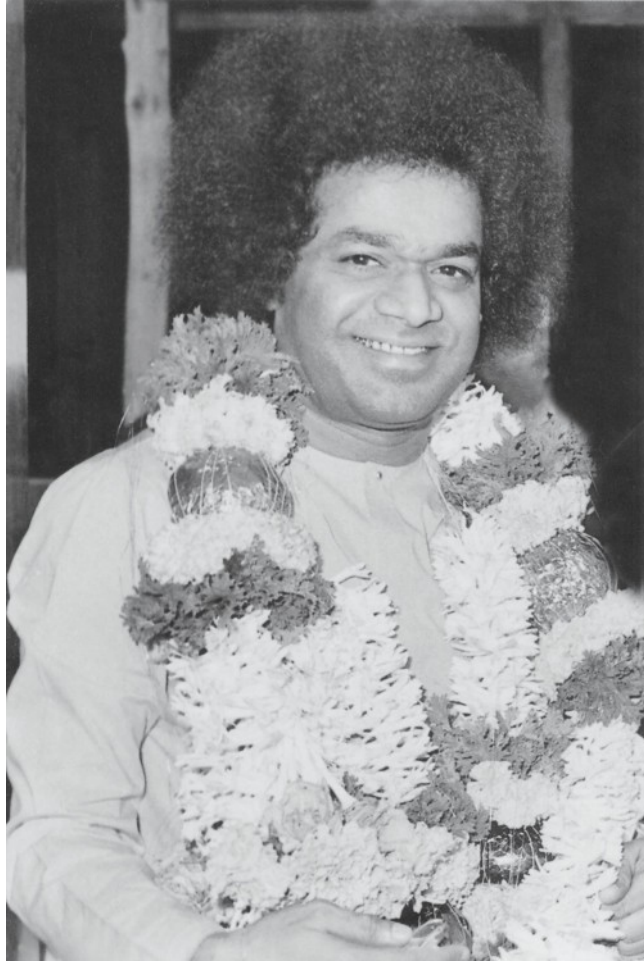
So that He can help us see!

Sai Baba! Sai Baba! So kind! So kind!!”

Sadhana, according to Baba, helps to discover the Inner Reality of our being, which appears to be encased in subtle and gross elements. Although we are under the spell of these elements, the *Avatar* is beyond them and controls them. Our descent commences, when we identify ourselves with these elements and believe in the obvious frivolity of difference. These elements have to be pierced, through *Viveka* (discrimination), *Vairagya* (detachment), and *Vichara* (enquiry), in order to lift ourselves from the plane of animality. Sometimes, this process lands us into the most deep-rooted false-hood, the Ego (the *Ahamkara*), which is the last hurdle keeping us away from the awareness of God. With a mind withdrawn from without and steadied in silence, it can be conquered.

Soon after the Birthday Festival was over, Baba went to Bangalore and stayed at *Brindavan*. What happened in the month of December is an epic in itself.







Chapter 14

The Miraculous Appendix

For us, who adore Baba, and for all man-kind, who are deriving the benefit of this Advent (Whether they acknowledge it or not), it was a great day, the 10th December. Baba was here with His majesty, magnificence, and munificence, not only unimpaired, but enhanced as a result of the world becoming aware of the deeper aspects of His mission.

Dear Sri Kasturi! Your telegram, cancelling your promised visit to Ceylon, has helped to render our faith in Baba firmer than before—This was not a particularly polite reply to receive from a Secretary of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti. Baba had permitted me to accept an invitation to visit Ceylon, on a Sai Pilgrimage, meeting devotees in villages and towns, to share experience and delight. My passage was booked by rail and plane; so, with my bag and portmanteaus, I went to Whitefield to take leave of Baba and to receive His Blessings. The Mail train for Madras, from where I had to emplane, was leaving Bangalore within an hour. When I touched the Lotus Feet, Baba asked me, “Where are you going?” I said that, I was on my way to Ceylon. He said, “Why Ceylon? Send them a telegram, cancelling your visit and come with Me to Goa, tomorrow.”

That was the telegram, which placed the faith of Sai devotees in Ceylon upon unshakable basis! Later, Sri Tyagarajiah, the Secretary, set my mind at rest, explaining the cryptic comment. Dr. Nallainathan, the President of the *Samitis*, had read out my first letter, accepting the ten-day schedule, before a large gathering of devotees and when he finished, he did a very Dr. Nallainathan-like thing. He heard himself say, “Of course, Mr. Kasturi has very kindly agreed to come and be with us for ten days. But, listen, he may not come at all! There is many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip. At the very last moment, we may get a telegram, cancelling his visit.” Six days later, the telegram arrived! And Ceylon knew that it

was Baba, who had persuaded Dr. Nallainathan to utter those words that day, for He shapes the future, recasting His projects plan. When we cannot predict about our own selves, how can we predict about Baba? He says that, no one knows what He is going to do in the next five minutes; therefore, we must learn to remain content, witnessing the Divine play.

At noon, the next day, I accompanied Baba on a circuitous journey to Goa. The three cars moved towards Jog Falls. The party included three lady devotees from the United States, June Schuyler, who describes herself as a simple, middle-aged teacher of young children; Indra Devi, celebrated as the 'First Lady of *Yoga* in America', and Mrs. Rajagopalan, an Italian living in the United States with her Indian husband. As usual, while leaving Brindavan, devotees lined up on both sides of the road, anxious to get a glimpse of Baba and to see the Hand that waves out of the window, until a turn makes it impossible to fill the eye with it. The afternoon was quiet and bright. "As the cars entered the tranquillity of the vast countryside," writes June, "my mind was jumbled with a feeling of incredulousness! For many years, peace of any kind seemed an unlikely prospect for me. God was my only hope and now, wonder of wonders, I was happy, with the Lord lifting my burdens off my mind."

On the way, Baba signalled the cars to turn towards a lane off the main road, so that we could drink coffee and consume some snacks. He Himself opened the tins and cans, containers and flasks and served snacks and coffee to all. The chauffeurs too joined the party and they were also served. A few tillers of the soil, who had taken up positions to stand and stare, received extra attention from the Master.

When we resumed the journey, Baba's car seemed to grumble a bit, but it was persuaded by mild and gentle pushing to take to the road. It had to be persuaded again, thrice, during the next fifteen miles; Jog Falls were still a hundred miles away! At 8.00 p.m., the car stopped and refused to budge, despite inducements or threats. It had, indeed, to be led back in Tiptur for attention at a local workshop. Then, Baba decided to go back to Brindavan. Baba was quite unconcerned, He did not speak about it with any feeling of disappointment. Among the eight attributes of Divinity, *Vairagyam*, absence of attachment, is one.

June writes, "A star fell; Baba, who misses nothing, saw it fall. He commented on it. I was grateful that I, too, had seen that bright thing falling, where the Lord had come. While in the car, His glorious voice filled the night, for He was singing, drawing stars down to earth! Dinner was ready at midnight, when we reached Brindavan. Baba's affection made Him appear anxious about our hunger. He took particular care to see that all were fed and sent to

sleep, before He retired for the night. We felt that we were tiring Him even more, drawing His attention upon ourselves. Is that precious Body sustained purely by the Love It showers? We wondered.”

June writes, “I lay down with a feeling of anxiety. I feared that Baba might go now ahead of us, by plane, to Goa. I was anxious not to miss the happy sojourn. I was sorry we had to return as a result of the breakdown of the car. Many things were battling in my brain that Sunday morning. When I awoke, I pondered over them. Why had the Lord, Who produces all manner of things by the exercise of His Will, not repaired His car? He could have anticipated and never allowed it to happen! The question had great importance to me, since I was convinced that spiritual power has the mastery over matter. Perhaps, Baba had willed the breakdown and the return, in order to provoke this question in me, so that I might seek answer. Every word, every act of Baba is a lesson. Here was a lesson—I wasn’t sure for whom.

We knew, even before we started, that Baba was not keen on Jog Falls. He had ridiculed the name as ‘Joke Falls’ and even as ‘Joke False’! He said, the route, if Jog Falls is included in the tour, will be lengthened too far. He will have to pass through many villages on the road, after night fall. The villagers would, He argued, be very sad, when they learn that Baba passed that way without their getting *Darshan*. Someone told us that Baba had questioned the driver, who had supervised the ‘servicing’ of the ‘historic car’, about the quality and extent of the servicing. “He must have known that it will give a poor performance,” He said.

Of course, if He had willed it, the car would have gone on to Jog; He willed a joke instead! A day later, we all left in two cars for Goa. On the way, Baba spoke long, on spiritual matters. Alighting enroute for breakfast, He gave us sweet, ripe, wild berries plucked by Him from the trees around, saying, “Berries, such as I used to eat and pick with My comrades at Gokul, on the banks of the Yamuna!”

The cars co-operated wonderfully and we reached the grounds of the Karnataka University at Dharwar, and entered the bungalow of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Adke at 2 p.m. There, we found about 500 people, singing *Bhajans* under a *shamiana*. They had learnt about the arrival of the Lord! After lunch, Baba sat among them, silent, for a few, joy-filled minutes!

June writes, “Those University Deans and Dons, looking at Baba with devout child-like expressions, twanged the chords of my heart.” Suddenly, someone asked a question and broke the silence. For an hour thereafter, Baba related to them parables and tales from

legends and folklore. “God is ever to respond, whenever there is a call for help. Yes, you seek the Grace of God, but can you get it, when you do not respond to the call of the distressed? God waits on the doorstep, like sunlight, eager to slip through the narrowest slit and spread light, where there was darkness, warmth, where there was biting cold. So too, you must wait for the chance to brighten and lighten the lives of others, deprived of cheer and charity... Awaken the people to the Glory of the Creator, through *Nagar Sankeertan*,” He said. June writes, on the occasional bursts of laughter, which shook the room, “I felt this is no dull, sober God. When I think of Baba, I picture Jesus with the same sense of humour. Baba was speaking in an Indian language, which I do not understand; yet, in some mysterious way, I too was receiving illumination.”

It was a Fiat 1500, in which Baba, Mr. N.D.M. Appah, Chairman, Mysore State Electricity Board, and I were travelling. The road was stony and rough, so the drive was full of jerks and bumps – this caused Baba to reprimand the driver for not being circumspect enough. “You do not know how much pain I get in the abdomen, when it bumps,” He said. We wondered why Baba, who withstood worse roads better, was insisting on slow driving that day.

The last rays of sunshine cast long and slanting streaks through the tall, heavily crowned trees of the Western Ghats, which we were climbing. When we were on top, the sun went down into the Sea! There is a certain grandeur, albeit pathetic, in this daily drama – the inevitability of a sunset; its noiselessness and the panic it creates, when you foolishly fear that it may not come up again. The forces of darkness quickly overwhelming the earth, sometimes give one an eerie sensation of despair. But, we soon remember that the wise earth manages to keep one half of her lit and warm and so, we sleep in hope and happy dreams!

When the cars reached Goa, it was night. The stars came forth; they came with us, every yard of the road, keeping pace. When the border of Goa State was reached, Lt. Governor, Sri Nakul Sen, the host, received Baba and led us into a Rest House, where china gleamed in the shelves by the wall and geraniums glistened on the window sills. We had coffee; from then on, Baba sat in the State car with the Head of the State.

Hurrying around the rambling roads towards Panjim Town, the cars finally arrived at Coba Raj Nivas, the Palace of the Governors-General of the “Portuguese Possessions in India and the Far East” for many centuries, but now, the official residence of the Lt. Governor. The time was 9-15 p.m. We had motored 385 miles, since morning, over good and bad roads, but Baba looked lithe and lily-like, when He hastened up the red-carpeted flight of steps, 28 in

all, to the flower-decked apartments set aside for His stay. Very soon, Baba presided over the dining table, to which we were led by the Lt. Governor. He watched with amusement the contingent of waiters and the beautiful chinaware, which the Portuguese had brought from Macao.

