



HEART TO HEART



RADIO SAI LISTENER'S JOURNAL

॥ Lingodbhava ॥



COVER STORY

The Symbolic Birth of God in Time and Space

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PRANAMS AT THE LOTUS FEET

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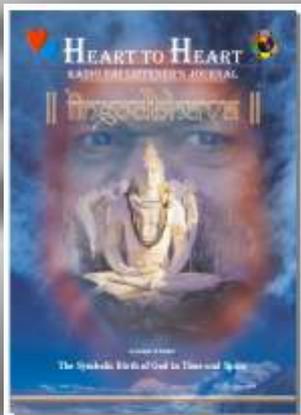
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Dear Readers,

This issue of Heart to Heart carries a story on Lingodbhava, the emergence of Lingam from Swami on the sacred day of Shivarathri. The article, which explains all aspects of the festival of Shivarathri, is by late Dr. Eruch B Fanibunda, a reputed dentist, and a great devotee of Bhagavan. It is from his book "Vision of the Divine".

Between YOU and US

Dear Reader,

Sai Ram and warm greetings from Prashanti Nilayam. As is only to be expected, this issue has a strong Sivarathri flavour. We hope you like the items we are featuring for you, especially the walk down memory lane.

We have now published over 10 issues of H2H in a row, and the wonderful, indeed the unbelievable thing about it is that every issue has appeared exactly on the dot that is, on the morning [Indian time of course] of the due date. This has happened every single time, and we owe this commendable punctuality entirely to our colleagues in S.N.Informatics who are most active in making this electronic magazine a reality, besides adding their own special touch of elegance. We in SGH salute our colleagues in SNI and publicly express our deepest gratitude for their sustained assistance in this and so many of our other joint ventures.

As soon as this issue appears, our friends in SNI will take a break [well deserved of course], but we of the SGH Team and Prashanti Digital Studio cannot afford to so relax. In fact, right then we would be running around trying to get everything in position for the first-ever live telecast of Sivarathri proceedings. Imagine that! Even as we here in Prashanti Nilayam have Swami's Darshan, hear Him and sing Bhajans on that holy day, so would millions all over India, thanks to the live telecast. In fact, there is a move for devotees to assemble in the various Sai centres and sing the same Bhajans that we shall be singing here! Fantastic, is it not? A whole country resounding with the Name of the Lord, all sung at the same time! If that is not a miracle, what else would you call it?

For the record we must state that once before, on the occasion of the Unity Cup Cricket Match [in December 1996], there was in fact a live telecast from Puttaparthi, but that telecast was arranged by the National TV namely Doordarshan. This time, it is our crew that will do all the camera and audio work.

Wonders will never cease and the way things are going, it may well come to pass that on 23rd November, 2005, that is on the occasion of the Eightieth Birthday of our Beloved Swami, we may have an Outdoor Broadcasting van in the Hillview stadium to bring the proceedings live, not merely all over India but over the whole world!

By way of wrapping this up, we urge you to look up what Swami told Hislop about the Glory of this Avatar!

Wishing all of you, wherever you are, a Blissful experience on the Holy occasion of Sivarathri.

Jai Sai Ram.

SGHTEAM

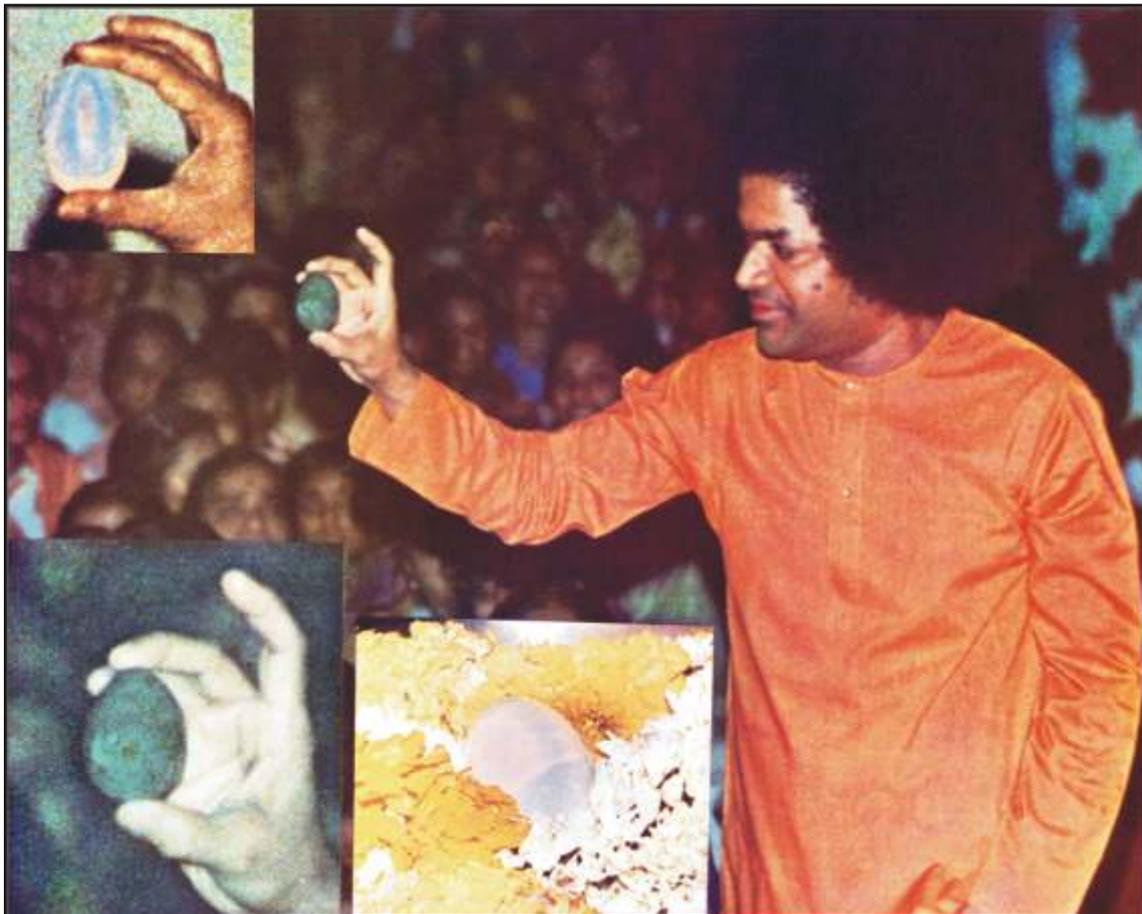


Cover Story
lingodbhava

The Symbolic Birth of God in Time and Space

Dear Readers,

This issue of Heart to Heart carries a story on Lingodbhava, the emergence of Lingam from Swami on the sacred day of Shivarathri. The article, which explains all aspects of the festival of Shivarathri, is by late Dr. Eruch B Fanibunda, a reputed dentist, and a great devotee of Bhagavan. It is from his book "Vision of the Divine".



For the twentieth century Man, the word God is an inexplicable mystery. It is perhaps a vague, hazy idea in his mind associated with the scriptures, conditioned by what has been drummed into his head as a child and modified in light of experiences gained during his later years. Truly, he does not know anything about the

Divinity which is enshrined within his body. A mere study of the scriptures will not reveal God to man or grant an experience of Him even in a small measure. The scriptures are like the signposts on a road, pointing to the ultimate destination. They merely point out the ways and the means to reach the Goal. Simply by pouring over a map one does not

reach the destination. Similarly, God cannot be known by reading or expounding the sacred scriptures, but by living them. A child who has been taught scriptures by adults who do not practise the disciplined path indicated by the scriptures, will soon discover the hypocrisy of the elders, and will have scant respect for them and even less for the scriptures. That



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child is today's Man, who has been enveloped by the superficial glitter of science and technology, possession of transitory wealth and acquisition of fickle fame. Steeped in arrogance and pride, he drives humanity from one crisis to another and in the process creates untold misery for millions of people. He still occasionally hears about God but he has never seen Him, and he does not care much about a God who will not co-operate with him by eliminating the misery and suffering inflicted on others, by his own selfish behaviour. Mankind is caught in this mighty grip of ignorance, propagating itself in an endless vicious circle, from one generation to the next.

Who can vanquish this terrible ignorance and rescue humanity? It is doubtful if man alone by himself, can ever hope to emerge victorious with everlasting peace and equanimity, enshrined in his heart. Only God can break this vicious circle by revealing Himself to humanity and dispelling the darkness of ignorance enveloping mankind. To achieve this herculean task, God has perforce to enter the framework of His creation to reveal Himself as an Avatar, through the agency of a human body. God by Himself is incomprehensible to man. The gulf is too wide between man and God. So in the body of an Avatar, God behaves as an *Ideal* man and works the miracle of breaking this vicious circle, by giving illumination from *within the heart* of man. Of all the living creatures only

man has the faculty of discrimination and the ability to exercise a freedom of choice. *In consonance with this freedom, the Avatar brings about an inner transformation through Divine Love,*



The Vibhuthi Abhishekam

without any form of external pressure or compulsion. This is the secret of Divine intervention in the affairs of men. Further, by a manifestation of Divine Wisdom and Omnipotence, He gives unassailable proof that He is not just another saintly personage, but God Himself. The most erudite scholar can neither explain these proofs nor understand them; but he can most certainly experience them. From his experience he can also learn the lessons of humility and reverence, and wonder at the Glory of God in human form, walking on this earth today as Shri Sathya Sai Baba. The subject of this story is one such proof given by Baba to humanity, of

all climes and all religions.

As mentioned elsewhere, the different religions of the world contain only some aspects of the ONE God and no one particular religion can claim to know God in His totality. A little thought will convince the reader of the subtle truth that all religions are contained *within* God, and therefore, no one religion can contain the *Infinite God*. All scriptures and all religions are earth bound and time bound, and therefore they can only present to the people those aspects of the *Infinite* which were revealed to that particular religion, within certain limitations. As soon as these limitations are recognised, then all obstacles are removed

for a broader understanding of the Supreme Infinite. The purpose of all religions is to remove the barriers between man and man, and certainly not to erect them. He who creates such barriers through myopic vision, commits a grave blunder against the very religion he professes, and creates strife between man and man. Many of us also commit this error of limiting God to our own narrow viewpoint, or confining Him to a particular religion. Baba as a manifestation of the Supreme Infinite may therefore perform acts which are not necessarily contained in all the religions, and if such acts or manifestations are not in one's own



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religion, then an effort should be made to understand the real inner significance of such acts or manifestations. Through such understanding all differences disappear and all religions become one. The Lingodbhava is to be viewed and understood in light of such perspectives.

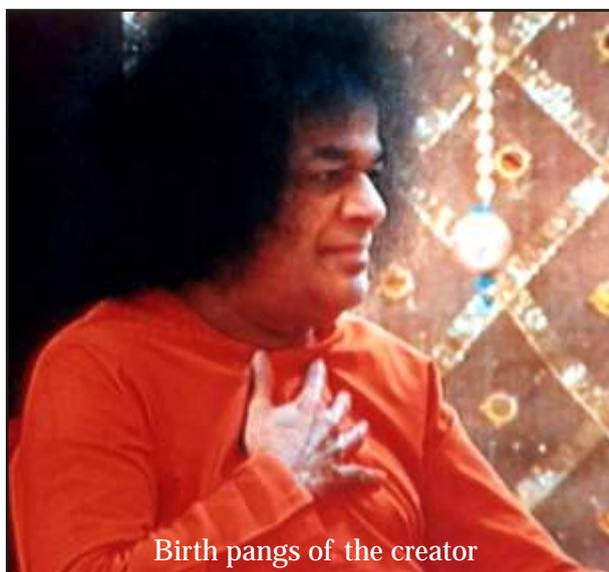
Ling means a symbol, and *Udbhava* means birth or creation. So the word Lingodbhava actually means *symbol of creation*. As the Lingam manifests in Baba through His Divine Kala or Sakthi of *Srishti*, one can say that the *Lingam is a Divine Symbol of Creation*; and it is only when the inner significance of the Lingam has been understood, that one can grasp the full significance of the act of Lingodbhava, which is a *Symbolic Birth of God in Time and Space*.

Yasoda had seen the Viswaswarup of the Lord, the Cosmic Person, in the mouth of Krishna, and the Lord had given the same Divine Vision to a shaukar's wife in His previous body as Babu, the future Sai Baba of Shirdi. Today, in His present body as Shri Sathya Sai Baba, He, grants a similar *Vision of the Divine* to millions of devotees, through the act of Lingodbhava. An embryo develops within the womb of its mother and takes birth into this world as a baby. Symbolically, the Cosmic Person develops within His mother SAI (Divine Mother) and takes birth as the Lingam into this world through the mouth of SAI.

The second verse of AHUNA-VAIRYA or the Word of Ahura Mazda declares that Creation is projected from the Mind of the Lord, and that Mazda or the Sakthi aspect, is itself the Creation. The Lingam, a

symbol of this Creation is manifest at the time of Lingodbhava. The Ahunvar and the Lingodbhava together, lay bare the total secret of Creation. To experience this phenomenon, is to know that the Universe rests in the palm of SAI.

All the scriptures of the major religions of the world declare that God is Omnipresent, that is to say that He is present *everywhere at all times*. Thus God cannot be limited to One particular form and it is in this context that Baba says, "All forms are



Birth pangs of the creator

Mine and all Names are Mine". From this one may conclude that the *Essence* which is manifest in all these forms, is Itself without a form. This Essence of the formless God is symbolised by the Lingam.

The Lingam has the form of a mathematically perfect figure: the ellipsoid. It has neither a front nor a back, and is without an end or a beginning. It has no protuberances or irregularities jutting out from its smooth surface, which might give it some character. Its form is based purely on a geometrical figure, the ellipsoid, and hence it cannot be identified with any other known physical form in the universe except

another mathematically perfect ellipsoid, which is another Lingam. It is so much devoid of character, that the author is almost tempted to call it a "formless form". Therefore, Baba has said that it is the *fittest symbol for representing the formless Divine Essence, that is God*. Thus, when the Lingam emanates from Baba's mouth it is symbolic of the birth in time and space of *THAT* which is formless and eternal, within a simple geometrically perfect entity, the

Lingam. This is the real meaning of Lingodbhava.

Baba has revealed yet another deeper spiritual significance in context of the Lingodbhava. In the Yagna called *Purusha Medha*, there is an occasion when Lingodbhava takes place. It has been said that before Divinity takes a form for this Lingodbhava, It utters a loud cry. This cry is addressed to the Devas (Divine Beings) and is known as *Deva-Huti*. The word *Deva* means Divine and *Huti* means a Call or a Challenge. The

Manifestation asks a question of the Devas, "Do you know who I am? Who am I? Ko Hum?" A new born babe also cries Ko Hum, Ko Hum, Ko Hum. Baba says, "It is only when you understand the significance of this Divine Cry *the Deva-Huti* when It takes birth in time and space, that one can understand the Divine Innocence and simplicity of a new born child."

Thus it seems that the *Deva-Huti* is the key to the mystery of the Lingam. Man emerges from the formless Divinity and inquires, "Ko Hum?" He practises Sadhana, realises "So Hum" (I am That), and merges back into the formless Divinity. Therefore,



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it is said that all things emerge from the Lingam and finally merge into the Lingam. The Angam or the physical body contains the subtle Lingasarira which houses the Lingam or the Atma. From the Lingam arises movement and flow of life, that is Jungam (Universe). The Angam is the Sangam (meeting place) for the Spirit and Matter, and of association, attachment and activity. As a result of this Sangam, analysis and inquiry, one realises the Lingam. Thus the circle is completed. This is the lesson that is taught by Lingodbhava.

The Lingam which emanates from Baba's mouth is made of metal (like gold, in the recent years) or of some semi-precious stone, like agate, for instance. On rare occasions it is made of a pure transparent crystal like substance. Baba has said that the four Vedic Mahavakyas have their aspects portrayed in the Lingam as well. The four Vedic Mahavakyas are said to represent the essence of the four Vedas and they are to be understood as follows:

1. *Pragnyanam Brahma.*
2. *Tat Thwam Asi.*
3. *Ayam Atma Brahma.*
4. *Aham Brahma Asmi.*

The word Pragnyan means eternal, limitless wisdom. So the first Mahavakya declares that Divine Wisdom is itself Brahman. Here, the Atma is equated with Divine Wisdom, because this Wisdom is born out of the Atma. It is not something acquired from outside of one's own Self. This aspect is symbolised by the *Sadasivam Lingam*.

Sada means eternal and Sivam is equated with auspiciousness, purity and bliss. Thus the Eternal Brahman which is pure auspiciousness and bliss is revealed through Divine

an aspirant, he becomes one with Brahman. Aham Brahma Asmi.

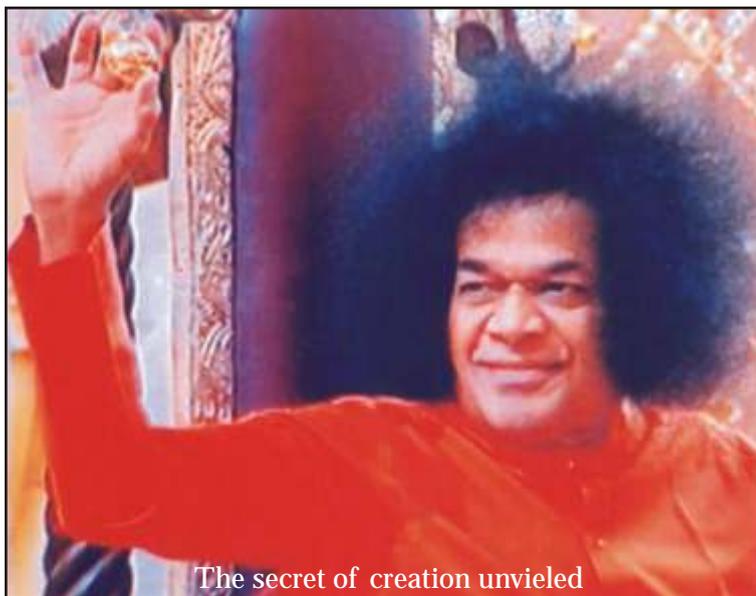
Baba says, "The formless Divinity, the Lingam, is in the very core of the heart of man as the sole purveyor of

bliss, power and illumination. Cultivate an inward vision, so that the Lingam may grant you all these three benefits. The mind will then be illumined by the cool comforting rays of Love, like the cool comforting rays of the moon.

Chandrama Manaso Jaathah (the moon is born from the mind). Unless you cleanse the mind with Love, the full moon of spiritual Wisdom will not shine

in the mind. The recital of the Name, Japa and Dhyana, or the observance of fasts and vigils, will merely scintillate like stars studded in the sky, in the inner sky of your mind. But the darkness (ignorance) will not vanish until the lamp of love is lit."

Sivaratri is observed on the fourteenth night of the dark half of every month. It is a well established fact of Yogic discipline, that it is easier to control the mind during the dark half of the month, when the moon is on the wane. The fourteenth night is particularly suitable for a little more intensive Sadhana to completely sublimate the last and the remaining fifteenth fraction of the mind, corresponding to the last fraction of the moon. *It is possible to achieve complete victory over the mind during this night.* When the mind is fully under control, one becomes an heir to the experiences of bliss, power and



The secret of creation unveiled

Wisdom.

The second Mahavakya, Tat Thwam Asi means That Thou Art. It asserts that distinction is delusion; the Jivatma and the Paramatma are One. The *Gnyanam Lingam* symbolically represents this awareness of Both Being One.

The third Mahavakya, Ayam Atma Brahma means This Atma is Brahman, and is symbolised by the *Anda-Pinda Lingam*. Anda is the shell and Pinda is the core. Man is also basically an Anda-Pinda, with an outer shell of materialism and an inner core of the Divine Atma. It points out that the Inner Self is itself the Brahman.

The fourth Mahavakya, Aham Brahma Asmi means I am Brahman. The *Atma Lingam* or the *Jyoti Lingam* is the symbol of the Supreme Light of Atma, and it proves to all that Siva is in everyone. When this Vision illumines the inner consciousness of



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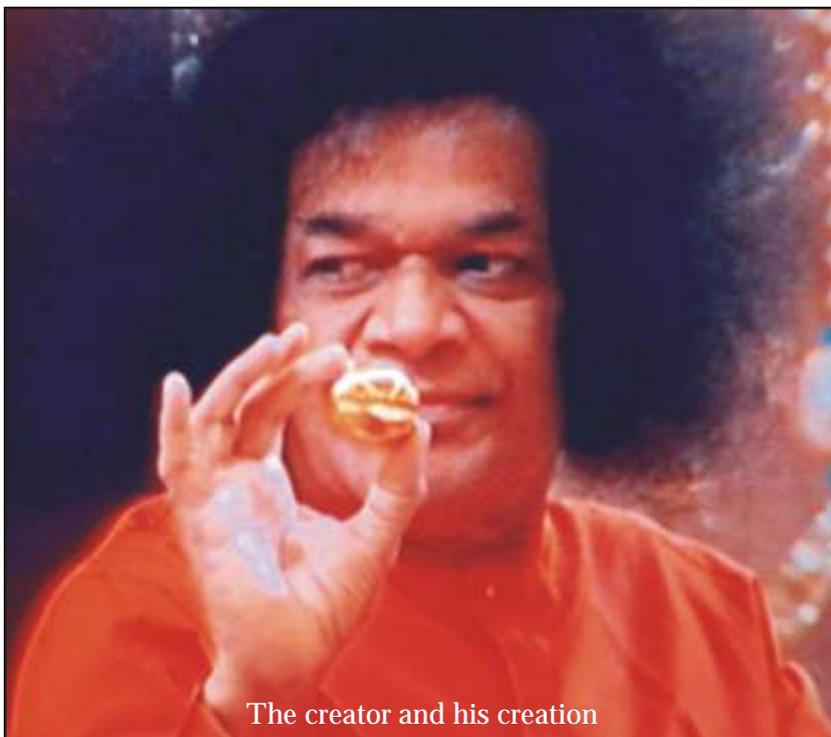
illumination.

"How is it possible for the moon to influence the Mind ?" Such a question has been often put to the author, by various people. The author does not know the exact mechanism, but he would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact, that the forces emanating from the moon are responsible for shifting gigantic masses of water on the surface of this earth during the tides. Then why should it be difficult to understand the influence of the moon on a human body which is nearly 80% water? The 'lunatics' are so called, because their behaviour sometimes can be predicted to some extent, by the waxing and waning of the moon. The ancient seers and rishis were fully aware of the influence exercised by the planets on the human body and they used these influences for their spiritual benefit. Thus the practise of intensive Sadhana on the fourteenth night of the waning moon is not just an old wife's tale or superstition, but it has its roots in the personal experience of the ancient sages of this land.

In the month of Maagh (Feb.-Mar.), the fourteenth night is known as Maha-Sivaratri. Maha means great, Siva means auspicious and Ratri means night; the Great-Auspicious-Night. Auspicious for what? Not only is the night auspicious' for obtaining complete control over one's mind, but Siva, the formless Divinity, is born in the Lingam on that night. Siva in the form of the Lingam, is adored and revered for the

acquisition of Divine Wisdom.