Though Mrs. Sen made bold to remind Him of His duty to Himself, He did not eat anything. He appeared to be anxious to send everyone to bed. "Go, go! You are all very much exhausted," He insisted. I protested that travelling with Him can never exhaust anyone, but He repeated that I was really in immediate need of rest. When we rose, Mrs. Sen was informed by Baba that coffee need be ready for Him only at 8 a.m., the next day! She knew that at Prasanthi Nilayam, He had His coffee at 6 or 6.30 a.m., but despite appeals for revising the order, Baba gave instructions that it was to be brought only at 8 o'clock.

Baba was alone in the suite reserved for Him. Nakul Sen pleaded for permission to be within call, but Baba sent Him away to his own room. We from Bangalore were in rooms on the ground floor.

About what occurred that night, Baba wrote later to Dr. S. Bhagawantham, in a letter I carried to him on the 12th, "On the night of the seventh, strange events happened. I could not lie in bed, I could not sit upon it, nor turn from one side to another. Nor could I speak or call. I did not like to cause anxiety or trouble to anyone. So, I kept silent, pretending that all was well with Me!"

Next morning, when the Sens grew aware of the truth, it became clear why He had abstained from dinner and postponed the coffee hour, wanting only to hurry away to bed! I knew why He had come away from Dharwar and why He had taken the driver to task. Obviously, He had been 'ill', when He started out from Dharwar!

Mrs. Sen felt that Cabo Raj Nivas was an 'unlucky' place, since He had fallen 'ill' there, but Baba immediately corrected her. "No, it is a house of good luck! I brought the 'illness' with Me to Cabo, so that I could get rid of it here."

By daybreak, on the 8th, Baba appeared to be in great pain and Nakul Sen called in doctors from the Medical College at Goa, and some leading physicians of the City. Soon, an imposing medical team surrounded the sick bed; their report read as follows, "History of pain, right lower quadrant of the abdomen, since 3 p.m. on the 7th December. To begin with, the pain was all over the abdomen progressive in intensity; towards the night, it localised in the umbilical region and the right lower quadrant. Had difficulty in extending the right lower

limb. Pain is exaggerated by movement. 8th December morning, had nausea and fever.” No one could be definite about the illness; there were too many experts and Baba was amused at the clash of their conclusions.

The American ladies were sent to visit the ancient Churches of Goa, redolent with history and vibrant with spiritual power. The Sens were aghast at the turn of events, for, among other reasons, the local Sathya Sai Seva Samiti had announced that He would deliver a discourse at the large maidan, in the heart of the city, at 5 o'clock that evening.

June Schuyler writes, “Back at Cabo, we ate lunch without Baba. It was a gloomy affair. Each person was wondering why He did not come; I did not know that some among them knew and were too full of distress to speak. It is very strange for Baba not to come out of His room; at *Prasanthi Nilayam*, or wherever He is, He gives of Himself, plentifully at all times, from early morning till late evening. I knew that Baba was scheduled to go out into the city to address a public meeting. We had passed the very maidan on our way to a Church and noticed people streaming in, hours before the time announced for its commencement. I took heart, because we would see Him then. Perhaps, we would go with Him to the meeting! At ten minutes to five, we gathered on the porch, dressed in our very best; my heart beat loud and rapid, as a clock ticked on, for the time was drawing near, when we would see Him for the first time that day... My thoughts went back to the time, when I first heard about Baba. A friend urged me to revere Him. I replied, 'How can I, belonging to Jesus? I am sure about Jesus. If Baba is one with Jesus, it is to Him I pray. If He is not, I won't have anything to do with Him.' And I added, 'If Baba is all that you feel He is, I am sure He won't hold this against me!' The electrifying moment, when I beheld Him for the first time, came to my mind. I remembered the flood of awe and joy that overwhelmed me. His first comment, when He saw me, assured me that He knew and approved of my feelings about Jesus... that He was certainly One with Him. My mind returned to the present; I watched Baba's door, intently.”

Meanwhile, pain, nausea, and fever kept Baba in bed all day. Information came that 20,000 people crowded the maidan, awaiting Baba and half the number had come from far off villages. Baba endeavoured to rise and don fresh clothes to keep the appointment and not disappoint thousands of people, but would have had to get down 28 steps and walk up some distance, in order to give *Darshan* to the people. And then, climb the 28 steps up!

Baba directed me to tell the assembly to disperse quietly and to assure them that He will be addressing them in a few days, at the same place. I was to tell them that He had taken over

the illness of a devotee, for I had witnessed such instances of healing and saving, in the past years.

June writes, “Baba’s door opened! Mr. Kasturi came out! Why Mr. Kasturi? Why not Baba? We sat sadly, watching a large blood-red sun sinking into the Indian Ocean.”

The gathering heard my announcement with amazement and admiration, for they had heard many stories of Baba and His miracles, but this mystery of taking on an illness and saving a devotee from its consequences was something they had never heard, nor imagined as possible. Could such compassion exist? How does Baba assume the illness and how does He rid Himself of it? How has He done it in the past? Many came up behind me to find the answers and I could tell them of the great Guru Pournima Miracle, when Baba took upon Himself the cerebral thrombosis and heart attacks of a devotee and after undergoing them for eight long days, rejected them before 4,000 people, becoming in a moment His fresh, free, and full Self. I could tell them that rescuing the good was as much the mission of the *Avatar* as chastisement of the wicked. He atones for the *Karmic* debt of the devotees, when they plead sincerely for Grace, I said. That is the measure of His Divine Compassion.

At 8 o’clock that night, the doctors reported, “Lying supine in bed, with legs drawn up. On examination, the right side of abdomen not moving with respiration; abdomen tender on the right side and the lower flank... point of maximum tenderness in lower flank... no rebound tenderness... guarding present over right lower quadrant, with rigidity of flank. Temperature 100°F; pulse 100M; respiration 16m. Total blood count 22,000; neutrophils 88%. A diagnosis of acute paracolic appendicitis was made. Unwillingness for surgical intervention.”

Pressmen approached the doctors, anxious to report the reason for the postponement of the announced Public Meeting, alarmed at the news of the illness of the world renowned Personality. The doctors told them that Baba was suffering from an acute attack of appendicitis. This news was flashed all over India and spread through the early morning editions and the papers issued from Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, and Madurai.

Telegrams and telephone calls poured in from all over the country, praying, pleading, and denying – disbelieving, hoping, weeping, and wailing. There were many offers to accept the ‘illness’ from Baba; some devotees said they would fast, until Baba was free from the illness. Devotees having firm faith in His Divinity were convinced that just as the illness had been taken on miraculously, it will be thrown off miraculously, too.

The doctors told us Baba must be suffering excruciating pain, but He said, "If I have to acknowledge that it is paining Me, how would I have taken it Myself? I have taken it on with Love and Love knows no pain!" June writes, "Mrs. Sen confided in me that she has been praying all day to Baba, asking that she be allowed to share the pain. We all caught this idea and trooped into Baba's room with the same request. He sent us back, saying, 'I do not feel any pain and even if I do, I am never in the habit of distributing pain as *Prasadam* (Gift from God).'"

Indra Devi had with her a container with an idol of Ganesha on the lid, given to her by Baba. It had *Vibhuti* in it and Baba had declared, whilst placing it in her hand, "Give this to people, who suffer; it will alleviate the misery. The *Vibhuti* will never be exhausted." She now offered some of it to Baba; He sent her away, saying, "That would be selfish. I want you to use it only for the sake of others." "O Baba!" June implored silently, "You are so sweet, so completely good. The rest of us deserve this pain, but You do not. Please take this condition away from Your precious Body."

June writes, "Finally, hesitantly, I prayed to Jesus, 'If Baba will not heal Himself, won't You heal Him?' But, I realised that this prayer was one without an answer, for Jesus and Baba were One! I fell back on metaphysics. Recognition of the Truth might cast out the illness. It was easy to behold, the Christ in the Christ Himself! 'Baba! You are the light and in the Light, there is no darkness,' I said this silently over and over again. I knew this statement was absolutely true, but I also knew that on the physical plane, Baba had allowed *Maya* free play for the sake of someone, who had surrendered to Him. He would not let my feeble, metaphysical faltering influence a step that He had determined upon. I was afraid my approach was quite wrong."

The doctors filed in and out of Baba's room. Indra Devi sat in the Cabo Shrine, applying the curative *Vibhuti* Baba had given her on the right flank of the abdomen of a large sized picture of Baba, praying that He may soon heal Himself. Mrs. Sen alternated between confidence and concern.

June writes, "Mr. Kasturi oozed quiet confidence. He was certain that this was another miracle of miracles; that Baba was suffering for the sake of another; that He would concentrate into a few hours the suffering that the devotee was destined to suffer for weeks; that we would soon behold the end of another Divine *Leela*. We warmed ourselves often, in the warmth of His optimism. Mr. Sen, too, was certain that Baba would confront the doctors

with another astounding and confounding miracle!

Suddenly, it flashed on me that Mr. Kasturi was asked to cancel his engagements in Ceylon and join us on our journey to Goa, precisely for this reason. To spread assurance, whenever doubt raised its fearful hood! His role was to laugh the serpent off and to restore courage. ‘Tell us about the time, when Baba took on the paralytic stroke,’ we begged and Mr. Kasturi, with genuine enthusiasm, plunged into that story of the eight appalling days and nights, the sudden doffing of the fell symptoms, the final triumph! The infinite compassion – the infinite power!”

The devotees came out of Baba’s room. They looked solemn and serious, as if weighed by an insoluble problem. June writes, “I had once asked Baba a question and I remembered His answer. ‘Baba, why did Jesus allow Himself to be crucified?’ ‘Because the great Ones never use spiritual power for themselves.’ Ah! Baba had not set the car right on Saturday night, because it was not imperative for the good of someone other than Baba. ‘Baba! Baba!’ I exclaimed, ‘I adore You; I utterly love You. Imperfect as I am, I give my heart to You completely!’”

Precisely at this very moment, I became aware that Mr. Nakul Sen was motioning to Mrs. Rajagopalan, Indra Devi, and myself to step inside the doorway of Baba’s room. I could not believe it was true. We crossed the threshold half expectant, fixing our eyes on the bedstead, where the Master was suffering for His dear devotee. He was not there! He was standing before us, feeble and frail, with eyes full of love and mercy—charming in spite of it all.

He drew back the orange robe and permitted us to touch those precious Feet. The lovely feet were warm, because of the fever. The beloved face was pale and etched with pain. The cheeks had been hollowed for want of sleep and refreshment. But, He stood there for our sake. “Do not worry,” He said tenderly, in a soft, soothing voice, "It is a little upset, that is all,” indicating the right side of the body.

“*Swami!* Accept what the doctors prescribe,” we prayed. “What do the doctors know? What can they prescribe? I only want your Love,” He said, quietly, almost wishfully. He stepped out of the room into the adjacent drawing room, where several others anxiously waited. He stood for a few minutes, looking languidly, lovingly at them all, reassuring the timid and charging them with courage. Then, He returned to the bed. None of us knew that the appendix was very near bursting point and the doctors had said that, He must not rise from His bed at any cost.

Later, in Bombay, on Christmas Day, Baba referred to the “illness He had taken on at Goa” and the suffering it caused to many. “The other day, a serious illness came upon this body in Goa. Many, who are devoted to Me, were plunged into anxiety and despair, when they learnt of it. Illness can never afflict this Body. It cannot even approach it! If it should come sometime—believe this—it belongs to someone; not Myself. And it goes just as it came, of My free Will. I have no contact with it; I am not affected by it.” The fact is that when a devotee prays for relief, Baba bestows upon Him His Grace, directly or indirectly. At times, the devotee is unable to apprehend an impending illness. The All-knowing Baba at that stage intercedes between the devotee and the illness, as Lord Shiva did in the case of Markandeya.

On the 9th December, the doctors decided to put tubes down the nose to relieve the hiccup, which was complicating matters, for taking the gas out of the stomach. They talked also of the urgent need that had arisen to puncture the lump and syringe off the pus from the abscess. It must indeed have given a terrible gash of pain for Baba, every time the hiccup pulled the muscle tight and affected the lump round the inflamed appendix! But eventually, the doctors left Cabo Raj Nivas with their tubes and bottles, as Baba refused to accept their proposals.