In temples dedicated to Siva, it is said that none should pass between Nandi



The creator and his creation

the bull and the Lingam. Baba has explained that the bull or the Pasu (animal), represents the Jiva and the Lingam is the symbol of Siva. As they both have to merge into *one*, no one should pass between the bull and the Lingam. Also, the installed Lingam has to be seen through the two horns of the bull; which means that one has to see Siva in the various Jivas. Pasu or Jiva, and Pasupati or Siva are *one*; Nandi or Jiva and Eeswara or Siva, become *Nandeewara*. Baba says, "When in bondage it is referred to as Nandi and when free it is Eeswara. When the Pasu is offered fully to the Pasupati and its separate identity is cast away, then it is a true Yagna (sacrifice). This significance has been forgotten by the worshippers today." In this context of worshipping Siva, Baba has also explained the inner significance of offering the trifoliate

Bilva leaves. They are symbolic of the three Gunas and the three forms of Worship. The three Gunas, which are

t o b e
surrendered to
H i m a r e
Thamas, Rajas
and Sathwa,
t h r o u g h
D e v o t i o n ,
D e t a c h m e n t
a n d
D i s c r i m i n a t i o n
; t h e t h r e e
f o r m s o f
w o r s h i p l i k e d
b y S i v a .

T h e r e a r e
c e r t a i n d a y s i n
t h e l i f e o f a n
i n d i v i d u a l ,
w h i c h s t a n d
a p a r t f r o m t h e
r e s t . T h e s e a r e
w o r t h

treasuring in one's memory, because of their association with some sacred or holy event which was responsible for initiating the individual into the higher spiritual mysteries of the *SELF*. There have been four such days in the author's life. The first one was many years ago, when as a child the author was invested with the sacred Kusti by his parents and was taught to recite the Ahunvar, the Word of Ahura Mazda. Since then the author has stood by the Word and in return on countless occasions, the Word has stood by him. It is possible that some mysterious forces evoked by the Word, were instrumental in leading the author to Baba's presence. That was the second day, the day when the author met Baba in Shri Munshi's residence at Juhu, and received His "visiting card", the



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Vibhuthi embodying His Divine secret. This Vibhuthi initiated the process of clearing the author's mind of doubts and ignorance accumulated through academic learning and achievements, over a period of forty odd years. The process still continues. Maha-Sivaratri in February 1974 was the third day, when the author witnessed the birth of the Atma Lingam and saw the Divine Jyoti (Flame) changing colours within the Lingam. Truly, it was a most auspicious occasion. It was a day of triumph over the twins of birth and death; not only for the author but for all those who witnessed this sacred Flame, this *ATAR USHTANA*, the Divine Fire of the formless or Ahura Mazda, burning mysteriously within this Atma Lingam. In the *Gatha Ahunavaiti* or the *Gatha of the Sacred Word* (Yasna 34:4), Zara-thushtra declares:

*"Thine Inner Fire Ahura, to see We yearn, He blazes mightily through Truth;
"He has Thy Strength, our hope and Goal is He, He lights the faithful dearly through life."*

That night, the above four lines of the Gathas came to life for the

author. The prayer contained in the first line of the stanza, was fulfilled by a Vision of the Divine Jyoti, and the remaining three lines aptly described Baba as He appeared that night with the Divine Jyoti Lingam in His hands. The day Baba performed the marriage ceremony of the author and his wife, was the fourth day. If the reader turns back the pages of his life, he will also undoubtedly discover such days in his own life associated with a Vision of the Divine, which when recalled are a perennial source of joy and infuse a calm, limpid peace, into one's being.

On that memorable Maha-Sivaratri night, Baba began with His usual public discourse. The author was wondering whether there would be a Lingodbhava that evening, because there had been no official ceremony in the two previous years and no announcements to this effect, had been made earlier for this occasion. The author had not seen a Lingodbhava ever before and did not know what was going to happen. However, at the end of His explanations on the significance of the Vibhuthi abhishek performed earlier in the day, He terminated the

discourse, rather abruptly. Earlier, a couple of coughs had indicated the rising of the Lingam within Him, and so He terminated the speech and started with the bhajans. The gathering joined Him in an exquisite rendering of His popular bhajan:

*"Prem-a-mudhite mana-se kaho
"RaamRaamRaaaam."*

Later, during the singing He coughed a few times, drank some water and sat down at the table on the stage. The bhajan singers carried on with extra gusto, and the author noticed that the bhajan leaders were now exclusively singing bhajans dedicated to extolling Siva. Baba spread a large handkerchief in front of Him and held another one in His hands. The frequency of retching had increased and the bhajan singers sensing the impending delivery, had stepped up the tempo of their singing. The whole atmosphere was charged with Divine vibrations. After repeated attempts at delivery on the part of Baba, the Lingam was finally ejaculated from His mouth into His waiting hands. Immediately, He held it up, so that all could see this manifestation of Divine Glory. Then He walked along the stage and



Showing the Golden linga



The Symbolic Birth of God in Time and Space

amongst the thousands, who were sitting at some distance at the back of the auditorium.

The author witnessed this memorable event and photographed this rare, unique crystal Lingam, which contained within itself an orange, cup-shaped flame in the form of a *Trishul* (a trident). The colour of this Trishul changed every ten minutes, from orange to yellow to blue, and sometimes changed to almost colourless. Ecstasy was writ on the faces of all those who had witnessed this Divine Birth. The author felt very happy, for he had actually seen a small aspect of the *Inner Fire of Ahura Mazda*.

Baba placed the Lingam on a mound of flowers within a circular tray and retired for the night. The bhajan singers continued singing throughout the night, until the early hours of the morning.

Just after dawn, Baba came back to the auditorium and gave a short discourse on the inner significance of the Lingam. During this discourse, He made a historic declaration accompanied by an incomparable shower of Divine Grace, which has no parallel in the whole recorded history of human existence. Baba declared, "You have had the good fortune of looking at the Divine Vision. You have also seen the Divine significance of the Lingam and that will grant you complete salvation. *So far as you are concerned you have attained complete salvation and there are no more rebirths for you.* Why is it that of all the crores of people in the world only you have seen this manifestation of Divinity? It is a piece of great good fortune for you. Some of you have seen this manifestation as a specific form, some as a light and some only as a streak or a flash of light; but it

does not matter in what form you have seen the generation and manifestation of this Lingam. *What you have really seen is the secret of creation.*"

"There are two kinds of Mantras, the Siva mantra and the Madhava mantra. The Siva mantra has the important letter MA in it, and the Madhava mantra has the important letter RA in it. Together they make RAMA. Rama is the manifestation of Eeswara or the Atma. Rama and Eeswara are inter-changeable and both are represented in this symbol of creation, the Lingam. Having witnessed this secret of Creation, do not spend your time in an unsacred manner; do not do work that will be called unsacred; do not promote ideas that will be called unsacred and do not look at things which will be called unsacred vision. Remember, what you have witnessed today is an unprecedented secret of Creation, and use it to promote the best thoughts, words, and deeds in your life. Whatever good which one can acquire after Tapas for many years, or by involving oneself in Meditation for many centuries, or by performing several Yagnas and Yagas, that good which is acquired by such practices cannot even be compared to the good acquired by witnessing this Lingodbhava. This is something which is unprecedented. It is only you, who have been privileged to see this vision of the Lord, in the form of a Lingam having the dimensions of Dashan-gula (ten inches)."

"Whatever is contained in Time, that is past, present and future, and whatever is contained in the three Gunas and the three Worlds, is all contained in this Lingam. The Lingam also contains the symbol of Trishula and every ten minutes the colour of this Trishula goes on

changing. The Trishula signifies the responsibility accepted by Divinity, for the past, the present and the future of all Creation. When the circumference of this Lingam is added and put together, it will be Dashangula. Only such a Lingam as this one, can be said to contain the important number ten and contain all the manifestations of Divinity."

"If our heart contains Truth and our conduct is conditioned by Love, then Peace which is within, is available to us. While all these things are within us, why is it that we are not acquiring them? Peace lies within the depths of one's heart, just as water lies in the earth. To get at the water one has to remove the overlying earth. Similarly, one has to remove the sensuous desires to get at the Peace in one's heart. *We must make an attempt to follow the ideas and thinking of the Lord.* Such sadhana will enable you to reach the destination. Smarana and Chinta (reciting the Name and Contemplation), is the easiest way for reaching this destination in this Kali Yuga. You have been singing bhajans for some hours and you call it Akhand Bhajan, but that is not correct. *Akhand Bhajan is that which has to be carried out continuously throughout your life.* (Akhand means uninterrupted.) Perform the Akhand Bhajan of Hamsa-Gayatri, and there will be no ups and downs in your life."

"By understanding the inner significance of the Lingam which was manifested, your life has been liberated. You have reached the ordained salvation. Develop this thought, keep it in your mind all the time throughout your life, and then you will have made good use of this rare opportunity, granted to you yesterday."



Cover Story An Invitation



Dear Reader,

We reproduce below two poems, one by late Mr. Kasturi and another by Ann Balabrege, both on Lingodbhavam. These appeared many years ago in the *Sanathana Sarathi*. Old timers might recall with pleasure reading these poems when they first appeared. We are reproducing them below for devotees who were called to the Divine presence later.

A silent sign, a twitch, a glow, a shiver,
An urge, a fancy, a wish to play, a spurt of sport
Disturbed the Peace of the vast Divine
It won't reside in inmost In.
It will emerge in Forms multitudinous.
Yes! It must.
And soon!

It strove, the Formless, Aimless, Nameless, Timeless,
It;

It felt the Form in its inmost In!
It took on aim and name
The flaming Linga rose.

Time with its lullaby, "Done doing yet to do,"
Space with its lullaby, "Where, there, here!"
Fondled the I, Ego Divine!

The seed of all the stars, of all the sea of light!
He Will in the shell He willed!

The womb of life, the tomb of death
The sovereign sign and symbol of the Dawn!
No eye did see that emerging Will
No tongue did sing of the Linga then;
There was a thrill in time and space

And that was all.

Siva knew He was One and so, the Many had to come!
The Linga was the First faint stroke
Of the grand Design, He planned.
Siva has come among us now!
See!

The sky is fondling all the stars
The Sun is dancing with its rays;
The Sea is sporting with the waves
The Fire is playing hide and seek
With Its own sparks ,O, rarest chance!
Year by year, He re-enacts for us, to thrill,
His pre time primal play
"I cannot be alone" "I shall manifest I must"

Come, and watch the Inmost In
Responding to the nascent urge
The Ego of the Universe emerge in the Linga Form,
Emerging at the call, from Him
Who is puppet, string and stage
And you and they and I.
Come, dear friend, do come!

KASTURI

Salutations

(Hymn to Shiva, as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba)

Power of all Powers! Oh, fill and flood my being;
O Sun Eternal, Whelm me in Thy Light.
Vision itself need ask no eyes for seeing,
And boundless Life no wings to mount the height.

I am Thy Light, by mortal lamp enshrouded,
The Bliss, beyond all shifting joys and pains;
Above their glooms and gleams is Peace unclouded.

Shatter the lamp; the Light, the Light remains.

Father of Spirits, Love forever burning!
Burn Thou all forms that hold my life from Thee;
Lost in my selfhood, to Thyself returning,
Find Thou Thine own, and my Eternity.

Anne Balabrege



Inner Significance of Sivarathri

What exactly is meant by Sivarathri and why is so much importance being given to its observance?

Baba has given us the explanation. He first reminds us that according to the Scriptures, the Moon is the presiding deity of the Mind.

As we all know, during the month the Moon waxes and wanes, taking 15 days for each process. The thirteenth day after the New Moon and the Full Moon is called Trayodasi. After Trayodasi comes Chaturdasi or the fourteenth day. Sivarathri commences at the end of Trayodasi and the beginning of Chaturdasi after the Full Moon.

We now come to the Inner or the Spiritual significance of the observance of this austerity after the conclusion of Trayodasi and the commencement of Chaturdasi just before Amavasya or the New Moon.