On the 10th, a *Bhajan* meeting had been announced at Government House and word had gone round, indicating that Baba would attend the meeting! Baba, too, said “Yes! Arrange it.” The doctors could not believe their ears. They did not foresee any possibility of a public appearance that day. There was doubt, wonder, and amazement in the minds of various people, a few of them believing that whatever He says will come to pass. At tea time, Mrs. Sen looked rather serious, as time was running out and already people were streaming towards the meeting place. Goa, which had been previously shocked by the news of the agonising illness, was now jolted by the impact of such good news.

Baba’s condition may be described in His own words, “The doctors were unanimous that an immediate operation was necessary, or they would not be held responsible for what might happen. They said the inflamed appendix had burst and the pus had entered the blood—a situation that is fatal for all mortals!”

Baba had to move across His own room, across the drawing room, walk along the veranda, ascend a low step, get across to the doorstep of the Hall, which He had selected for *Bhajan*, traverse its length, reach the dais, climb two low steps, and finally, sit upon the chair placed there. A total distance of 200 feet! A floral carpet stretched all this length.

Sri Nakul Sen spoke later, during the *Bhajan* sessions, “The doctors became panicky and I

could feel that they were absolutely against what *Bhagawan* had said to me. My sixth sense somehow assured me that *Bhagawan* was showing one of His *Leelas* in Goa and that through His *Sankalpa*, He would get rid of this trouble as quickly as He had assumed it.”

Dr. Varma, the chief of the team of doctors, came at about 4 p.m. and finding a floral carpet covering a distance of 200 feet, protested that it was too long a walk. He suggested some short cuts through other doors and passages, making the journey a distance of only 40 feet. He said, “The dais itself will have to go; let the chair be on the floor, for He cannot get up the steps, however low they may be—and please, have the dais on the near side, not at the farthermost end of the hall.”

At 5 p.m., Baba was led into the bathroom and twenty minutes later, He came out of it, clean shaven, wearing a new robe! Fresh as a new blossomed rose.

When the doctors examined Him again, they could not locate any abscess, nor could they find any trace of big lump of flesh near it. The whole area of the appendix was as soft and as normal as it could be.

“Lo and behold,” said Nakul Sen, in the speech he delivered as soon as Baba sat on the dais at 6 p.m., “*Bhagawan* walked from His bedroom to the dais, a distance of about 200 feet, without any aid. He sat down erect on an Office Chair.”

June writes about that historic moment of ecstasy, “*Bhajan* began and my heart was pounding a joyous tune of expectancy. Love for Baba filled the hall. Ah! There He was, moving majestically down the hall, although He had required the assistance of two men all day. He now moved, as if nothing had ever happened. His steps were as sure and graceful as ever. The cheeks, which had been hollow when I last saw them, were completely filled out. His love flooded the hall. It was overpowering. He swung into the room and when He saw someone leaning against the wall, with a sick child, the Hand began the familiar circular motion to create the cure.

Baba’s eyes, which plumb the depths, His eyes, which pour out love and compassion, His eyes, which flash when He speaks of cruelty, falsehood, hypocrisy, and injustice, eyes, which can be full of quips, were as eloquent as ever. He took His place on the *divan* in front of the gathering and began keeping rhythm with the *Bhajan* being sung with head and hand. Mrs. Rajagopal whispered in my ear, “Look! Those eyes are more beautiful than ever. There is an ethereal expression not of this world, in them; a look of radiant joy and adoration.”

Baba’s eye caressed the gathering, which was watching Him without even a wink,

apprehensive that the cure He had effected on Himself might be only partial or temporary.

Mr. Nakul Sen was full of gratitude and wonder! While welcoming Baba and introducing the gathering to Him, as convention demanded, he said, “Bhagawan lives in the inner recesses of the hearts of His devotees; there is nothing He would not do for them. He has simultaneously appeared in this Form at different places, to help His devotees in distress, or to save them from impending calamities, of which He alone has the pre-cognition! Through His *Sankalpa* or Will, He has assumed the illness of His devotees and suffered it for them, because they would have succumbed to it, if left alone.

We have witnessed this now, a *Leela*, which has greatly perplexed the medical experts of Goa. It leaves no doubt in our minds that there is nothing on this earth, which is beyond *Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*. His *Leela* is *adbhut* – unprecedented; it is *romanchari* – exhilarating; it is *madhumaya* – sweet in memory; *mangalamayi* – prompting the happiness and welfare of mankind; *manoharini* – over-powering the mind and turning it to truth, beauty, and goodness. It gives *Ananda!*”

The Governor also spoke in some detail about Goa and the associations it had with Rama and Krishna and their careers on earth. He spoke of the legends that enrich the holiness of the two rivers, Mandavi and Aghansini that enter the sea right in front of Cabo Raj Nivas.

Nakul Sen concluded his descriptions of the ancient glories of Goa and its sacred contacts with Siva, Rama, Krishna, and Parasurama, the Divine *Avatars*, with these words: “No wonder the Lord decided to visit this ancient and sacred land again in the form, which He has assumed now, with the name of Sathya Sai Baba; He has loved Goa in His previous incarnations and Goa continues to be dear to Him even now.”

Baba spoke for over forty minutes, with His usual emphasis and elan. The gathering listened spell-bound, for it was a message of triumph, benevolence, and benediction.

The illness that had vanished an hour ago was still uppermost in the minds of all and so, Baba spoke of the significance of its ‘entrance and exit’ and its place in the scheme of the *Avatar’s* Activities. “There are many, who doubt the existence of God, deny Him, or dismiss the idea of God as a silly, out-worn superstition. To make them discard their conceit, the Divine, out of Its innate grace, reveals Its superhuman glory. The doubters receive the reply without asking, the door is opened without even a knock, for those, who deny, will not knock at all. The ‘superstition’ will be illumined into divine status by a concrete experience, an undisputable fact. The human body generates diseases as a result of faulty food, frivolous

habits, foolish rashness, or fanatic emotions; the illness that was witnessed by you, during the last two days, was quite different. That was an illness taken over by Me, voluntarily put on, in order to save a victim, who could not have survived it. His continued existence, in good health, is desirable for the task dear to Me. Pouring Grace on the devout is one of the functions of the *Avatar*. The appendix was inflamed, it turned into an abscess, which the doctors could cure only by removal. He could not have survived it, I know. I have come with this Body in order to save 'other bodies' from pain. This Body is ever free from pain. Disease can never affect it.

I had to go to rescue a person, who had surrendered to Me even his judgement. I took over his illness and went through it. It shall not recur again in him. You refer to this incident as a miracle, but remember, each one is a miracle. Every breath is a proof of the Providence of God. Each event is the consequence of Divine Omnipotence. Wherever you find truth, beauty, goodness, justice, wisdom, compassion—God is present and active. An atheist denies God with the very breath that God has given him! He closes the eye that God has opened in Him and declares that there, he could see no God. Therefore, such amazing events have to be accomplished and made known to man everywhere, so that mankind can be saved from overfond involvement with the world and lovingly drawn towards the Master of the World.”

For us, who adore Baba and for all mankind, who are deriving the benefit of this Advent (whether they acknowledge it or not), it was a great day, the 10th December. Baba was here with His majesty, magnificence, and munificence, not only unimpaired, but enhanced as a result of the world becoming aware of the deeper aspects of His mission.

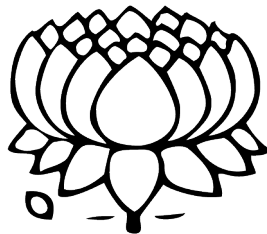
Baba sang a few *Bhajans* and returned to His room. The completeness of the restoration can be gauged from one interesting incident. Baba had asked two young men from Brindavan to join Him at Bombay. We telephoned them on the 9th, asking them to come to Goa itself. They rang back a few hours later, to tell us that the Indian Airlines strike had spread to Bangalore as well. So, they were told to proceed to Goa by car. They reached Goa at 6-30 p.m., on the 10th. Hearing Baba's voice over the loudspeaker, they entered the garden of Cabo Raj Nivas, ran up the steps, and entered the hall.

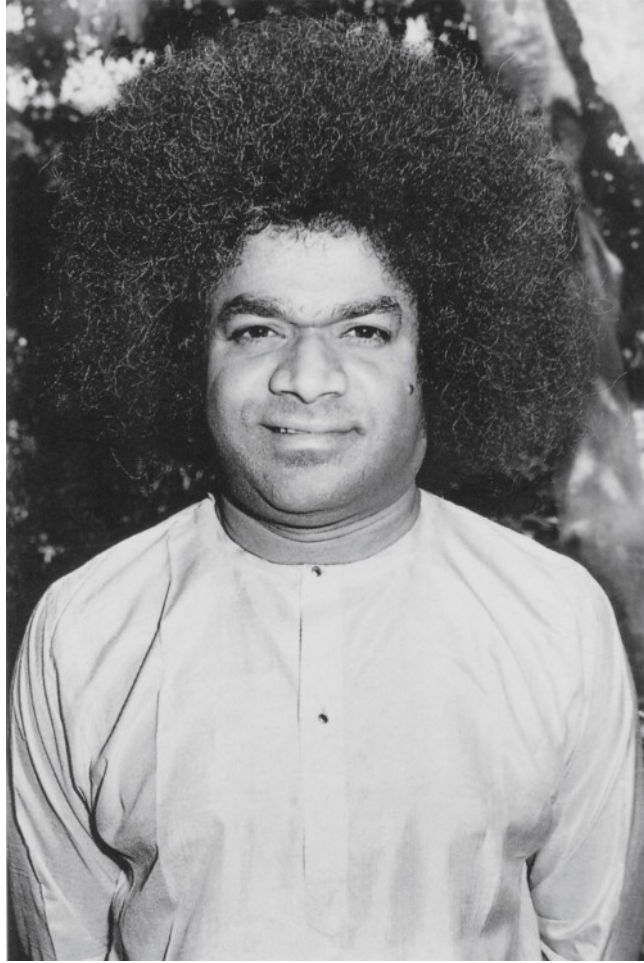
They heard Baba saying, “Now, I shall tell you about the illness, which agitated the whole country and caused great anxiety in the minds of millions, for they feared I was hospitalised and operated upon!” That was the first intimation to them of the illness that had come and gone.

Thereafter, Baba was surrounded by us, the Sens, and the doctors in His room. The Doctors asked Him some spiritual complexities and He clarified them. While talking of Dattatreya, the God, who represents the Trinity, the Trimurti so imposingly sculptured at Elephanta, Baba waved His palm as He announced that He was Dattatreya and lo, there was in His hand a picture of the three-headed God, the Trinity in Unity, but wonder of wonders, the picture Baba created showed the same head thrice, on the right, centre, and left, Baba Himself as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva! It was a picture, which we were privileged to see for the first time in our lives!

On the 11th, Baba called the doctors to His presence, created gifts of Grace for them, and blessed them. Each one received a memento of the event. Every evening thereafter, *Bhajan* Sessions were held at the Raj Nivas attended by devotees, who came from long distances. The promised meeting in the heart of the City was arranged on the 18th evening; the gathering was twice the size of the one that was sent away disappointed on the 8th; for, there were many thousands, who wanted to have the *Darshan* of a Baba, who could take on and throw off illness in order to save a devotee. Sri Nakul Sen presided; he spoke of the wide range of tasks, on which the Formless Divine Principle had come 'with Form' as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Baba spoke about *Yoga* and all activity as *Ud-yoga*, that is to say the higher *Yoga* of putting *Yoga* into practice.

The devotees in Bombay were getting restless, awaiting Baba's arrival. The strike of the pilots and the ground staff of the Airlines rendered them desperate; attempts to persuade Baba to sail by steamer failed, as it meant spending long hours cooped up in the vessel! At last, a privately owned plane was chartered to transport Baba and a few of us from Goa to Bombay, on 21st December.







Chapter 15

Live In Love

You have no reason to fear God, for love transcends doubt and fear. Love God as a companion and respect Him as a devotee must. Baba becomes childlike in the company of children, a scholar among scholars, a doctor among doctors, out of His Love, for He wants to put everyone at ease.

Some wear a provocative twinkle of a skilled dialectician, or have a raised brow of pedantry. They are too keen to decry others advertising themselves. They are like vultures, flying high only to seek carrion over a wider circle – writes an aspirant, who went around India seeking a Guru. Paul Brunton was advised to pray every day to God, so that he may be led to the Man, in whom God is at present incarnated. The Incarnation comes down through love and so, the mark of the Incarnation is above all, Love.

Try and see yourself in all, then you will not love one person more and another less, realising that they are both yourself. When love is shared, peace reigns. All worldly relationships are based on the principle of give and take. The highest form of love is expressed between a devotee and God, the devotee being intent on merging with Divinity. Thereupon, love flows towards everything and every being. According to Baba, God is Love; the lover is the individual and the beloved is nature. Knowing fully well that nature is under the complete control of God, why be under its spell? Realising God's prevalence everywhere, let us learn to love the Creator, since creation is nothing but His manifestation. Baba says that, we should direct all our thoughts towards God. But, we cannot do so, until our minds are under control. It is only through protracted practice that we can succeed in living in God, that is in Love through His Grace. Almost everything that goes wrong in the relationship of man with man, goes wrong, because the self-impulses outweigh the altruistic impulses, or because we overvalue the satisfaction of appetite and undervalue the satiation of our spiritual hunger. True

happiness, for human beings, is possible only to those who develop their God-like potentialities to the utmost.

This is the way to God, known as the path of Love. In the *Gita*, the Lord said, “The Lord, O Arjuna, is seated in the hearts of all beings; fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, prostrate before Me, so shall you come to Me.” You have no reason to fear God, for love transcends doubt and fear. Love God as a companion and respect Him as a devotee must. Baba becomes childlike in the company of children, a scholar among scholars, a doctor among doctors out of His Love, for He wants to put everyone at ease.

Feeding the poor, service to those in jails, visiting the deaf and the dumb, the blind, leprosariums, mental hospitals, these have been laid down by Him as the Highest *Sadhana*. “When you sit for *Japam* or *Dhyana*, if you hear one groan, rise and investigate. Helping the person to get rid of the pain gives you more spiritual merit than the *dhyana* you miss.”

Baba’s love for His devotees is expressed in many ways. Once at Dharmakshetra, there was a gathering of teachers of the *Bal Vikas* in Sathyadeep. After the meeting commenced, the *Bhajan* party from below the Hill was also invited to join. Hurrying up the steep incline, many were short of breath, but one elderly lady seemed to suffer a great deal. Baba made her sit down, leaning against the wall, under a fan. Then, He disappeared for a moment, only to reappear with a glass of water, which He gave the lady to drink. He cannot tolerate anyone standing in the sun, waiting for *Darshan* and is bothered when, due to rain, devotees are drenched. During the hot summer months, Baba allows the Prayer Hall at the Nilayam to be used by old or sick women to sleep in. It is Love that prompts Him to distribute sweets to each individual Himself, though there be thousands present, and to eat ever simple food, so that even the poorest person may offer Him hospitality.

The practical application of Love is clearly seen also, as Baba walks gracefully between lines of people, who wait patiently to be selected for a private interview. Ailing children are picked out for a special blessing; they are spoken to or given *Vibhuti!* The sick, the aged, the socially spurned, and economically backward are all dearly loved by Him and cared for. He uses a Telugu proverb to assure you that however far you may sit, or however many the number of people around you, He will spot and bless, provided your prayer is sincere. He says, “You are of the Sai Body – be happy that you are a limb – do not complain that you are only the foot, or be proud that you are the head, for it is the same blood stream of Love that circulates and sustains both!” When people come to Him pathetically crippled, unable to bend and touch

His feet, He raises a Foot, so that it can confer the healing balm of peace! “I always anticipate the prayer, the moment of calamity for My *Bhaktas* and I intercede in time to help them or save them,” He says.

He has spoken of the Seed of Love planted in the heart of men, sprouting in the family, spreading over kith and kin, the village, the community, and finally, bringing under its shade the whole of mankind. When teaching Meditation, He directs the concentration on the flame is the best way. “Imagine the flame in the middle of the brow, imagine the light entering the cave of the heart and illuminating it. Let this Light destroy all hate, greed, and ego, and let it flood your entire being. Then, let it emanate from you and take into its fold wider and wider circles, embracing all mankind – all beings you regard as friendly and even those you have set aside as unfriendly.”

Years ago, Baba stayed for a few days at Horsley Hills, which is 3800 ft. above sea level. Twice a day, He would take us to some beauty spot, where we could peacefully learn from Him spiritual matters. Our little camp, situated as it was amid the hills, was inaccessible, except by jeep; so, our food and water for drinking had to be hauled up by the villagers from the small hamlet at the foot of the hills; for other purposes, a buffalo at the bungalow helped to transport water from a well, in skin bags slung across its back! This quiet sylvan beauty was enjoyed by all and we were privileged to share it with Baba. Then came the day, when we had to break camp and return. Baba proposed that we walk down together. He suggested that we try and see who could run down the fastest! Baba interrupted, saying, “Wait, I will be back in a minute,” and went into the garden. Some of us quietly followed Him and found Him taking leave of the buffalo! He patted it affectionately, saying, “You have done Me good service, Bangaroo.” (A term of great affection, meaning gold)

Baba is kind to all, who serve Him in and through all, even in the littlest way. In the village of Bikkatti in the Nilgiri Hills, lived a lame dog, called Kuttan, meaning the lame one. He was a very old, loving dog, yet alert, where strangers were concerned. Baba, on visiting the village in 1962, walked down the carpets laid out for Him. Kuttan strained at the leash, by which he was held, lest he pounce on Baba! But, Baba stopped and patted him, and asked that he be let loose, saying, “Bangaroo! Leave him alone, he is a pure *Atma*.” So, Kuttan followed Baba up the dais, sat and listened to the *Bhajans*, and later, followed Him into the kitchen, where Baba, after blessing the food, asked that Kuttan be fed first! When he finished his meal, he walked up the decorated dais and stood beside Baba’s chair, watching the long lines of villagers having their food. After a while, Kuttan placed his head upon ‘Baba’s footstool’

and within a few minutes, breathed his last.

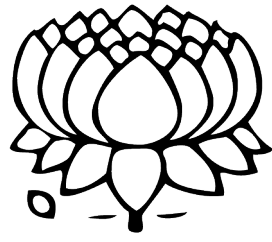
Everyone felt that he was a pure soul; he was buried near the dais, in a flower-shroud. Baba has had many pets – dogs, rabbits, peacocks, and now, the elephant Sai Gita, who adores her Master so much, that should He be away for long, she sheds tears! If stray dogs are led away from the Nilayam, so that the silence of the place may not be disturbed by their barking, instructions are issued that they be taken to a place, where food is available.

He asks, “Of what avail is it to simply worship My Name and My Form, without attempting to cultivate My *Samatwa* – equal love towards all, *Shanti* – unruffled equanimity, *Prema* – love, *Sahana* – patience and fortitude, and *Ananda* – blissful nature! I sing *Bhajans* after every discourse for your sake, not Mine, so as to enable you to become aware of the sweetness of the Name, which cleanses the mind, by which you can realise that God is ever with you, in your physical and spiritual being.”

God has, it is said, two types of deluding powers, *Avidyamaya* and *Vidyamaya*. Sometimes, His *Maya* makes us feel that He is a mere human and we partake of acts, which inflate the ego, making us feel important and all powerful. The fog of pride hides the Reality. This is *Avidya*.

When we submit to His Will, He shows signs and wonders that make us eager to follow the right path. This is *Vidyamaya*, from which we learn that it is in Him we live and move, and have our being. ‘He’ and ‘we’ are one. Only thus do we cleanse and purify our attitudes, habits, and judgments and discover God in His true manifestation, that is as living in all things created. The recognition, that we and others are mere puppets in His hands, will be imprinted on our consciousness, through the meaningful recitation of His Name; then, we start dwelling in Him, through Him, and for Him.

People from all parts of the world, who have had the privilege of being near His Lotus Feet, try to remodel their lives, change their world view, and their sense of values. This silent, psychological revolution, affecting lakhs of people, illustrates the gift of Grace. The real *Sadhana*, according to Baba, is to rake up the field of our heart and to cultivate in it the most valuable crop we can.





Chapter 16

Beacon Of Bliss

“The children of the Sathya Sai Bala Vihars must know the Sathya Sai residing in their hearts. The teachers must also take it as the Puja of Sai Ram. How to reveal to these children the Sai, who is in their hearts—that is the problem you should set before yourselves. By leading the children towards Divinity, the teachers are serving their parents and society, for they will cleanse and brighten their homes and surroundings,” Baba said.

Confusing and confounding stories, depicting the illness of Baba and details of the operation that was not performed, generating distressing news that He would not be able to make a public appearance for months, filled the drooping hearts of devotees in Bombay with fear and anxiety. These uncalled for fears, the progeny of rumour and hallucination were allayed by Baba’s Presence at Dharmakshetra on Christmas Day. The gathering heard a long discourse, followed by many *Bhajan* songs, from Baba. They heard the authentic version of the assumption of the illness and its equally sudden dismissal. Illness had appeared to affect that holy body, but in fact, it cannot afflict it. It had been a passing phase, belonging to someone. It came and went like a passing cloud.

“But, I have no contact with it; many people, however, have the courage to suggest to Me ways and means of dealing with such situations!” According to them, Swami should not allow the illness of another to come upon Him, causing sufferance to lakhs of people. Baba told the gathering that it is His duty to take upon Himself the suffering of those, who surrender to Him. Likewise, it is the duty of His devotees, too, to suffer on that account. But, the truth is, there is no suffering and as such, no reason to get anxious. Christ sacrificed His life for the sake of those, who put their faith in Him. Service is God, Sacrifice is God—that was His Declaration. The whole world can derive joy from that divine assurance. “Do not

grieve, the Saviour, who will take on your grief, has come.”

On the first day of the New Year, the Kamanis, the famous industrialists, had the privilege of welcoming Baba at Kurla. Their Community Hall, which is the commodious auditorium, was restricted by passes only, there was not an inch of space even to change one’s sitting posture. The auditorium consisted of workers and their families. The area was tastefully decorated with simple, unostentatious dignity, television sets provided the entire gathering with the thrill of *Darshan*.

The words of wisdom, contained in the Discourse delivered on January 1st, 1971 by Sri Sathya Sai Baba at the premises of a massive, industrial establishment in Bombay, have great relevance to modern India.

Commenting on this, the Bhavan’s Journal wrote, “When a sage brings His mind down from the higher realms of beatitude to dwell on a mundane matter, like employer–employee relations, the subject is bound to acquire a new dimension and a fresh sparkle of spirituality.”

While exhorting the employees to develop the enthusiasm to earn 'rights' by fulfilling obligations, Baba also exhorted the employers to take care of the employees and provide amenities to their children to develop a strong and virtuous character. To put it in the words of the Divine Master: “Happiness and peace are mental conditions, which grow in the soil of love and not of power, affluence, or skill.”

“The tree of life yields as its most precious fruit, the equality of Love. Sweet fruits have bitter rinds. This fruit, too, is encased in a thick, bitter, six-fold rind, composed of lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and hate. If these are negated and the rind removed, the nectarine sweetness of Love can be tasted and taken into the system. Those, who make effort to explore into that treasure of Love within, they alone can have the Peace and Bliss. *Sadhana* is the name of process, by which man discovers the Spring of Universal Love within him, by which he is privileged to share it with all beings.

Riches of various kinds, possessions and power, name and fame—these are not of much worth; the precious possession called Love is the very breath of Life for man. A heart devoid of Love is an altar plunged in darkness. Bats of evil passions will make it their home. They will render it a dirty, stinking seat of chaos. Only the Light of Love can illumine the heart and drive away these vicious inhabitants.

We have here, gathered in thousands, the employees of the Kamani factories: The industrial, agricultural, mercantile, political, and administrative fields are the Five Vital Airs to the

human community. They have to be healthy and harmonious, so that Mankind can live in peace and prosperity. If these five are aware of their inter-relationship and interdependence and if they lovingly co-operate in common endeavour, this country and the world too, can celebrate each day as a festival day, can festoon each door-sill in green.