Again we turn to Baba. He says that on this night the Moon is hardly visible. Such a barely visible Moon represents the Mind of a true seeker. Through Sadhana he has almost conquered the Mind. And just as the Moon disappears a day or two later, the seeker, with a little extra effort, can completely extinguish the Mind, that is to say, master it. As Baba puts it so simply: **MASTER THE MIND AND BECOME A MASTER MIND!**

The astute reader would have noticed that something is missing in the above. Does not Sivarathri come once a month? How come then we celebrate it just once a year? Ah, therein lies a tale, and for that, we go back to an account written by Gandhikota Subramania Sastry a long time ago.

Upto 31st January 2004

BANGALORE SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL

Cardiac Surgeries: 4076
Cardiac Catheterisation: 6,982 [3,714-Diagnostic; 3,268-Interventional]
Neuro Surgeries: 3,411
CT Scans: 12,333
MRI Exams: 13,120

PUTTAPARTHI SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL

Heart surgeries 13704
Cath procedures 13815
Urology surgeries 22294
Ophthalmology surgeries 22513
CT scans 3628

Cover Story

Meaning of Sivarathri

Based on the Traditional Folklore

Most readers must undoubtedly be aware of late Dr. G.V Subba Rao, till recently a familiar figure in the Ashram. Many may also know that it is Dr. Subba Rao's father, esteemed Gandhikota Subramania Sastri, to whom we owe the famous SAI GAYATHRI. We reproduce below the English translation of an article by Subramania Sastrigaruru that originally appeared in the Telugu edition of Sanathana Sarathi. In this article, Sastrigaruru gives us the traditional explanation and significance of Mahasivarathri.

The Universe is a play enacted by God for God. Precious stones shine in multicolored brilliance without any effort or expenditure of energy, and God manifests as this and many such marvels. To descend as an *Avatar* by taking on a body for fostering the good and the loyal, is but a phase of His playful mood.

The Supreme One has two basic aspects. (1) The Formless and Eternally Pure Universal Consciousness which can be cognised from the *Guru* and the *Sastras* [scriptures]. (2) The second is the aspect with Form which has two important facets, the Universe itself and the *Avatar*.

Truly speaking, the Universe is His Embodiment, though as long as ignorance persists this truth is not realized. But when ignorance is dispelled, *Jnana* reveals that what is taken to be the Universe is only the Pure Consciousness Principle of *Brahman*. In the *Rudradhyaya* of the *Thaithiriya Samhitha*, (2d to 8th ANUVAKAS), the fact that the manifested Universe is Siva, nothing more, nothing less is clearly defined. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* and other axioms appearing in the *Vedas* are all further dicta on the same theme.

The second Formful embodiment is the *Avatar*, as Siva and other Godly Forms. He appears in these forms in order to chasten the wicked and



Gandhikota Subramania Sastry

encourage the good, and to provide facility for the devoted to earn mental peace through worship. The Siva-Form is paramount among these, because even while fostering the good and the devoted, He is Pure Consciousness and Bliss, since He is of the *Sathwic Guna*, pre-eminently. Other God-forms have an inkling of subtle *Rajas* and *Thamas* and so, in the task of maintaining the Universe,

they are merged to the apparent detriment of their fundamental Reality. This is the reason why Siva alone has the *Lingam* as the Concrete Symbol, besides the usual Conventional Form with weapons, accoutrement, multiplicity of arms and equipment for the sake of the Mission. The *Lingam* reveals the Fullness and the Illimitability of Siva. Siva grants visions of Himself as the *Lingam* or as having *Karacharana* etc.

Once upon a time, long, long ago, the Gods, Brahma and Narayana as the story goes, were extremely jealous of each other and argued loud that each was superior to the other. They had come to the stage of a trial of arms, when between them a brilliant *Lingam* of Light appeared! They were stunned by the splendour and they decided among themselves that He among them is superior to the other, who is able first to see the beginning below or the end above of

that magnificent *Lingam*. Brahma rode on His *Hamsa* [swan] and flew above; He could not see the crown of the *Lingam* however high He rose. Vishnu took the form of *Varaha* [boar] and dug into the nether regions but could not delve into the base of that *Lingam*. When they returned to earth, a Voice from the *Lingam* asked them whether they had succeeded in

Cover Story

Meaning of Sivarathri

Based on the Traditional Folklore

their quest. Brahma uttered a lie and declared He had seen the crown! Narayana was about to concede victory to Brahma, when the Voice intercepted Him and Siva manifested Himself from the *Lingam*, with the full Divine Equipped Form described as “*Hiranyabaahave, hiranya varnaaya, hiranya roopaaya*” in the scriptures. He punished Brahma for the audacity and the falsehood. He authorised Vishnu to correct wrong and promote right. The *Lingam* that manifested on this occasion is known as *Jyothirlingam* and altogether 12 such have appeared according to tradition.

Two dates are important in this grand awe-inspiring play of the Gods: (1) *Ardra* star-date in *Margasirish*. when

Lingam of Splendour, without beginning or end appeared before the two competing Divine Forces and (2) *Magha*, dark half, 14th day, *Chathurdasi*, usually known as *Mahasivarathri*, when from that *Lingam*, Siva emerged with all the Divine Qualities and Glories, to bless and chastise.

Mahasivarathri is sacred because on that day, Siva first assumed His Mind-conquering beautiful form emerging so from Symbolic *Lingam*, Siva gave this Vision to the two great Divinities whom He directs. So, worship of Siva on such a day is considered to be of supreme importance.

To have the chance to worship Him

at Puttaparthi and witness the emergence of the *Lingam* from Sri Sathya Sai Baba is indeed a unique Blessing.

*From the Telugu Article by
Ghandikota Subramanya Sastri*

Coming Next.....

An exclusive story on the famous trip that Swami made to Badrinath.....





Spiritual Blossoms Sathya Sai Speaks

Swami on the significance of Lingodbhavam

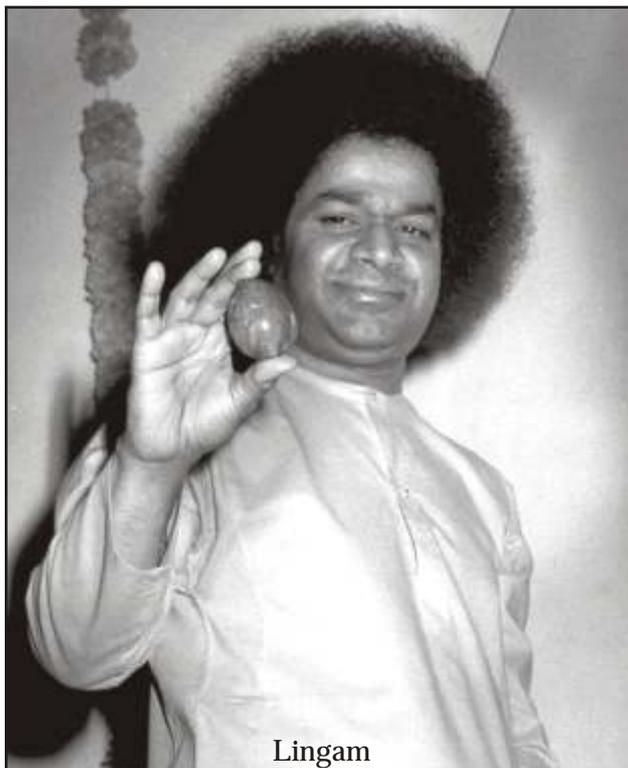
In recent times, much to the delight of devotees, the Lingodbhavam has been revived. But how many care to look BEYOND the spectacle and ponder on the Inner significance of what exactly the Lingam means as also its emergence from Swami? Bhagavan Baba has Himself explained those matters. We reproduced below what He said way back in 1974, when there emerged a Lingam of a type very different from what we have been seeing in recent years. For a description of that Lingam and the significance of Lingodbhavam itself, let us go to the SOURCE!

The manifestation of the *Lingam* is a part of My Nature. Spiritual Scholars explain it as reminiscent of an epochal event in the past when Shiva challenged Brahma and Vishnu to gauge the height and depth of the *Lingam* Form He assumed. The two Gods failed and had to accept defeat that is the usual folklore. Truly speaking, however, the *Lingam* emerges as a result of prayer by devotees and Divine Grace. You have to recognise in this event a glimpse of Divinity and a sign of Infinite Grace. Just as *Om* is the sound symbol of God, the *Lingam* is the Form symbol or the visible symbol of God, the most meaningful, the simplest and the least endowed with the appendages of attributes.

Lingam means That in which this merges or dissolves. Eventually, all Forms have to merge in the Formless. Shiva is the Principle of the Dissolution of all Names and Forms, of all entities and individuals. Thus, the *Lingam* is the simplest sign or symbol of Emergence and Mergence.

Having had the unique good fortune of witnessing the emergence of the time-space-embodiment in the *Linga*-Form, I assure you that you are released from the bondage of birth and death. Recollect and relive the *Ananda* of that moment of Emergence, and meditate on the significance of the *Linga*-Form. This is an extra-ordinary chance that people seldom get, a chance that has been gained by you through the performance of *Yajnas* or *Yagas* or other elaborate rituals or as a result of years of arduous *Sadhana*. When you are asked what happened at Prashanthi Nilayam,

tell them that your life's mission has been fulfilled, that you were able to witness the *Lingodbhavam*, and see the *Lingam* which emerged during the auspicious hour.



The *Lingam*, as you can see, is ten inches in circumference. It has within it, shining with native light, the *Thrishuul* (three-pronged spear) of Shiva, symbolising the three phases of Time past, present and future and the three dimensions of space-earth, sky and the nether regions, as mentioned by Me already. Just as time changes constantly, in this *Lingam* too, as you can see even from where you are sitting, the colour of the *Thrishuul* inside the *Lingam* changes into a new one, every ten minutes. The handle of the *Thrishuul* demonstrates the One, of which the three are manifestations. This is the grand Mystery that has been revealed to you. You have witnessed the Divine Creation;

you have seen the Divine Symbol; you have shared the Bliss. Out of the world's population of many billions, you alone secured this fortune.

The Scriptures declare the Supreme One as splendour and as *Jyothi* [Effulgence]. You have seen the splendour when the *Lingam* emerged; you have seen the triple *Jyothi* in the *Lingam* itself. No greater fortune can befall a man. Live hereafter as befits the recipient of this rare Grace.

Baba, in His Sivarathri Discourse in 1974.



Spiritual Blossoms Getting Spiritually Better

Mama Dharma or Atma Dharma

Dear Reader,

We now come to what may be called the CORE of spiritual lessons. This section is a bit long, but if you take the trouble to study it carefully, digest the content and learn to apply it in daily life, then you have got it made! We not only urge you to study this material carefully, but also suggest you reflect on it in relation to what Bhagavan Baba says in His innumerable Discourses. If you do, you will find this is the essence of what may be called Practical Spirituality.

Good luck and happy reading. Jai Sai Ram.
SGH TEAM

In the last unit that we offered, we ended with the theme of *Mama Dharma*. Presently we expand on it.

Let us start with the term *Dharma*. We all have heard it any number of times. But do we know the real meaning of the word *Dharma*? Scholars would say that this term is too rich in meaning to be given a simple translation. Indeed, this is true. In fact, the word is used in different contexts with special meaning. An example. In India, the term *Dharma* is sometimes used to describe charity. Swami has drawn attention to this on many occasions. We do not use the term here in such a narrow or limited sense. For us now, *Dharma* stands for DUTY. This of course raises another question: "What precisely is meant by duty?" Indeed, that is what we shall be zeroing in on presently.