But, at the present time, the bond of love and mutual cooperation is absent. There are factions in each of these fields, each producing its own share of confusion; so, the country is heading every moment into deeper and deeper anxiety. People are moving about in fear, grasping their lives in the palm of the hand, doubtful what the next moment holds for them. This is not a proper state of things to be welcomed.

Emotions and Passions have a way of suddenly rising into devastating floods. Really speaking, every worker has to earn the authority, before standing forth as a part of the organisation, of which he is a limb. Emotion and passion have to arise out of earned authority; now, they surge forward from persons, who do not carry out the duties undertaken by them. Authority and Influence have to emerge from the discharge of one's duties. Then only will they be effective. We must be convinced that rights are deserved only by the discharge of obligations.

But today, agitation is only for rights; there is no enthusiasm to earn rights by fulfilling obligations. Everyone must work with the consciousness that Duty is God and all Work is Worship. If devotion to duty is developed and all work is done as sincerely and correctly as acts of worship, then each one can be happy, society will be free from discontent and misery.

The Kamanis are fabricating transmission towers in their factories. Every person, who is engaged in the fabrication and erection, has to carry out his work correctly and sincerely, so that the towers may be strong and secure. Who among them does the more important item of work? It will be impossible to discriminate. Each item is important and each worker earns his right by discharging well his particular share of the total obligation. *There should not be any attempt to compare and claim superiority or confer inferiority. Such attempts will only promote ill feeling and obstruct the flow of Love and Tolerance.*

Let Me illustrate this by an example. There was a man going along a country road, whose eyes saw ripe fruits on a wayside tree. The eyes told him that they were desirable and would provide him a feast. So, the mind got attached to them, the feet took him nearer the tree, the body was bent by the muscles of the back, the hand moved down to the ground, the fingers picked up a stone and clasped it, the shoulders gave the needed thrust, when the hand threw

the stone on to the tree in the direction of the fruits. That made one fruit fall on the ground. But, more items of work still remained to be done by the limbs of the body. The fingers have to pick it up, the hand has to offer it to the mouth, the tongue has to place it between the teeth, the teeth have to chew it, and the gullet has to swallow it and send it to the stomach. Now, which among these items are more important and which less? Which limb has done more and which less? Each limb has done its duty exactly when needed, to the best of its ability and so, the fruit on the tree reached the stomach of the hungry person. We must respect each worker as the contributor of a valuable share of the common task. Feel that all are Divine, all are equally to be loved; that is the *Sadhana* that will bestow *Ananda* on both the individual and society.

Doing the duty that has fallen to one's lot is the best way to make life worthwhile and to contribute the skill and intelligence one is endowed with for the common good. This is the debt one has to discharge, for having come into this world embodied as a human being. We have not come into this world for the sake of eating and drinking; we eat and drink in order to live; we don't live in order to eat and drink, we have to reach the far higher goal – the Presence of God, through the Path of Love. That is the higher duty, the most elevated item of work we are engaged in, in the Factory (the Body) where we are. All our energies and skill have to be fully directed towards this effort. Or else, we lay waste our lives in the chaos of emotional impulses.

Of course, the question may be asked: who is God? Where can we find Him? Who has seen Him? I can tell you a story to elucidate this. A *Sanyasi* (monk) wearing a 'gerua' robe entered, during his pilgrimage, a village, renowned for its godlessness. Seeing his robe, which indicated a person who had dedicated his life to God, a crowd gathered around him and started heckling him on the existence of God. "Can you show Him to us?" they asked and the Monk said, "I can." However, he called for some milk, evidently to overcome exhaustion. When the milk was brought, he stared into the cup for a long time in the silence. The group of villagers lost patience and clamoured that God be shown to them, as promised. They asked him why he was staring at the milk so long. He replied that he had heard that milk had butter in it and so, he was trying to see the butter! They laughed; they called him a fool and a simpleton. "Don't you know that milk has to be boiled and cooled, curdled and churned before the butter can be seen as such, clear and distinct? Now, it is there in the milk, in every drop." The Monk said, "There, you have the answer to your question. God is in everything and being, in the Universe. If you want to see Him clear and distinct, you have to go through

various processes called *Sadhana*. You can see Him thereafter, not now, by merely asking me.”

The essential ingredient of this Sadhana is Love. Sadhana without Prema (love) towards all creation, will reveal only Satan.

I shall explain this a little more. Around us now, here, we have the radio waves, carrying music from the Broadcasting Station, Bombay. We have the radio waves from Delhi also; in fact, we have, here and now, the radio waves from Stations all over the world, though we are not able to see them or listen to the ‘programmes’ they carry. When we have with us a *yantra*, called receiver and when we adjust the wavelength to the station that transmits the programme and tune the receiver correctly, then we can hear the music or the news. God, who is also here, now, all around, can be cognised clearly by means of a *Mantra* (meditation on a meaningful, mystic formula). Have the *Mantra*, concentrate on it (i.e. the adjustment to the wave length) with Love (i.e. the tuning in), and you become aware of God (i.e. listening to the omnipresent programme). If the tuning-in is not accurate, you run the risk of listening to the nuisance, not to the news! So too, unless Love is poured out in profusion without any idea of Self, you run the risk of cognising Devil, not God! And if you do not develop concentration, your mind will wander in many directions at once, causing confusion.

Therefore, Love is the best instrument to win Grace. Draw everyone near, as you draw your own brother and sister and resolve to bear your responsibility with the utmost care and skill you are capable of. *In fact, life as a worker is most valuable and fundamental. Work, worship, and wisdom are three stages on the Godward path; work is the base – work that is dedicated, work that is done righteously and in reverence to others. The employer and the employees are bound close to each other, as close to each other as the heart and the body.* There can be no heart without a body and no body without a heart; both are essential for each other. The employer-employee relationship is as the bond between a father and his children. It is only when such affection and regard prevail, when the atmosphere of brotherhood is recognised among workers, that mutual help and service can flourish. Under such conditions, each can fulfil his duty gladly and peacefully.

When the employees have any problem that worries them, they can place them before the employer and both can discuss them calmly and sweetly, without unnecessary passion, without arousing hatred or malice and spreading unrest among others. Above all, each person must be conscious always of his obligations, as well as of his rights. That is the basic

requisite.

The Community Centre has been inaugurated by Me, just now. I suggest that you gather in the place once a month, or more frequently, once a fortnight or once a week, for *Satsang*, when you can have *Bhajans*, spiritual discourses, or other programmes, which will turn the mind towards the contemplation of the glory of God, or the spiritual treasures in your own selves. I desire also that the children of the labourers be provided with schools, where they will be initiated into *Bhajan*, instructed in spiritual discipline and theistic beliefs, and inspired to develop strong, virtuous character.

Discipline is the most essential equipment for man; the acquisition of discipline should be the primary goal of all endeavour. Life is rendered worthwhile and valid, only when it is lived out in disciplined ways.

It is a great source of *Ananda* for Me to be with you. Let the New Year bring you new opportunities to establish joy and peace in your hearts.”

The beginning of 1971 was conspicuous, because of its auspiciousness for devotees in Bombay, who had the benefit of Baba’s immediate presence there. In the evening of the first day of January, Baba addressed a public meeting in the compound of Dharmakshetra; the sea of humanity seemed to over-run its precincts. John Hislop is inseparable from paper and pen, whenever he is in the August Presence; he jots down notes of what he hears on spiritual matters from Baba. On this occasion, Hislop posed two questions, viz., “What does Baba mean to me, as a person born and educated in a foreign country? And what does Baba mean to the subtler aspect of me, which has no nationality?” These questions were answered by himself, when he went on to state, “He is the Lord of the heart. He has removed from my heart the hardness, accumulated during the years and made it fresh, new, and joyous.” The second question he answered, saying: “Baba’s Divinity is an overwhelming and incomprehensible mystery. He is the Supreme Teacher, He guides us to Liberation.” Blessing the devotees, Baba told them to pray for peace and concord amongst communities and nations. Mankind must learn to live happily as one human family.

During Baba’s stay in Bombay, the children attending *Bala Vihar* classes enacted plays, recited poems, sang *Bhajans*, and repeated stories selected from the Epics and *Puranas*. There were occasions, when they felt so deeply the impact of Baba that they broke down in tears, in sympathy with the characters they were portraying. One boy, concluding his account of *Bhagavad Gita* with a great appeal to the Sai Krishna, who was standing beside him,

sobbed in uncontrolled joy. No wonder Baba considered those children the Prahladas of the present age.

“The children of the Sathya Sai *Bala Vihars* must know the Sathya Sai residing in their hearts. The teachers must also take it as the *Puja* of Sai Ram. How to reveal to these children the Sai, who is in their hearts – that is the problem you should set before yourselves. By leading the children towards Divinity, the teachers are serving their parents and society, for they will cleanse and brighten their homes and surroundings,” Baba said.

Talking to the members of Service Organisation, Baba emphasised the role of *Sadhana*, which leads man to self-realisation, implying that all are waves of the vast ocean, called the Higher Self–*Paramatma*. Warning them against any display, pomp, and publicity, He advised them to link themselves with God by the chain of love, through the recitation of names saturated with His lovable qualities. His Name uttered in sloth or slight, in resentment or rancour, will constitute a weak link and the chain will not bind.

The 7th January was *Vaikuntha Ekadashi*, the day on which, “The Gates of Heaven are opened.” Baba observes these festivals in order to restore their significance. At the conclusion of the *Akhanda Bhajan* on that day, Baba revealed the real meaning of *Ekadashi* – the eleventh: when the ten senses are co-ordinated and turned towards God, then the doors of Heaven will certainly open, welcoming you into the presence of the Eleventh that is God.

Before leaving Bombay, Baba addressed members of the *Seva Dal*. He said, “Discipline comes to your rescue, when the world storms around you with the dark flood of hate or derision, or when those, in whom you put trust, shun contact and shy afar. Crucify the ego on the cross of compassion, preparing yourself by all means for serving others with your specialised skills. When you are engrossed in such work, remove the ego with *Namasmarana*, *Japam*, *Dhyanam*, and Study.” Baba exhorted them to lead simple lives, not to wear gaudy and outlandish dress and manners, for they keep the common folk away from them. Test every gesture and mannerism, every habit, and every whim of yours on this touchstone: will Baba approve of this?

During Baba’s stay at Bombay, a unique book was dedicated to Him by the members of the Maharashtra Branch of the All-India Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, founded and directed by Baba. The President of the Sabha, Sri P.K. Sawant declared that the book will ‘light a path to the Almighty’. Sri V.S. Page, the Chairman of the Maharashtra State Legislative Council, said, while offering the book, at a public meeting at Dharmakshetra, “I sat at the Feet of Sri

Sathya Sai Baba and started questioning Him on many secrets of spiritual progress. He was kind enough to give His Grace freely. Others of the *Sabha* participated in the process of questioning and learning. This is a faithful record of such Divine Dialogues, which confers illumination to those, who struggle in the darkness of confusion. Baba explained that there seemed to be three stages in the life of *Bhakta*: (1) *Tvamivaham*: I am entirely Yours. Here, the *Bhakta* completely surrenders himself to God without any reservation. (2) *Mamaivatam*: You are exclusively mine. Here, the *Bhakta* thinks himself to be the chosen devotee of the Lord and starts to make a claim on Him. (3) You alone are and I am not. I am Yours and You are nothing but I. Here, the *Bhakta* sees God alone, everywhere, including himself.”

Giving directions about *Dhyana*, Baba mentioned a method, which He has elaborated often: “Are we not at peace, when one thought ceases and another does not rise? You have to watch that moment, be one with that moment, and get fixed in that, so that there is ceaseless, continuous peace; thoughts arise and die as ripples on water; you have to look at the water, rather than the ripples. Neglect the waves, watching the water.” Sri Page pursued the subject and asked, “That is *nirvikalpa samadhi*. *Nirvikalpa* is like water without waves or ripples. Can we watch the water, even when there are waves and ripples? For us to have deep peace in the mind, should we not have experienced *nirvikalpa*, sometime or other?” Baba answered, “Yes. The person, who takes up the process of meditation, lands into a state of *nirvikalpa*, sometime or other, though it is a very difficult state to attain. Even a *Karmayogi* or a *Bhakta* touches this stage time and again, in the most natural way and knows fully what it is. Therefore, he can remember it, bring it back into experience, and feel the joy of continuous communion with God.” Sri Page writes, “This was a complete answer to my question and I was very much satisfied with it. I could not get this answer from my reading of the scriptures, but, as Sri Sathya Sai Baba was kind enough to give it, I hope it would be useful to a number of aspirants, including myself.”

Another very interesting point clarified by Baba was about *neti, neti*. (Not this, not this). He said, “*Brahman* is like a balloon that bulges; it never bursts! So, *neti* refers to the comprehension of *Brahman*, not *Brahman* itself! *Neti* does not mean, ‘No, it is not this,’ it means: ‘No, it is not that.’ ‘No, this is not all.’ ‘No, there is much more to *Brahman* than this or that.’”

Sri Page mentions that Baba distinguished between ego and Self. Baba said, “‘I’ pure and simple is God; ‘I’ identified with the body, the subtle body, and the body imagined in dream life is the ego.” Then, Sri Page asked, “God is said to be One. Is there one ‘I’, pure and

simple, for all of us?" Baba replied, "The different egos are but reflections of one and the same Self or God." Sri Page asked, "Is the mind's material just like our body? Can it be objectified?" Baba replied, "Yes. Mind is matter. Only, it is very subtle, we cannot point out its breadth, length, thickness, or weight. It can be objectified. *Sankalpa* can do that." Sri Page asked about the miracles, too. He says, "Sri Sathya Sai Baba explained these powers in a very frank manner and we accepted the same without any reservation." Baba said that, the miracles were the *Nidarshan* (witness, evidence) of God having created the world out of His Will.

The festival of *Mahashivaratri*, in 1971, was celebrated on 23rd February. Though Prasanthi Nilayam gets over-crowded during that time, the peace of that Abode is maintained, due to the Holy Rays emanating from that holiest of places. Speaking from *Santhivedika*, Baba raised a very interesting question and answered it Himself, "Why does Swami produce the *Linga* from Himself this day? Let Me tell you that it is impossible to understand the attributes of the Divine. You cannot measure Its potentialities, nor gauge the significance of Its *Mahima*; it is *Agamya*; unreachable, *Agochara*; ununderstandable. Because of these, you get an example of Divine attributes. In order to bear witness to this Divinity that is amidst you for your benefit and benediction, the *Linga* emerges. If even these glimpses are denied, faith in the Supreme will vanish and an atmosphere of greed, hatred, cruelty, violence, and irreverence will overwhelm the good, the humble, and the pious.

The *Linga* is an illustration of the limitless, formless, beginningless, Divine Principle. Baba stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam to assuage a large number of persons, who had come from long distances to fill their eyes and minds with the sanctity and elation that the *Lingodbhava* gives and to touch His Lotus Feet. After showering Grace on them, Baba left for Brindavan.

The Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay, had organised the first All-India *Bala Vikas* Teachers' Conference on 11th and 12th May. So, Baba, in response to the prayers of the devotees of Bombay, visited that city for a few days, to bless the teachers. 404 teachers, crusaders of the new Sai Era of Education, attended and were benefited by *Bhagawan's* counsel. Baba interpreted the usual, invocatory verse on the *Guru*, recited by a pupil and made it the text of His Discourse. The *Guru* is Brahma, because, He said, teaching is a creative activity; he is Vishnu, because the teacher has to foster the child, guide him, and guard him: he is Maheshwara, since he has to weed out deleterious components and undesirable traits and habits. The verse, which has been all along taken to mean conventional praise and glorification of the Teacher, thus assumed the role of a clarion call to the entire profession

itself. That is the significance of Sai Touch! “The *Guru* is praised as *Parabrahma*, the genuine supra-soul, for He reveals to the pupil the Reality that makes him free.” He said, “Recognise the vast potential lying dormant in the child; help it to express itself.”

For this reason, Baba suggested that the name of the classes for children should be changed from *Bala Vihars*; for, more than play and recreation, what has to be done is to encourage the good, the true, the beautiful in the child to blossom, to express and expand. “*Bala Vikas*,” Baba said, “is the more correct name.” He wanted that the little children must be trained and encouraged to speak before gatherings of devotees and even others, so that elders might learn from the lips of children, what they refuse now to learn from those entitled to advise them. He appreciated the short speech given by a little pupil on ‘Film posters and the horrors they inflict’. It was an eye-opener to the elders, who are tolerating such insults on the innocence and purity of home life.

All over the country now, the tiny tots of the Bala Vikas sing *Bhajans*, draw pictures, paint, write stories and relate them, about heroes of the spirit and the great mothers of the land, and enact plays, depicting elevating incidents from the *Upanishads*, *Itihasas*, and *Puranas*, as well as the religious literature of all faiths. A big revolution in thought and in social relations is fast coming into fruition. The Maharashtra State Conference and the Gujarat State Conference of the Organisation were held in May. Baba was present in Bombay for the Maharashtra Conference. He sent a message of Blessings to Dwaraka for the Gujarat Conference. “I am watching the entire proceedings; do not deplore that I am not present with you. I am present as the Eternal Witness,” He wrote.

While returning from Bombay, Baba presided over the Mysore State Conference at Dharwar, on the 14th. About 200 Office-Bearers, of the Units from all parts of Mysore, were charged with steadier faith and deeper devotion for the work ahead.

“The College at Anantapur,” wrote Dr. S. Bhagawantham, D.Sc., “is a concrete manifestation of something superhuman. At an enormous cost of four million rupees, within a record time of ten months, Baba has reared a structure, which is good enough for a University! Who did all this work? Where have the funds come from? If you want to see Divinity in action, you can find concrete evidence at Anantapur! It is something beyond the pale of human reason and mortal prowess!”

The College was to be inaugurated on the 8th July, '71, by the President of India, although there seemed to be no sign or hope of completing the building by the stipulated date!

Everyone swore that it was an impossible task. A big industrialist, who had visited Anantapur a week before the inauguration, said, “If I had applied all my energies with my entire organisational machine, I would have thought that it would take another six months for completion of the work.”

The college building is the architectural archetype for Sai Era in education, for individual and social uplift. Baba has the Sai Emblem, depicting the many faceted adventure of man to realise the Divinity inherent in him as His very breath, hoisted on the central tower as the symbol of hope and victory. The college building is a full circle of charm and dignity. It symbolises the Fulfilment of the Search, called Religion. It is Brahman, the beginningless and endless, which a circle alone can represent. It is redolent with the fragrance of the cultural heritage of India. It is resonant with the echoes of *Sanathana Dharma*. It carries sky high the Lotus Flower (*Hridaya-kamala*), which blossoms at the first touch of the rays of the Rising Sun (Intelligence, Reason).

Baba has installed a clock on the tower, so that time, the Divine watchman, can awaken, hasten, and warn the process of teaching and learning, shaping and strengthening that happens in the college. Architects sat with Baba to translate His ideas on papers, but the Supreme Architect had it all in His Will and that was enough. The Anantapur College looks like a prayer rising up from the heart, a poem of praise for the giver of all good. The building is a miracle in a marble, brick and stone, colour and light.

On the day of the inauguration, an international gathering saw a constellation of great personalities. The President of India, Sri V.V. Giri, the wife of the President, Srimathi Saraswati Giri, the Governor of Mysore State, Sri Dharma Vira, the Lt. Governor of Goa State, Sri Nakul Sen, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Vice-Chancellor of the Venkateswara University, Dr. Jagannath Reddy, Sri G.C. Venkanna, and Sri M. N. Lakshminarasaiyah, Ministers of the Government of Andhra Pradesh – it was a bouquet of talent, authority, sacrifice, and patriotism.

Above all, there was Baba, fresh as a flower, beaming with a benignant smile, with no trace on His Divine Face of the exhaustion, worry, or anxiety that He had removed from the faces of even the busiest workers around Him. The bright morning was rendered doubly bright by the Light of Love that shone on that Face.

Dr. Gokak, Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, welcomed the distinguished guests. He communicated to everyone an awareness of the epochal character of

the moment. “This college and the others that Baba has planned to establish in every State in India will inculcate Indian Culture in its essence and purity; they will develop not only knowledge and skill, but balance, insight, and faith in the unity of all religions and in the Reality of Oneself.” Dr. Bhagawantham, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra and Osmania Universities, said, “History has few parallels of a college that is so well equipped on the date of its Inauguration!” Dr. Jagannath Reddy spoke of the phenomenal growth of the college in the short span of 3 years. The Minister for Education said, “When Baba establishes a college for women, we can be certain that it will not be just one among many. It will be a beacon, a lesson for others, a model, a pioneer.” Sri Brahmananda Reddy greeted the Day as a Festival for Andhra Pradesh and for Bharatiya Culture itself. Sri Dharma Vira felt that the college for women will be of lasting benefit for the whole country, since educating a woman is educating a whole family. The President declared that it was a good augury for India that Baba is not only conferring spiritual enlightenment to millions, but granting the proper type of education to the youth of the land.

The 8th July, 1971 was *Guru Pournima*, the Full Moon Festival, dedicated to the Primal Spiritual Preceptor, Vyasa and also, to the adoration of Spiritual Preceptor by aspirant. It is the Day, when millions seek to have *Darshan* of Baba. It was Baba’s Will that the College, in which the *Guru-Sishya* relationship of Ancient India was to be revived, should be inaugurated that Day itself, for He had willed that the Women’s College at Anantapur must be shifted from temporary sheds and rooms to its own magnificent home, with the beginning of the academic year.

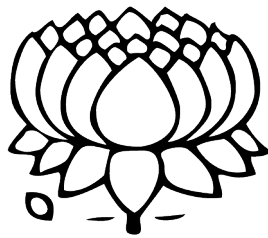
Baba pointed out that, as lava from subterranean fire, a huge upsurge of low desires is smothering man, though his chief desire should be the visualising of the God in him and the cultivation of Peace, Beauty, Truth, and Love that are the marks of that Divinity. “Man has in him a fountain of joy, peace, love, and courage. Cultivate these by precept, example, and exercise. Then, the educated men and women will have security and sweetness as long as they live.”

“India is being forged into a *Bhogabhoomi* – land of luxury – a land of sky-scrapers, tinned foods, air-conditioning, and television. Indians are being shaped into an imitative, insurgent, ill-disciplined mass. They are being transplanted on other soils and encouraged to grow, without roots. This is an insult to our past and a dangerous defiance of history. It is sacrilege on the sanctity of time, on the holy purpose of the human body. That is the reason I have decided that this college has to be inaugurated on *Guru-Purnima* Day, on *Guruvar*

(Thursday) as a *Guru-kula*-the hermitage school of ancient India, in which the highest ideals of life were instilled by personal example and guidance, by the *Guru*, to the pupils eager to imbibe.”

Baba concluded with the Blessing: “The seed has been planted; it will sprout and spread heavy with fruits, providing shade, security, and sustenance to all.”

The educational institutions started with the Blessing of Baba will not imitate, nor help to forge out of competitive or compulsive society. They look forward with hope and envisage a society built on love and co-operation, blossoming the human spirit and the human community.





Chapter 17

The Names We Know

We find in Baba the integral manifestation that combines these three roles.

He is the great teacher, far-famed for His simple and sweet exposition of Vedanta, today. He is the great dispenser of love or Prema. Finally, He is the great restorer of the essence of spirituality to mankind.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is how Baba is referred to by the millions that adore Him. He announced Himself as Sai Baba, when He spoke of His identity at the age of 14, on 23rd May, 1940, when His father insisted on being told what Baba meant by saying that, He had His disciples to look after and His unfinished work to be completed. "Sathya Narayana" was His Name and Raju was the family appellation. This was shortened into Sathya, the name by which Baba was known at home, village, and school. To the name announced by Baba Himself – Sai Baba – was added the word "Sathya". Five or six years later, after the announcement, the devotees, who desired to distinguish Him from Sai Baba as He had manifested Himself at Shirdi, realised that Baba Himself was the Shirdi manifestation. But, they did not wish to confuse the minds of those, who loved to cling to the memory of Shirdi Baba. "Baba is the word used in Marathi and Hindi to refer to saints. It means 'Father'. 'Sai' is the name, by which Baba had been spoken to by the priest of the Khandoba temple near Shirdi, when He arrived there as a youth. 'Sai' means 'Master.' It is a derivate of the Sanskrit word Swami. The word 'Sai' has also been traced to the Persian word Shah, Shahi, Sahi, Sai.