Before going further, let it be mentioned that Swami also reminds us that there is another term for *Mama Dharma*; that term is *Atma Dharma*. This is a very important and crucial point, and we have to go into it in some detail. Our starting point is hymn [*sloka*] (2,31) of the *Bhagavad Gita*, wherein Krishna introduces the term *Swadharmā*. *Swadharmā* = *Swa* + *Dharma*. *Swa* is invariably interpreted as the self. Hence, the word

Swadharmā is interpreted as "the *Dharma* of the self". This is OK, except for one very important point. The word *Swa* refers not to the lower self [as most scholars assert] but to the HIGHER SELF or the *Atma*, as Baba has pointed out. Thus, *Swadharmā* really means *Atma Dharma* or, duty performed in consonance with the nature of the *Atma*. This interpretation of Bhagavan Baba is both unique as well as profound. *Swadharmā* DOES NOT mean *Dharma* of the individual self, as scholars normally imply. It means *Mama Dharma*, and it also means *Atma Dharma*. There also exists what may be called the *Dharma* of the individual self; it is called *Para Dharma* [to which a reference has already been made].

Seekers are likely to be dazed and confused. They may say: "What is this? First we are told that there are many meanings for the word *Dharma*. Restricting to duty, we are now informed that there is *Atma Dharma* on the one hand and *Para Dharma* on the other. Which of these are we supposed to follow?" This is a legitimate worry. However, most mercifully, Baba has clarified everything in extra-ordinary detail and clarity. So, there is nothing to worry about really. We just have to carefully follow what He says about the matter.

First, *Atma Dharma* is supreme while *Para Dharma* is subsidiary; that establishes the hierarchy. Next, in 90% of the cases, we can just routinely follow *Para Dharma*; no problem. This is because, in all simple situations, *Para Dharma* is in fact consistent with *Atma Dharma*. Therefore, in all such cases, following *Para Dharma* is the same as following *Atma Dharma*.

A person may now raise a doubt like this: "Listen! I don't know a thing about either of these two *Dharmas* you are talking about. How then am I supposed to follow these?" No problem; Swami has explained everything! Let us start with *Para Dharma*. It means the duty of the individual self; it means the things an individual is supposed to do; it also implies what the individual shall not do. There is nothing complicated about this. All societies and religions have laid down norms. For example, we have the famous Ten Commandments of Moses. Now *Para Dharma* does not merely represent a set of general instructions like, "Love thy neighbour." It implies specific rules that apply to one's position in life. For example, the *Para Dharma* of a teacher is not quite the same as that of a doctor. This is not as confusing as it might seem. A teacher is supposed to teach and doctor is



Spiritual Blossoms Getting Spiritually Better

Mama Dharma or Atma Dharma

supposed to heal. Likewise, a king must behave like a king and not like a vagabond.

Swami puts it very neatly: “*Para Dharma* simply means the *Dharma* of the body. It means being natural corresponding to the state you are in. It automatically varies from person to person, and in fact, even for the same person it varies from time to time and depends on the place!” He explains this as follows. Let us take a baby boy. When the baby is less than three years old, it is quite natural for the baby to play all the time, and even run around without dress occasionally. Nobody thinks that there is anything wrong about this. The baby does what is *natural* to that particular state. One may say that the baby is intuitively following its *Para Dharma*. A few years pass and the boy is now grown up. He is studying in High School. He can no longer run around as he did when he was a baby. His *Para Dharma* is now that appropriate to a schoolboy. He must dress like a student, study well, observe discipline, obey his parents, etc. This is what is now *natural* to the schoolboy. After completing education, the boy, now a young man, takes up a job; his *Para Dharma* changes again. After this, he gets married; more fine print into *Para Dharma*! Still later, he becomes a grandfather; *Para Dharma* now acquires a different character, since the grandfather has to play the role of an elderly patriarch. Another example, almost trivial. There is a man who is a Judge by profession. In Court, he has to wear special robes to maintain dignity. That is what *Para Dharma* dictates; that is being natural in Court. At home, he discards the robe and changes into casual dress; once again, he is being natural, and therefore conforming to *Para Dharma*.

OK, we understand all this. Where does *Atma Dharma* come into the picture? In fact, why is there a need

for such a thing as *Atma Dharma*? As was mentioned earlier, *Para Dharma* can easily guide one most of the time about what is the right thing to do. But there are situations, where one gets lost; there are dilemmas, moral dilemmas, and one does not quite know what to do. This precisely is where *Atma Dharma* enters the picture and becomes crucially important.

The fundamental difference between *Para Dharma* and *Atma Dharma* is that whereas the former is the *Dharma* of the body, the latter is the *Dharma* of the *Atma*; whereas the former is the *Dharma* of the lower self, the latter is the *Dharma* of the True Self. In *Para Dharma* there could be a tinge of selfishness; in *Atma Dharma*, on the other hand, there is not even a trace of selfishness; the actions are totally selfless and rooted in Pure Love. The bottom line is: “In the ultimate analysis, it is *Atma Dharma* that must be followed, particularly so, when there is an apparent conflict between *Para Dharma* and *Atma Dharma*.” This in fact is the most crucial point relating to practical spirituality, and needs careful study.

A small example. There is a young man whose mother is critically ill. The doctor prescribes a powerful drug. Unfortunately, it is in short supply in the market and is available only at black market prices. The man does not know what to do. He is dead against black marketing. He does not wish to encourage it in any form and under any circumstance. But his mother's life is in danger, and the wonder drug that could save her is available only in the black market. What is he to do? Adhere to his basic principles or compromise on them just once, in order to save the life of his dear mother? This is a moral dilemma. When it is a clear choice between right and wrong, it is not difficult to decide. But when there is a conflict between one type of duty and another, there is a problem. The

young man is facing just this kind of a situation; he has a duty to his Conscience and he also has a duty to his mother. What should he do? His *Para Dharma* says, “Do your duty by your mother. Mother is God!” But his Conscience says, “NO!” What the Conscience proclaims is *Atma Dharma* - painful choice, but there it is!

This is a typical example of a moral dilemma, a tug-of-war between two conflicting duties. This precisely is where *Atma Dharma* comes into the picture. Remember, if *Para Dharma* says one thing and *Atma Dharma* says another, always vote for AD! *Atma Dharma* says, “Don't give a bribe!” So, that's what one is supposed to do.

“Look, that's not fair! The boy's mother is in danger!”

“Yes, that is true, but the mother is related only by the body. Before he was born, where was the mother and where was the son?”

“This is a crazy argument!”

The basic point is that when one follows AD, one acts beyond all bodily and worldly relationships. One may not like to hear the verdict of AD, but whatever it says is the ultimate.

“*Atma* is God, and when it is a choice between something and God, then it HAS to be God.”

“It is not the *Atma* which is telling anything but the Conscience!”

“And what do you think the Conscience is? It is nothing but the voice of God!”

In spite of all this, many would not be convinced, and so at this stage, two points must be injected. First is the following. Suppose the young man does obey his Conscience and refuses to buy the medicine in the black market. Why should one automatically assume that all is lost? He who has protected *Dharma* would himself be protected by that very



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same *Dharma* have we not heard Swami say this any number of times? It is quite possible that when he returns empty handed, the doctor says, "You are lucky, I found that I still had some of this medicine left over from my last patient," or something like that. Indeed, many devotees [not necessarily those who avoided the black market], have been able to get rare drugs after losing all hopes of buying them, just in time there was a 'miracle', and they got the drug from somewhere or the other. People describe such events as a great coincidence. But, as Baba puts it, "Coincidence is a miracle where I hide Myself!" The point simply is that by following the *Atma Dharma*, the young man does not simply shut out all options. He could also pray intensely to God, and there is absolutely no doubt that God would come to his rescue in some manner or the other; this has happened innumerable number of times; when all is lost, there is still Prayer available. And God's only weakness is Prayer!

The second point relates to the examples of correct choice, cited by Bhagavan Baba Himself. Let us start with the celebrated case of Prahalada. The scriptures say, "Father is God." Now what did Prahalada's father Hiranyakashipu do? He told his son, "Listen, there is no God. I am the Supreme Being. Worship me and no other God." Here, the father was coming between the son and God. In the normal circumstance, the son would have obeyed the father as the scriptures advise one to do. But nowhere do the scriptures say, "Do what your father says, even if it is wrong". So, when the father comes between oneself and God and the choice is between father and God, it HAS to be God. This precisely is the choice that Prahalada made. In the same manner, Swami has given examples of 'conflict of interest' between mother and God, *Guru* and God, and husband and God. In every case, the

person tested made the right choice, i.e., chose God. And in every case, the choice was correct because the person followed AD. AD means following God in the ultimate analysis, over all other considerations arising out of bodily relationships or mental associations.

For a moment, let us go back to the origin of the celebrated *Bhagavad Gita*. Arjuna is a warrior by birth. He has also been trained that way. There is to be a war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. This war did not happen overnight. In fact, everyone [from the side of the Pandavas] tried hard to prevent the war. Even Krishna tried. But it was all in vain. Finally, it was decided that it would all be settled on the battlefield. Arjuna was a party to this decision. He had sought the help of Krishna even when the latter refused to fight or lift arms. Arjuna said, "Lord, it is enough if You are by our side." And now at the crucial moment, seconds before the gong is going to sound, he backtracks. His argument: "How can I kill my grandfather, cousins, nephews and relatives? A kingdom won by shedding the blood of one's own kith and kin is simply not worth it. It is far better to beg than to fight this war," etc.

On the face of it, all these arguments sound great and noble. After all, war DOES mean killing, and if Arjuna says "I will not kill," it sure does sound like a noble sentiment. How can one take objection to Arjuna? Let us look at the substantive part of Lord Krishna's reply. He says, "You seem to have got sudden enlightenment. You are wearing the dress of a soldier and instead of performing the duty of a soldier you have started talking like a sage! As a warrior, you have killed many times before. But now, you have begun to have feelings of pity. Where did this pity disappear earlier? You feel pity now because you are caught up in feelings of 'mine'. According to the

highest dicta of scriptures, duty must be on an absolute basis, above all considerations of mine and thine, beyond bodily relationship or mental attachments. Let us look at your present duty objectively. A war is about to be fought between the forces of *Dharma* and *Adharma*. You are with the army that will fight for *Dharma*. Can you chicken out? Your argument for not fighting is based on bodily relationships and mental attachments. You are not crying because people are going to die. People have died before and you never cried. You have yourself killed many people and you never cried then. You are crying now because the people who are going to die are yours. It is attachment that is making you say what you are saying. Can these personal considerations and body-consciousness be allowed to come in when you are defending *Dharma*? Is not *Dharma* God? If it is a question of priorities between God and relatives, what is it going to be? Is it not clear? My dear fellow, at the moment your judgement is clouded by attachment. That is why you have developed cold feet. So, let ME tell you what you ought to do. Get up and FIGHT. Do so with the feeling you are doing God's work. That really is your duty at the moment. That's *Swadharma*. That's *Atma Dharma*!"

Krishna did not quite stop with giving an order. He backed it up with full reasoning [and that is why the *Gita* runs into 18 chapters; otherwise, it would have stopped at the point in chapter 2 where Krishna says, "Get up and fight!"]. What Krishna teaches is called *Atma Vidya* or the Knowledge of the Self. It is also called *Brahma Vidya* or Knowledge about God. *Brahman* [God] and *Atma* are not different. More about this in a later chapter.

The most important point about Krishna's exhortation is that one cannot wage a war in the external



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world, unless one has conquered internal enemies, like lust, for example. Krishna also educates Arjuna on how to overcome these internal enemies, why this is important, how such internal purification would most surely lead towards God, how God would take care and, finally, what is the advantage of eternal merger with God.

To put it all simply: From God we have come, and to Him we MUST return. If we are serious about the return trip, and do not want to be delayed, then we must make AD the basis of our lives. AD is not all that difficult as it might seem. If one loves God dearly [as all of us profess to!] then it should be quite easy to follow God's command.