'Sri' is an honorific prefixed to the names of deities, sacred texts, and eminent persons. It is an auspicious word, indicating good fortune. The word also came to be used as an honorific for each individual, universalizing or democratising good fortune as it were. This democratisation has itself led to another outburst of robbery, on the part of the disciples of the heads of *Mutts* or monasteries. For example, the prefix–Sri 108, meaning that spiritual

eminence is indicated by the fact that the name is to be preceded by a string of 108 Sris.

The word ‘Bhagawan’ means one endowed with *Bhaga*. According to ancient, Sanskrit lexicographers, *Bhaga* means: (1) *Aishwarya* – authority derived from power, (2) *Virya* – heroism, bravery, (3) *Yasa* – fame, (4) *Sriyah* – prosperity, (5) *Gnyana* – wisdom, and (6) *Vairagya* – detachment.

Baba’s *aishwarya* or authority derived from power is self-evident. Masters of special branches of study like doctors, lawyers, engineers, and artists acknowledge Him as their master in their respective fields. For, He can correct them and give them invaluable help. Fame and prosperity follow Him wherever He goes, though He has never cared for either. As for bravery, wisdom, and detachment, thousands, who have known Him, know Him as the embodiment of these qualities. Baba declared at the World Conference held in Bombay, in 1968, “The loyalty and devotion that the previous Incarnations commanded, arose partly through fear and awe and partly from super-human power. The Sathya Sai Manifestation has none of these appendages. Nevertheless, it commands the adoration of millions in this age of rampant godlessness, materialism, cynical disregard of higher values and aggressive irreverence.” This is because, He carries His message of love to the very vortex of disbelief and nihilism, like light penetrating into the very heart of darkness. Himself an unfailing reservoir of health, happiness, and wisdom, He is, at the same time, profoundly unattached, accepting devotion and derision with equal unconcern. He wrote to His elder brother, even as a boy of twenty, that He had no particular name or native place and that all names and places were His. A supreme example of desirelessness, He has only one desire: the desire, which made Him descend from the all-pervading, divine consciousness – the desire to save the world from the consequences of ignorance.

It is laid down in the *Shastras* that only those who have mastered the six primary mysteries can be referred to as ‘Bhagawan’.

Utpattincha Vinasamcha

Bhutanam Agatim Gatim

Vetthi Vidyam Avidyam cha

Sa Vachya Bhagawan iti

“He, who knows the mystery of the origin and dissolution of created beings, the mystery of their doom and their redemption and of their ignorance and wisdom, is alone to be spoken of

as *Bhagawan*.”

It is crystal clear that this is what Baba stands for. As He told Arnold Schulman, “I know your past, I know your future. So, I know why you suffer, how you can escape from suffering, and when you finally will. I know everything that has happened to everybody in the past, everything that is happening, and everything that will happen in the future. I know why a person has to suffer in this life and what will happen to him the next time he is born, because of that suffering this time.”

In His speech to an enormous crowd at the Patel Stadium, in Bombay, He said, “I know all that happens to all, because I am in everyone. This current is in every bulb. I illumine every consciousness. I am the inner Motivator in each one of you.” He declared at Anantapur, “Even if the fourteen worlds in the upper and nether regions of the universe unite, in order to delay or disrupt the work, for which I have come in this Body, it will not suffer or falter.” He said at a meeting in Prasanthi Nilayam, in 1965, “No *Avatar* has done like this before—going among the masses in the villages, seeking out the distressed, waking up the sleeping, quickening the dull, showering Grace on millions, and counselling, consoling, guiding, uplifting them along the path of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema*. I am neither *Guru*, nor God. I am you! You are Me! That is the Truth and you will realise it, when you reach the goal. You are the waves and I am the Ocean.”

On Christmas Day, 1970, at Dharmakshetra, Baba said, “There is no mesmerism, miracle, or magic in what I do! Mine is genuine Divine power. Small minds and limited intellects are too weak to perceive the Divine. The Divine magnificence is too much and too overwhelming for their *maya*-filled eyes. And so, they ridicule it and call it the result of *Yoga Siddhi*, mesmerism, or magic. But, the Divine can do anything. He has all the power in the palm of His Hand. His powers are not such as would abide for a time and then, fade away.” He had said already on the occasion of *Dasara*, in 1963, “The man, who dies, prays to Me to receive him. The relations, who lament the loss, pray to Me to prolong his life! I know both sides of the picture, the past and present, the crime and the punishment, the achievement and the reward. And so, I am just modifying the sentence now and then with grace. I am not affected in the least by the birth of this one, or the death of the other. My nature is unalloyed bliss.”

The word ‘Bhagawan’ also means ‘Blissful’. The Vishnu Purana says that the syllable ‘*Bha*’ means ‘the cherisher and supporter of the universe’, ‘*Ga*’ means ‘the leader, the impeller, or the guide’, and ‘*Va*’ means ‘that elemental spirit, in which all beings exist and which exists in

all beings'. This 'Va' is also to be found in the name of Vasudeva, which was the name that Baba said was His own, when He was at Shirdi. Gunaji says in his biography of 'Shirdi Baba' (page 103): "Baba said that, He was omnipresent – occupying light, air, water, world, land, and heaven – and that He was not limited. He said, 'I always live everywhere. I have no form. I require no door to enter.'" – (page 155). In His present incarnation too, Baba entered *Swami Abhedananda's* room in Ramanashram, even when the door was bolted, in order to assure and illumine the monk and accept him as a disciple. He also entered an operation theatre in a surgical home, in Bangalore, in spite of bolted doors, for blessing the patient, when a prostate gland operation was going on.

Sanskrit classical text also gives other definitions of 'Bhagawan'. The Saranagati Gadya says, "Bhagawan is He, who is boundless Bliss, Bliss that rewards every being in the Universe." The Gadya goes on to say that Bhagawan must have an extraordinary knowledge of all the mysteries of the world, dominion over all the forces of nature, power, splendour, gracious manners, affection as of a mother, softness and compassion, rectitude and uprightness, comradeship, impartiality, mercy, nobility, generosity, skilfulness in strategy, heroism, dash and enthusiasm, steadiness in truth, and all other good qualities. Dr. Gokak is never tired of pointing out that Baba is, more than anyone else, power, dominion, majesty, and splendour. It is this element of power that, among other things, distinguishes an incarnation from a saint. Baba's scholarship is overwhelming. With hardly any formal education, He has on the tip of His tongue atomic formulae, *Vedic* hymns, medical recipes, and *Tantric mantras*. Sri Aurobindo has said, "Each incarnation holds before men His own example and declares of Himself that He is the way and the gate: He declares, too, the oneness of His humanity with the Divine Being."

Man, after all, is nothing but the Divine, bound by the three chains of time, space, and causation. This is why Baba says, "You become Bhagawan, as soon as you express the *Atma* principle. Each one of you can become Bhagawan, by merging your separate individual *Jiva* or self in the ocean of universal *Atma*."

The word *Avatar* means 'descent, coming down, alighting.' This is the limitation that the limitless imposes on itself, in order to lead mankind. In a discourse on *Shivaratri* a few years ago, Baba recited a verse, such as He is used to composing and reciting at the commencement of a discourse, in which He recounted the aims and purposes of His own *Avatar* at Puttaparthi, "Vasudeva, who lives in all, has come in this body at Puttaparthi, to show to the *Kali* age the path of truth, to eliminate hate and greed, to save the good and humble from pain

and shame, to reveal the significance that lies obscured in ancient texts, to destroy the pomp and pride of little men, and to redeem the pledge of grace given to mankind.” He has declared that He is the Divine Essence that is known and worshipped in many Names and Forms, all over the world.

In his ‘Essays on the Gita’, Sri Aurobindo has analysed the role of an *Avatar*, “The *Avatar* comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that human nature may, by moulding its thoughts, feelings, and actions on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, transfigure itself into the Divine. The *Avatar* is always a dual phenomenon of Divinity and humanity. The Divine takes upon Himself human nature with all its outward limitations... The object of the *Avatar*’s descent is to show that human birth, with all its limitations, can be made a means and an instrument of the Divine birth and Divine works.”

One has to remember in this context what Baba said to Schulman, “If I had come as Narayana with four arms, they would have put Me in a circus, charging money from people to see Me. If I had come only as a man, like any other man, who would listen to Me? So, I had to come in this human form, but with more than the human power and wisdom.”

Baba also explained the mystery of *Avatarhood* in a simple way, when He said on His Birthday Festival, 1971, “Every one of you is an *Avatar*. You are the Divine, encased like Me in human flesh and bone! Only you are unaware of it! You have come into this prison of incarnation through the errors of many lives. But, I have put on this mortal body out of My own free Will. You are bound to the body with the ropes of three *Gunas*, I am free, untouched by them, for the *Gunas* are but My playthings. I am not bound by them, I use them to bind you. You are moved this way and that by desire. I have no desire, except the one to make you desireless.”

Baba’s call to suffering humanity stands out in its directness and simplicity: “Why fear, when I am here? Come unto Me all ye, who suffer!” Baba assures us, if we take one step towards Him, He takes ten towards us. He hears us, when we cry out in anguish. As the *Gita* declares, “The hand and the feet, the eyes and the ears, and the head and tongue of the Divine are everywhere, to help us and save us and lead us to the Divine, when we have a sincere desire to ascend to the Divine.”

The *Avatar*, as Baba has declared, shares the possession of the five senses with the world of animals and human beings. He shares with mankind the four attributes of mind, reason,

emotion, and *Ahamkara* or the ego. But, the *Avatar* possesses seven characteristics, which are unique. Four of these can be enumerated as follows: *Srishti* – or the power to create; *Sthithi* – or the power to foster, guard, and protect; *Laya* – or the power to destroy; *Thirodhana* – or the power to make things disappear. The three remaining attributes are such that only a full-fledged *Avatar* has them: *Anugraha* – or Grace, which may be of two kinds, Grace for the deserving and Grace conferred regardless of the recipient deserving it, like a bolt from the blue. Again, He is ever present, where His Name or *Nama* is uttered and where His *Rupa* or Form is recognised. The *Vibhuti* that falls from Baba's portraits in different parts of the world, itself shows how His *Rupa* or form brings us into contact with Him, if He is remembered.

As an example of a concrete presence, where the Name and Form are remembered, I may quote from a letter written by the Cowans of Orange Country, USA: "In our home, we have a small room filled with the pictures of our great Lord Sathya Sai Baba. It is here we meditate before retiring. Many times, people of the Sai family drop in and pray. Each night, we watch for *Vibhuti* to manifest, but so far, none has appeared. It was about a month ago, when some friends, who are devotees of Sathya Sai Baba, came to meditate with us in His room. I wish to say that the fragrance of this room has a beautiful odour, as if hundreds of flowers were giving forth their blooms to us. This is one of the gifts the great Swami bestows on us. Our friends were amazed at the sweetness of the room.

We all sat down around the small altar and gave admiration to the Picture! And behold! Upon a large coloured picture of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a Sapphire Star had appeared with eight rays manifesting from it, as if it was a necklace, with a Gem at His throat centre! The word travelled fast and many of the Sai family have come to see the miracle of the Lord."

In many thousands of homes and public prayer halls in India, Africa, Ceylon, and other countries, Baba has willed the devotees to get the sacred curative *Vibhuti* from the portraits hung on the walls. There was *Vibhuti* at the shrine in the home of the Cowans, too. Here is an account given by a sceptic of his visit to the shrine in the home of the Cowans. The visitor's name is Joel Riordon, a Hollywood writer of film scripts: "My wife mentioned to me that a picture in the house of the Cowans was producing ashes! She immediately walked away. Now, she did it... dangled a bit of curiosity in my path, curiosity that I couldn't resist. Sunday morning, I was ready for the challenge... when we arrived at the meeting after following Mr.& Mrs. Hislop's car for over one hour, I thought there is a church three miles from my house and I won't even take the time to go there. What am I doing here? At the meeting,

voices rang out, as they were clapping to the rhythm of a chant: there was a speech by Jack Hislop, about a letter he received by mail from Sai Baba and the mystery – how it arrived without a stamp! ‘So, the stamp dropped off in the mail man’s bag,’ I thought. I am certain there was more to the story, but my mind was on the picture. Where is it? Why can’t I see it now? Finally, the moment came; we were allowed to go into another room, where a shrine had been set up with Sai Baba’s picture – and it was producing ashes!