We now come to an important analogy that would clarify the relative roles of *Atma Dharma* and *Para Dharma*. Now, practically every democratic country has a written Constitution [Britain is a famous exception!]. There also exists in every country, a legislature that enacts laws, the power and the authority of the legislature being derived from the Constitution. Always, it is the Constitution that is primary; the legislature and laws enacted by it are secondary. Sometimes, enacted laws are challenged in the Court. The Court then examines whether the enacted law violates the Constitution or not in any way. If the law is in harmony with the Constitution, then it is declared to be valid and legal. If it violates the Constitution in any way, it is declared *ultra vires* and struck down. This has happened many times. *Atma Dharma* or the *Dharma* of the [Higher] Self is like the Constitution while *Para Dharma* or the *Dharma* of the lower self is like the law passed by the legislature. *Para Dharma* as one understands and interprets, had better be consistent with *Atma Dharma*; otherwise, it

must be rejected.

An important example. There is a soldier; the *Para Dharma* of a soldier is to obey orders implicitly that is why the poem says, "*Theirs is not to reason why but to do or die!*" Does the soldier, under the circumstances BLINDLY obey all orders, no matter what the circumstances are? No, certainly not, and World War II provides many an example. As is well known, Hitler ordered mass extermination of Jews [all civilians], and many Nazi soldiers were only too happy to implement the orders. And yet, when after the war ended they faced trial as war criminals, they all pleaded that they were merely 'following orders'. It is the duty of a soldier to fight in war and not to participate in mass executions of civilians. Annihilation of the Jews had nothing to do with the war Germany was fighting but everything to do with the hatred one man had for the Jews. If Hitler ordered genocide, it was wrong and immoral and therefore the order did not merit compliance. If the punishment for disobedience was death, well, tough luck! But death it must be rather than complying with a grossly immoral order just for saving one's own skin. All the trial courts rejected the defence plea and the culprits were sentenced in proportion to their crime. It is interesting that all these concepts that flow naturally from the teachings of Krishna and our beloved Swami, are intuitively in operation in society. This is no accident. After all, *Atma Dharma* applies to all, and the *Atma* is in all!

In a nutshell, there is a thing called a higher duty that must necessarily override lower duty under appropriate circumstances. All societies have implicitly recognised this. No society permits killing; yet in times of war, soldiers are asked to kill if necessary, in defence of their country. In fact, soldiers who exhibit

bravery are even decorated. And no victorious country [at least in modern times], brings soldiers of the vanquished country to trial.

Many devotees feel that AD is nice to read about and talk about but not practical. This is not correct. It is true that one cannot overnight give up body consciousness, family attachments, etc. But the point is that one must at least make a beginning. One cannot and must not drag one's feet giving alibis and excuses. That is not correct. One has to begin somewhere, sometime; sooner, the better!

It is important to appreciate that *Atma Dharma* is very much relevant in today's society, especially when one is confronted by so many evil forces. Take corporate advertising, for example. TV channels depend on advertising. The advertisers look to the show ratings. To make the show ratings high, producers do not hesitate to inject a liberal dose of vulgarity and obscenity. Whether one likes it or not, whether one agrees or not, it is a fact that obscenity and vulgarity on TV do widespread damage to society's ethical and moral structure. Under the circumstances, what should a major company that sponsors the show do? The standard attitude until recently was: "If the show is popular, it means that millions are seeing it. If our product is advertised on the show, then millions would become attracted to our product. So, let us go ahead and sponsor the show." But now, a remarkable turnaround has started. Many of the huge corporations in America have started saying, "Enough is enough. No advertising money from us if the show is vulgar." And money power is so strong, that overnight, the show producers have started bending backwards [at least in a few cases] to make the show more decent. This is a good example of the working of what may be called Corporate



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Getting Spiritually Better

Mama Dharma or Atma Dharma

Conscience. Just imagine how things would be if this sort of thing snowballs!

The world is full of undesirable actions, wherever one turns. If only the concerned people are not guided by selfish considerations but by *Atma Dharma* instead, the world would rapidly become a much better place to live in. Take for example the print media. It has created the myth that it is accountable only to itself. Of course, it has cleverly conned people into believing that they are the ultimate arbiter but that is not true. Claiming that it can do effective self-policing, it has managed to get court sanction to do more or less what it wants, all in the name of Freedom of the Press. Over a period of time, this license had been increasingly misused, and obscenity and vulgarity now have a free run. The Press argues that people should have the freedom of choice. Is this correct? The attitude of the Press is driven by crass selfishness. It is more vocal about its rights than its responsibility. Swami repeatedly says that man has no rights but only responsibility. The only right he enjoys is the right to responsibility!

Atma Dharma is all about selfless actions, discharged in the most responsible manner. Today, there is a tremendous need for it in all sectors of society and in all walks of life – gun control, consumerism, and what have you. As Swami says, *Atma Dharma* should be the essence of one's life.

Atma Dharma is what one must really follow in life. Most people would say, "Yes, Yes, that's what one must do," but when it comes to practice, they would chicken out giving one excuse or the other. Why? Because of attachment! "But can one really be rid of attachment? There is the family, one's parents, business, and so many things like that. One cannot just walk out on them, can one?" A valid question.

Seekers must realise that no one is asking that Rome be built in just one day. But the desire to build Rome must be there and a few steps also taken, even if they be small ones. That is what is important. If the ball is got rolling, then little by little, one can get where one has to.

One doubt that many have is: "Listen, this is a very competitive, dog-eat-dog world. One has to cut corners; otherwise, no go." Now this is where the game really begins. One must assert with confidence, "No, I will not cut corners, come what may. Perhaps I would suffer a set back. But I am sure the setback would be a temporary one. In as much I am standing up for *Dharma*, I expect that very same *Dharma* to protect me in the long run." Many would not accept this line of reasoning, arguing that *Dharma* is but a concept. No, *Dharma* is NOT a concept; it is Truth in action. Since Truth is God, *Dharma* also is God. Thus, when one says *Dharma* will protect, one really means that God would protect.

It is quite likely that in actual practice, the protection that one visualises does not materialise. This should not cause diffidence and disbelief in *Dharma*. This is just God's way of testing our faith. Faith is VERY important to a seeker. Obstacles must be viewed as God's tests, and an indication that God is in fact close by and in close touch. Those who face life in that manner would find that difficulties one day fade away like the mist before the morning Sun. As Swami says, a man lacking in faith in God is a [spiritual] corpse, though he might appear to be very active in a worldly sense.

People may still not be convinced. They may say, "If I do not do such and such a thing, my life would be in danger, my prestige would be affected," etc. Yes, there can be danger but only to the body and the mind. This precisely is where one

must show guts and say, "I don't care about these dangers if it means I have to compromise my Conscience." Conscience is the prompter from inside. That must be kept happy and satisfied. Standing by one's Conscience is one's real duty. [Remember what Shakespeare says: "Above all, to thine own Self be True!"]

Swami often talks about Self-confidence. People invariably misunderstand what Swami is implying. Self-confidence is misinterpreted as the feeling, "I can do it". No it does not mean that. Swami actually uses the word *Atma Viswasam*. It is this word that is translated as Self-confidence. *Atma Viswasam* really means faith in the *Atma*, faith in the In-Dweller, faith in the God within. Thus Self-confidence is that which promotes the feeling: "God will make this happen, using this being as His instrument", and not the feeling, "I can do it!"

Getting back to the efficacy of action in accordance with *Dharma*, the main stumbling block people have is mental. They think that Dharmic action can lead to problems, whereas short-circuits can save trouble. Yes short-circuit may appear to yield results in the short term, but one day or the other, the price HAS to be paid there is no such thing as a free lunch; there never was and there never will be.

Others may say: "Look, there are any number of examples of very good and noble souls who were very Dharmic but suffered all the time. Whatever happened to your *Dharma*? Why did it not protect these unfortunate people? Why did it go into hiding instead?" This is a very common objection raised by people who are desperate to seek the path of convenience rather than of righteousness. Yes, it is true that many noble souls have had to wait



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for long before their destiny changed for the better. However, the change when it came, it was PERMANENT! This fact is invariably overlooked by those wanting to raise objections. It is quite likely that in the case of these people, the waiting was long because a lot of past *Karma* had to be cancelled.

In short, faith, tremendous faith is called for. One holds on to the path of Righteousness because that is the ONLY path. Other paths may seem rosy to start with but eventually lead to hell. The path of Righteousness, on the other hand, may appear thorny and rough in the beginning but eventually turns out to be super smooth.

To sum it all, *Atma Dharma* may seem impossibly difficult to start with, that is to say, for ordinary mortals, total selflessness may be out of the question. Agreed, but that does not give the license to be utterly selfish. A certain amount of self-interest may be unavoidable but the magnitude must be kept to the barest minimum. Further, the magnitude must be progressively and systematically reduced to almost zero that is the real signature of spiritual progress. And one fine day, God would be so pleased with the progress that He would say, "My dear, you are now ready to merge with Me", and draw the devotee into Himself!

ADDITIONAL NOTES RELATING TO THE ABOVE

- *Dharma* means Righteousness. Therefore, following *Dharma* implies adhering to Righteousness under all circumstances.

- Adhering to Righteousness also implies harmony of thought, word, and deed, what Swami calls *Trikaranasuddhi* [literally meaning the purity of the three organs].
- Words and action/deed belong to the realm of the body. Thought belongs to the realm of the Mind. Both these must be linked to the Heart, the seat of good feelings.
- Most ordinary mortals follow *Dharma* in an instinctive manner; their observance is almost robotic, one might say. Due to training and advice earlier received, they more or less do automatically what their Conscience would approve of. This is what *Para Dharma* boils down to in practice. It is OK, 95 % of the times.
- The careful Joe applies his Mind and then acts. This is *Para Dharma* of a higher grade, one might say.
- *Para Dharma* does not hang in the air all by itself. It has a basis, a very sound basis. But before that point is considered, there is something else that must be noted.
- As explained earlier, *Para Dharma* varies from person to person according to the person's situation in life. Indeed, even for a given person, the *Para Dharma* depends on the situation and the time. In mathematical language, one would say that the *Para Dharma* of a person is a function of space and time, and describe this situation by writing,
$$Para\ Dharma = f(space, time).$$
- Turning next to the variations in *Para Dharma* and the basis, all this

can be understood with the help of an analogy. Consider a plot of land with many different kinds of trees.

- Though the trees are of different kinds, they all are anchored via roots to the same land. The *Para Dharma* of different persons is like the set of different trees. Thus, all *Para Dharmas* are based on what has been referred to as *Atma Dharma*. The land on which the trees are growing is like *Atma Dharma*.
- Further, a given tree is not static. It is growing all the time. In the same way, the *Para Dharma* of a person keeps changing with time because the situations and the circumstances change with time. This is what is captured by the symbolic equation written earlier.
- It was said earlier that *Para Dharma* serves very well in about 95 % of the situations. What about the balance? Well, they could be sticky. In what sense? In the sense that these situations might pose moral dilemmas.
- A moral dilemma is a situation in which one is confronted with two conflicting calls of duty. Both appear right in their own ways. Under the circumstances, what is one to do?
- The greatness of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that it gives precisely the formula that one must apply in such circumstances. And the beauty is that when that formula is applied, there is only one clear option there is no more any dilemma.
- How does one discover that option? Swami has the answer. He says, that one must apply *Atma Dharma*.