I tried not to be conspicuous, but I must have been, because as I approached the picture, looking at it from all angles, from the front, top, and back (I even pretended to tie my shoes, to see under the table; to see if I could find out what trick caused this ash-flow), I saw the hostess talking to two young boys and as the three of them stared at me, I had the feeling they were expecting me to steal the picture or something in the house. I immediately departed with ‘a guilty look’.”

There are certain remarkable, ancient, astrological texts, called *Nadis* in South India and *Bhrgu Samhitas* in Northern India. They contain details of the lives of numerous persons, even of people, who lived beyond the seas. The hereditary custodians of these manuscripts read out the relevant portions of the life of the person that comes to consult them. The late Dr. K. M. Munshi wrote some years ago, in the Bhavan’s Journal, that the details recorded, regarding his life, in some of these manuscripts astounded him.

The record mentions the exact time and place, where he was to propose to Smt. Leevathi Munshi, his future wife. Sri Sharma, a former Chief Minister of Haryana State, states that the predictions recorded about him in *Bhrgu Samhitas*, showed that he would meet God in His human incarnation at Prasanthi Nilayam. Sri Sharma says that, it was a job for him to find out where Prasanthi Nilayam was. Baba received him graciously and created for him a Nataraja image, which he could wear on his person all the time. Whenever there is a reference in these texts to Baba, He is referred to as ‘the Father of all worlds, the Supreme Physician, who cures at lightning speed, and Founder of *Pathashalas*, institutions of higher learning, and hospitals’.

Sri J.P. Maroo writes, “I have a family astrologer, who belongs to Nepal. He remembers and can recite and quote from the 15,000 verses of the ancient, astrological cyclopedia, called *Bhrgu Samhita*! Last October, that is to say in 1967, he came to see me before returning to Nepal and I requested him for information about some outstanding event that may occur in the near future. He consulted the *Samhita* and recited a verse, which said that on 4th

November, 1967, I will have *Pratyaksha Deva Darshana!* (The *Darshana* of God in concrete Form!) And it happened as forecasted! Baba came to Usha Kiran, to my home and accepted my worship on 4th November, 1967.”

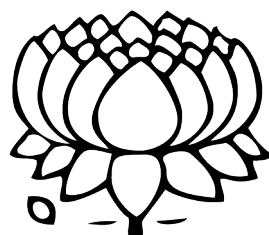
Speaking to a group of seekers from San Francisco, in the USA and from Ceylon, in June, 1970, at Brindavan, Whitefield, Baba said that, the Divine is as eager to be one with the individual soul, as the individual is eager to merge with the Divine. He said that, this was a gradual process, very much like what happens to stalactites and stalagmites in lime-stone caves. One of these is formed in the roof, pointing downwards and the other on the floor, pointing upwards. The formation on the floor is due to the deposit of one drop in a thousand years, from the stalactite in the roof pointing downwards and the other on the floor pointing upwards. Baba was demonstrating how this happens with the use of His fingers. He was a little dissatisfied with this demonstration Himself. He then waved His hand in a very long, flat, circular motion and materialised a round, black stone, the weight of which made His hand vibrate like a tuning-fork. The stone was round in shape, slightly flat at the top and bottom, and it bore no marks on it. It was smooth and shiny. Baba lifted it, held it a few inches away from His mouth, and blew a hole into it with sovereign ease and grace. This hole appeared like two intersecting circles. The place of intersection was wide open and the two circles were touching each other with concentric rings that bore in towards the centre and were trying to merge into each other. Baba used this stone to illustrate His point and then, gave it to a *Sadhaka* in the group, named Gill. About a year later, Gill happened to show it to some Indian friends in Juhu, Bombay. They told him, to his utter astonishment, that the stone, with the imprint blown on it, was a fossil called *Saligram* and that it was used by Hindus for worship. Howard Melvin, a member, who happened to be one of this group, told me about this interesting incident.

Another fact that sets us wondering regarding Baba, is the many facets of His personality. One sees in Him a paragon, upon which each one models himself. The manager of a mighty manufacturing concern sees in Him an ideal Organiser and Manager. A doctor sees in Him the Perfect Master of diagnostic and medical skill. An engineer or architect finds in Him the Master, who humbles their pride with a blue pencil and fills their heads with ideas and designs, any one of which can make a fortune for them through its beauty and practicability. A musician finds in Baba the primal source of melody and harmony. When someone praised Baba for His musical talent and compared Him favourably with Tyagaraja, Baba asked him, “And who do you think taught Tyagaraja music?” Baba is the poet of poets. Not only is He

Himself an inspiring theme; His conversation and charm release in the poet springs of inspiration hidden away for a long time. A philosopher can learn from Baba the art of laying bare enigmatic thought-processes in a simple and straight-forward manner. A painter of genius meets his challenge in the ever-varying expressiveness of His face and eyes. An actor learns from Him those subtle inflections and intonations of the voice that best express the soul. A trained teacher finds a Master of profoundly new methods in Baba. As the *Gita* says, “The Divine is the best, the mightiest, the most charming, the wisest, the highest, and the most intricate being; an incarnation of the Divine bears this stamp on its personality.” Baba asked Schulman; “How can a fish understand the sky?” He also remarked elsewhere, “I am all deities in one. You may endeavour your best for thousands of years and have all mankind with you in your search, but you cannot understand My Reality.”

In his book entitled, ‘Krishna, a study in the theory of the *Avatars*’, Bhagawandas speaks of the circumstances that bring about the advent of an *Avatar*. “When false teachers arise and elevate flesh above spirit, when the lower passions and the six inner enemies, or seven deadly sins have mankind in their grip, when ruthless ambition, selfishness, and evil sway the world, then it is that the *Avatar* appears. Each one of these three sets of circumstances may bring about the advent of an *Avatar*. The predominance of false teachers brings down the *Avatar*, who re-illuminates the science of spirit. When wrong emotions prevail, there is the advent of the *Avatar*, who is full of love-compelling purity and self-effacement. When evil rules the world, there is the advent of the *Avatar*, who rights widespread wrongs and is the adjuster of natural *Karma*.”

We find in Baba the integral manifestation that combines these three roles. He is the great teacher, far-famed for His simple and sweet exposition of *Vedanta*, today. He is the great dispenser of love or *Prema*. Finally, He is the great restorer of the essence of spirituality to mankind. We may say of Baba what Prof. P. Shankaranarayanan says in his book, ‘Sri Ramachandra’: “For man to receive God’s stimulus and to make the responses, God must become a person in flesh and blood, human in His Divinity and yet, Divine in His humanity. To infinitise man, God has to finitise Himself.”





Chapter 18

One Word More

Baba is the Indweller in each human heart. He gathers people around Him, day after day and deals with them in love and compassion. Physical illness, mental worry, psychic disorder, economic want, family discord, intellectual deficiency, professional set-backs: He handles each problem as it comes with unfailing skill.

The person, who reads this book about Baba and the two preceding volumes in the series, is sure to experience an impact, which will not allow him to be the same again. He will have to take up the challenge and prove it or disprove it to himself, for his own satisfaction, if he is earnest about the view of life presented in this book. Baba can dismiss a cancerous growth by saying, “The cancer is cancelled.” He can extinguish forest fires around the Kuchuma Mount on Mexican border, by a declaration made at His *ashram* in India, “No more fires!” He can create a jar of sacred ash, which can never be exhausted by use and the gift of spiritual ecstasy by a simple touch. He knows each one’s past and future. He says that, we are the same as He is. It is simply our delusion that we feel we are different.

The Publishers Weekly wrote about Arnold Schulman’s book, ‘Baba’, Sathya Sai Baba calls Himself an *Avatar*, an Incarnation of God, His followers, who number over six million, come to His *ashram* at Puttaparthi in Southern India, to sit at His feet, sing their prayers, and ask for miracles. Baba answers their prayers: He cures the incurable, materialises objects and holy ashes, sustains the faithful and convinces the doubtful.

We may frequently fall into the error of deeming Baba to be a mortal like ourselves, forgetting the fact He is the very Divine Essence that has willed itself into each mortal body. Baba has said that, He as well as the Sai Baba of Shirdi have been emanations of the same Essence. Baba is one with all the *Avatars* that have descended so far and those that will come

hereafter. There is no inner circle or outer, among Baba's devotees. All mankind is His fold. Numberless persons have been drawn by Him away from low desires and passions, from fanatical and cynical attitudes. The Name 'Sai' will soon be embellished in every heart.

Prasanthi Nilayam is the *Ashram* at Puttaparthi, the village, which He has immortalised by deciding to be born there. As He always says, "My residence is in your hearts. My Prasanthi Nilayam is in you."

Baba's *Bhajans* have penetrated into numberless homes and led to the itinerant singing in cities, waking up the hearts of men to the glory of God. Baba can be adored in all forms and addressed by all the names that God bears.

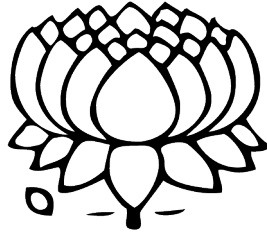
One sees in Him the power that works as the effulgence of the transcendent ray that beams beyond cosmic laws. He calls us near and wipes out tears of sorrow, in spite of our faults and failures. He declared in 1962 that the Chinese menace would not be there at the time of the Birthday Celebrations, on November 23rd. It is a fact that the Chinese retreated beyond the Himalayas on the night of the 22nd November. In 1965, when everyone thought that the *Dasara* celebrations should be postponed, in view of the Pakistan invasion, Baba declared that the *Dasara* celebrations would be held as usual. As a matter of fact, a ceasefire was ordered and accepted, three days earlier than *Dasara*. The Fifth All India Conference of the Sathya Sai Seva Samitis had been fixed in Madras to take place on 22nd and 23rd December, 1971. There were frantic telegrams about whether the Conference was postponed, for Pakistan bombed Indian airfield on 3rd December. The events that followed seemed to predict that there might soon be a global war. Baba said that, there would be no war and that the Conference should be held as planned. The war came to an end on the 17th December, 1971.

Baba is the indweller in each human heart. He gathers people around Him day after day and deals with them in love and compassion. Physical illness, mental worry, psychic disorder, economic want, family discord, intellectual deficiency, professional set-backs: He handles each problem as it comes, with unflinching skill.

He gives holy ashes, because that is the ultimate form that things take – Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, their ambitions and their empires. That is how He teaches us the lesson of detachment. He cures us of greed and hatred, by reminding us of the ultimate fate that awaits all earthly pomp and glory.

That He is all knowing, even a sceptic like Schulman was compelled to admit, when Baba

mentioned to Schulman his visit to Japan to study Zen Buddhism and other details. Schulman thought that Baba was parading information that He had collected from Dr. Gokak about him. Sensing this the very minute, Baba told Schulman that Gokak had given Him no information. He proceeded to refer to a certain ailment of his wife, which no one else had known. He told him that it was Baba, who had brought about the disappearance of this ailment a week before he boarded the plane for India, so that he could come to India in time. Baba is an open book for all to read. He is the Guide as well as the Goal.



About SSSSTPD

On 1st January, 2009, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust (SSSST) commenced operations with four divisions; the Bhakta Sahayak divisions (one in Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi and another in Brindavan, Bangalore), the Publications division, and the Media division.

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software, etc. for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

2) The publication and distribution of Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-versions of the magazine are also released simultaneously and are available in PDF and EPUB formats on www.sanathanasarathi.org.

3) Maintaining a reporting channel, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers'- for free distribution.

4) Organising and conducting seminars and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.

5) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of various spiritual and religious books.

Other Books By SSSSTPD (In English)

1. Sai Sathya Sakha, 2. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1972
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