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- How exactly does one do that? By using one's *Buddhi* or intellect.
- And how does the *Buddhi* help? It helps in discriminating between the two competing choices. *Buddhi* will examine and finally give its judgement. It would identify the correct option, and point out the flaw in the rejected option.
- And how is *Buddhi* able to do that? *Buddhi* is able to do that because it has a hot line to the Heart or the *Atma* that is why!
- How come when *Atma Dharma* is appealed to, only the correct choice emerges and the other competing choice fades away? That is simple. Competing choices arise when one is immersed in the world of duality and becomes subject to selfishness. When one rises to the level of the *Atma*, there is no duality and there is no selfishness. As a result, there is only one choice, and that is always the correct choice.
- OK, so what must one do to go beyond the routine *Para Dharma* analysis to get an idea of what *Atma Dharma* has to say? Well, one must totally give up selfishness, that is all! Not easy? May be, but one must try!

**PARA DHARMA IMPLIES
SOME SELFISHNESS.
ATMA DHARMA IMPLIES
ZERO SELFISHNESS.**

- In *Atma Dharma*, God is always priority number one. Examples that Baba often gives.

Scriptures say treat father as God. But Prahalada disobeyed his father. Was he not wrong? No, because he made God

priority number one. God comes ABOVE even the physical father. Swami has similarly given examples of devotees who have apparently gone against the scriptures and chosen: God above mother, God above *Guru*, God above husband, and so on. Look them up. Also, identify examples cited by Baba where people have made the wrong choice!

- Let us consider some examples of *Atma Dharma* in action. Actually, if we look at Baba's actions, every single one of them is a perfect example! That is because, as Baba often says, there is not even an iota of selfishness in Him, from top to toe, never.
- Let us now go back to the life of Rama [see the *Message of the Lord*, for a brief account of the life of Rama] for *Atma Dharma* in action. There are many examples, of which two are classic.
- The first is when Rama is asked to go to the forest. Legally, he did not have to. But Rama did. Why? Because He was following *Atma Dharma* actually, He was just setting an example for man about how to follow *Atma Dharma*. [More details in the *Message of the Lord*].
- Again in the Ramayana., Ravana's brother Vibhishana crosses over to Rama's camp. Rama's associates apprehend Vibhishana and want him to be done away with. They argue that Vibhishana would be a threat to Rama's safety. Rama rejects that argument and says that even if Vibhishana meant to harm Him, He was obliged to protect Vibhishana because he had surrendered. [For details see *Message of the Lord*].

- As remarked elsewhere, *Para Dharma* as taught to us by our elders and as one normally follows is consistent with *Atma Dharma*. But sticky situations can arise. These situations appear sticky because the analysis is either consciously or unconsciously based on selfish considerations. Then *Para Dharma* becomes shaky and risky to follow.

- A classic example. According to all accepted conventions, a soldier must follow orders. This is his *Para Dharma*. OK so far. In World War II, many German soldiers were ordered to participate in the extermination of the Jews. After the War when many of these people were tried for war crimes, they pleaded, "We were only following orders." The Court rejected such pleas, rightly so.
- The Court said, "The rules of War are stated in the Geneva Convention. Murdering Jews cannot be considered a part of war. It was a criminal act ordered by Hitler. You had no business to follow such immoral orders. You should have refused to obey, even at the risk of death."
- In our language, what the Court was saying was that the accused ought not to have blindly done something in the name of doing their duty. They should have checked with their Conscience. What they did was against Conscience. Therefore they were guilty.
- This gives a convenient operational definition of *Atma Dharma*. It is *Dharma* that is in consonance with Conscience.
- Many argue: "All this is fine to talk about, but will not work in



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practice, especially in this day and age. This is the age of acute competition. It is dog eat dog out there. Therefore, all is fair, as they say it is, in love and war". THIS IS NOT TRUE and one should not fall for such false arguments. One's Conscience represents Truth, and action that is against one's Conscience cannot ever be right or truthful. One should simply not be bothered about whether *Dharma* will "work" or not. That is NOT of concern at all. One must simply follow *Dharma* come what may that is all.

- Incidentally, the statement that *Dharma* will not "work" is based on worldly considerations. What does it mean when one says it will not work? The person is saying that following *Dharma* will not lead to a result that is advantageous to the individual concerned.
- Take the case of giving a bribe to get something done, like getting a certain certificate, for example. People may say, "Listen, I desperately need this certificate. And unless I pay the bribe, I cannot get it; so, what am I to do? I have no choice!" That is the worldly way of looking at it, and from that point may seem quite reasonable. But a person wedded to *Atma Dharma* will say, "I don't care about all that. My duty is to follow *Dharma*. My Conscience says that giving a bribe is wrong. So, I shall not give. It does not matter if I do not get that certificate. Heavens will not fall. The important thing is to please my Conscience."
- When does a person talk like this? When he has what Baba calls *Atma Viswasam*. The word *Atma Viswasam* literally means faith in the *Atma*. However, it is often translated as self-

confidence, and this gives room for some confusion.

- Swami often refers to Self-confidence, and He invariably means confidence in the Inner Self or God. In this interpretation, a person having Self-confidence does not boast, "I am great; I can do it", etc., like boxers do, but instead says, "God is Great. I am confident He will do this, possibly using me as His instrument." This is important. When the lower self is involved, it is the ego speaking. When the Higher Self is involved, the devotee invokes the power of the True Self or God.
- Is it not risky to follow *Atma Dharma*? Would not one fail to achieve what one wants or has to? So it might seem in a worldly sense. But it has been said that he who stands by *Dharma* will be protected by that very same *Dharma*. Yet, people normally do not buy this line. However, Swami has told any number of stories concerning this to restore the faith of devotees in this matter.
- Look up these stories. The point about them is the following: The Pandavas were frequently in difficulties; sometimes, the situation they had to face was quite nasty. But they did not give up their faith in Krishna. And Krishna did not fail them either. In the midst of all their suffering and misery, He came to their rescue and pulled them out of the jam.
- The message is this. Krishna is God; He is also *Dharma*. One who claims to place TOTAL faith in God must also place total faith in *Dharma* and abide by it. When one makes the effort to do so, then God

extricates that person out of the jam. There are any number of stories of Sai devotees being extricated in this manner from knotty situations, literally in the last minute, like Draupadhi was. These episodes go to prove that *Dharma* DOES work, provided one reposes full faith in it.

- In the *Gita*, Krishna gives this solemn assurance [see, for example, hymn/*sloka* 9.22]. When one surrenders totally to God, He takes full care. He has given this promise [*Gita* 18. 65, 66].
- To summarise:

Adherence to *Dharma* is a must.

One's actions must be in accordance with the situation, the circumstances, and consistent with one's position in life.

While performing actions, selfish motives must be excluded to the extent possible.

If they cannot be totally avoided, then they must at least be minimised. And as time passes, selfishness must be gradually eliminated.

Above all, actions must proclaim strongly the harmony of thought, word and deed. Baba regards this as a very important requirement.

- The Bottom Line is:

One must follow one's Conscience.

If one is forced to be a bit selfish in one's actions, then one must pray to God for



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forgiveness.

One must progressively decrease the selfish content in one's actions.

- Different levels of selfishness Swami's example. There is an old man. He plants a mango tree in his garden. He knows that he will not live to eat the fruit of the tree. Yet he plants the tree. Therefore, his act is unselfish. However, it is only partially so. Why? Because he wants his grandchildren to eat the fruit. There is an element of attachment in his action. He wants only his family to benefit; that is why he plants the tree in his land. Next, there is a King who orders that trees be planted along the highways in his kingdom in the olden days, many kings in India did this. The King's act is totally unselfish. Why? The King planted trees so that they would provide shade to those who walked along the highways. When he travelled, the King never walked; he would be carried in a covered palanquin. Therefore, the King did not personally need the shade but the ordinary passer by did. Therefore, the King's act was totally unselfish.
- It may not be possible for ordinary mortals to be always unselfish, but one can try to minimise selfishness. That is all God expects. As time goes on and one evolves, one would automatically tend to become less and less selfish. The limit of course is Baba who is TOTALLY unselfish.
- Useful guidelines:

MAN + SELFISHNESS DEMON
MAN SELFISHNESS GOD

ASSIGNMENT

- Line up some examples of moral dilemmas that could be discussed in Study Circle sessions. Make sure that in these cases the choice is not between right and wrong, but two kinds of duties that appear to contradict. Make the examples as tough as possible! And also have the solutions based on *Atma Dharma* ready, so that when people have failed to resolve the problem, you can expose the solution and explain it convincingly.
- Line up examples of stories that illustrate that though people might appear to be in trouble, unconditional faith in God rescues them. [Whenever people thank Baba for saving them, He always says, "I did not save you; your faith saved you!" This is a most important statement!!]
- One important point to consider is how to slowly break in children to these concepts. Obviously, they cannot be

told about this *Dharma* and that *Dharma* and all that. But they can be slowly trained and drilled in talking to their Conscience, to Swami. So, one could devise plays in which children talk to God all the time and end up doing the right things. It would be a good exercise to have a competition amongst members of the Study Circle to come up with scripts for such plays. The best script could then be perhaps promoted for a Bal Vikas drama!

- Finally, remember that trying to practice *Para Dharma* without reference to *Atma Dharma* is like trying to pain in the air!

JAI SAI RAM



Kindle your Spirit

What is SARS?

A few days before Easwaramma day, I was reading a discourse of Swami in which He mentioned about natural disasters taking place in the world. He said they cannot be avoided, and to face them we have to be spiritually strong. How to be spiritually strong? Swami continued to say that we must constantly chant the Lord's Name; let that be Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, or Shiva. Every breath should be filled with His name, then we will be spiritually strong and our heart will become pure and full of compassion. On 6 May 2003, during Easwaramma bhajans, while contemplating on Swami's picture, a question flashed in my mind. Swami, what is this new disease called SARS? He instantly replied,

"Swami Advises Remain Strong (SARS)"

Thereafter, whenever I read the word SARS, which would otherwise scare me, I would say to myself, 'Only by remaining spiritually strong and focused on HIM we can fight SARS! In this manner, He protected me, my family and the rest of the devotees through the difficult times we faced during SARS in Taiwan. Thank you Swami! Jai Sai Ram.

- Surender Narang, Taipei, Taiwan
(excerpt from Kansai light, vol 112, Nov 2003-Feb 2004)



The Wonders of God

A boy was sitting on a park bench with one hand resting on an open Bible. He was loudly exclaiming his praise to God. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God is great!" he yelled without worrying whether anyone heard him or not.

Along came a man who had recently completed some studies at a local university. Feeling himself very enlightened in the ways of truth and very eager to show this enlightenment, he asked the boy about the source of his joy.

The boy replied with a bright laugh, "Don't you have any idea what God is able to do? I just read that God opened up the waves of the Red Sea and led the whole nation of Israel right through the middle."

The enlightened man laughed lightly, sat down next to the boy, and began to try to open his eyes to the "realities" behind the miracles of the Bible. "That can all be very easily explained. Modern scholarship has shown that the Red Sea in that area was only 10-inches deep at that time. It was no problem for the Israelites to wade across."

The boy was stumped. His eyes wandered from the man

back to the Bible lying open in his lap. The man, content that he had enlightened a poor, naive young person to the finer points of scientific insight, turned to go. Scarcely had he taken two steps when the boy began to rejoice and praise louder than before. The man turned to ask the reason for this resumed jubilation.

"Wow!" Exclaimed the boy happily, "God is greater than I thought! Not only did He lead the whole nation of Israel through the Red Sea, He topped it off by drowning the whole Egyptian army in 10 inches of water!"



Moments, Memories, and miracles Rendezvous with Anil Kumar

The Kodaikanal experience part 2 (Part 2 of 3)



Prof. Anil Kumar

Introduction:

It is said that Prasanthi Nilayam is Swami's office, Brindavan is His home and Kodaikanal is His playground. In a manner of speaking, this is so particularly where Kodaikanal is concerned, for it is here, that one gets a glimpse of the Sai of the Forties, especially where Divine Leelas are concerned. It all lasts only a few weeks, but what extraordinary weeks they are, for those blessed to enjoy Divine intimacy then!

Kodaikanal is a hill station in South India about four hundred and odd kilometres south east of Bangalore and near the Temple Cities of Madurai and Palani. In former years, every summer Swami used to take a few selected students with Him to Kodai. To help you to know more about Swami's Kodai sojourn, we reproduce below the transcript of a dialogue between Prof. Anil Kumar and Prof. Venkataraman, broadcast earlier over Radio Sai. Both are from the SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING.

(Continued from the previous issue)

AK: At times, Swami takes the boys out on a picnic, where He almost plays with the boys. Sometimes, He even sings with the boys. All sorts of funny things happen.

GV: Does it all remind you of Krishna and His cowherd boys, the Gopals?

AK: Yes, I think it is all action replay, like a tape being replayed.

GV: Except for the age difference between the physical body of the Lord and those who are with Him this time?

AK: May be, but Bhagavan crosses all time barriers when He materialises certain things. I know Sir, one year He materialised the ring worn by Lord Rama that was presented to Him by His father Dasaratha.

GV: Oops! The ring that Dasaratha gave?!!

AK: That is right. It was a diamond ring, and Swami was smiling as He looked around while materialising another ring this time it was a sapphire ring that was presented to Lord Rama by His father-in-law, Emperor Janaka.

GV: I am told these rings are very big?

AK: Very big indeed. I said, "Swami, it is almost the size of my wrist. How come this ring is so big?" Swami replied, "Lord Rama was an Aajanubhau, meaning one of very tall stature.

GV: Eight feet or so?

AK: Yes, Swami then materialised the Mangalsutra or sacred wedding medallion, complete with the sacred thread that holds the medallion. This was worn by Mother Sita at the time of the wedding. I have also seen Swami materialising the chain worn by Ravana.

GV: Ravana?

AK: Yes, complete with 365 Shiva Lingas and a pendant at the bottom made up of three large Shiva Lingas, one yellow, one green and one blue. All the 365 were made of gold while the three in the pendant at the centre were made of crystal. This was the chain that



Rama's Ring

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Ravana wore.

GV: What happens to these jewels afterwards?

AK: They go back to SAI STORES (laughter). Swami also materialised a golden replica of the deer that captivated Sita, later landing her in trouble.

GV: Are you allowed to touch these objects?

AK: Yes, sir. On one occasion, Swami said, "Tomorrow is the wedding function of Balarama [brother of Krishna] and Revathi. All of you are invited for lunch!" Sure enough, on the following day, there was a fabulous lunch and in the afternoon Swami spoke about the marriage of Balarama with Revathi. And at the end He materialised a magnificent diamond-studded necklace with three or four rows of diamonds.

GV: My GOD! How big was the necklace?

AK: About 15 cms. At the centre of the arch-like necklace there was a Swan suspended by a gold chain. The Swan was clear and you could look through its eyes, beak, stomach, and so on. Every body started looking at it. Swami came to me and said, "Look, look deep". I did so and there in the middle of the stomach of that bird I could see Bhagavan Baba in a reclining posture, the classic reclining posture of Lord Narayana, reclining on His Thousand-hooded snake, Adishesha. That is what I saw. It was absolutely fantastic. Swami also materialised the CHOODAMANI or the ornament that Sita used to wear on her head. This was the CHOODAMANI that Hanuman brought back as proof of having met Sita, when he reported back to the Lord Rama.



Sita's Chudamani

GV: How do the boys feel on such occasions? They must be transported to a different world.

AK: That is right, into a totally different world. They had come so close that they even took the liberty of almost pestering, saying, "Swami, let us see, let us see!" Swami

The Kodaikanal experience part 2 (Part 2 of 3) gave ample opportunities for all to see these manifested objects at close quarters. He would keep them on the table so that everybody could later see at some leisure. Photographs would be taken and some of them are here in our MUSEUM also.

GV: Fantastic! Can you recall some really moving, spectacular, or heart-warming incidences? I am sure there must certainly have been a few of these.

AK: Well, there was an incident involving a student from the State of Kerala.

GV: How long ago did this incident take place?

AK: About six to eight years ago. Swami was showing special concern for this boy. We were wondering why? In fact, I was even jealous! Swami materialised a ring for him, a chain for him, a watch for him, and so on, and it seemed as if the whole trip was meant just for this boy! After a few days Swami materialised a pair of ear rings for that boy.

GV: Ear rings?

AK: Yes sir, ear rings that only girls wear. How is it that He materialised ear rings for the boy? We just couldn't understand. The next day, Swami materialised another set of ear rings for the same boy. I thought to myself, "Swami I have three daughters, you can give me also one (laughter), why only to that boy, an unmarried fellow?" Then after a week, while delivering a Discourse, Swami said, "Many are wondering why Swami showed special concern to one particular boy. Some are specially curious to know why I gave ear rings to that boy. That boy lost his mother long back. I have been watching the boy crying and sitting in a corner. I called him close to Me and asked him about the reason. He then told Me about the death of his mother and how his mother wanted to present ear rings to her two daughters, that is the two sisters of this boy. Before his mother could do that, she died. Now, I am his Mother and also of those girls. Who else is there to care for them? That is why I materialised many things for that boy. You will seldom understand what I do. Whatever I do and say has got a deeper significance and inner meaning. Out of frustration, the boy's father wanted to commit suicide. I made the boy's father to come here, took a promise from him that he would not make any attempt to take his life. I am now taking care of the family. From that day onwards, the boy has started smiling." That story really touched my heart. I said, "Swami you are the MOTHER of MOTHERS, dearer and nearer than the physical mother. You truly care for them". I am sure none of us can really experience the depth, and the full intensity of Swami's Love.

Moments, Memories, and miracles

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The Kodaikanal experience part 2 (Part 2 of 3)

what you have to say.

GV: Yes, that's true. Swami has always that feeling towards us; only, we are not able to see that. Instead we go around making all sorts of silly statements like, "Swami is angry, so He will not talk," and so on. We do not realise that Swami cannot be anything other than loving. In this context Swami says that God does not change and that it is only man who changes. One day he says God is good another day, he says God is not so great! The problem is always with man and never with God.

AK: Yes sir and He gives an example also. When we go by train to Bangalore, we say, as the city is approaching, "Bangalore is coming, Bangalore is coming". And while departing from Bangalore, "We say Bangalore is gone". Bangalore neither comes, nor goes. It is only we who go there and leave from there.

GV: Any memorable incidents that you can recall from your Kodaikanal trips?

AK: Yes. In Kodai, Swami often distributes all sorts of things, including peppermints, chocolate bars, and so on. Suddenly one day He said, "I am here distributing all these sweets and chocolates for you to eat, but there is one fellow who is not eating; instead he is dumping them all into his bag. Come on boys! Search everybody's bags." It was something like an income tax raid (laughter)! Then I said, "Swami, Bhagavan, why all this trouble? I am the one who is not eating. I am keeping them all in my bag." Bhagavan then asked, "Why do you do that?" I replied, "Swami I have four children. They expect something from me. When I take back these most precious things like peppermints - whatever You give is most valuable for all of us when I hand over these things, the children will jump in joy". Swami said, "Oh, is that so?" He then told the boys, "Hereafter, you give Anil Kumar five pieces of sweets, four for his children to be kept in the bag, one for him to eat along with you and feel happy". How can I ever forget that incident? I don't recall anybody loving me more than Bhagavan Baba. In fact, this is the feeling of every devotee. This is the chance you have given me, sir, to describe my experience which is also the experience of millions of devotees the world over.

GV: What does Swami expect in return for all these? This is a sort of typical human question, because I do know that God does not expect any returns. In any case, let us hear

AK: Swami only wants us to learn from Him that just as He loves us, we must love our family, fellow human beings and God. And that is because God is Love and Love is God. Always Live in LOVE - that is His message.

GV: I am told that one year on Eswaramma's day, Swami distributed blankets to the poor and then went out distributing to people who could not come to Sai Sruthi or the Mandir in Kodai. Were you present at that time? That seems to be a very unusual and moving incident. Why don't you tell us about it?

AK: Yes, blankets were first distributed to all the poor people who assembled in Sai Sruthi that day, the 6th of May celebrated as Easwaramma day. Suddenly Swami said, "Let's go!" He got into His car and the convoy started moving. On the way, whenever He saw poor people He stopped the car, got down and started personally distributing these blankets.

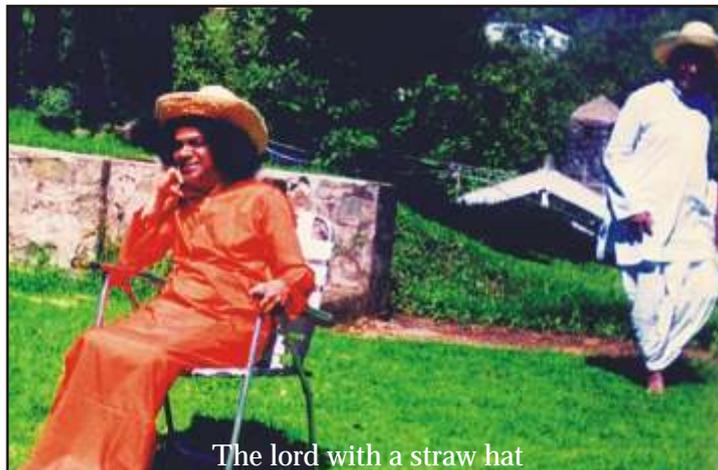
GV: Did He explain why?

AK: Bhagavan said you should do everything to care for the poor, the needy and the forlorn. This is a lesson that everyone

should learn from Bhagavan. You should not expect them to come to you for service; instead, you must go to them, the Daridra Narayana or God disguised as the poor.

GV: Was it also because some of them could not come because they were disabled?

AK: Absolutely. Not only that sir, on our way to Kodaikanal, His car would sometimes suddenly stop whenever He saw a beggar or a village woman carrying a head-load of firewood. He would call them and give money; these are people who have never seen Swami before nor know anything about Him, much less that He was SAI BABA. He does things like that all the time. When I give Him a strange look, Bhagavan says, "I just cannot bear to see these poor people suffering like that". Sir, I think you will be more thrilled and excited if I say, that in Kodai, Bhagavan purchases fluffy candy or candy puffs. Once He purchased about twenty five of them and took them in His car His car was full of that stuff. Later He distributed them to VIPs. They were just amazed. Bhagavan then said, "Do you know why I bought them?"



The lord with a straw hat

Moments, Memories, and miracles Rendezvous with Anil Kumar

The Kodaikanal experience part 2 (Part 2 of 3)

Here, in Kodaikanal there are some aged people, they cannot move about and their children carry on their livelihood by selling these candy puffs. So when I purchase them, they go back home with money and give to their parents and that day is taken care of". From that day, every body started purchasing candy puffs. For twenty five candy puffs you may have to pay about ten rupees, but Swami gave them five hundred rupees. I asked, "Swami, why so much?" He replied that it was not the price of candy that He was giving, but His Love! It is not the price of the candy, it is the love of Bhagavan towards them. I was really so happy when one day He called the boys and told them, "Boys, look here, you have seen Tibetans girls selling woollen garments. Everybody go and buy so that they will be happy!" When Sai Baba is in Kodai, they all have very good business. And then you must have heard about the straw hats.

GV: Straw hats? In fact I think I have a photo of Swami and Narasimhamoorthy with straw hats.

(to be continued in the next issue)

Tender hearts

What Is Real Wealth?

Once there was a rich and powerful king who wanted to invade and conquer a neighboring country. While passing over a snow-covered mountain with his army, the king met a holy man who had no clothes. The king thought the poor fellow must be cold, so he tried to give the holy man his grand and expensive cloak.

The holy man had grown wise from his many years of prayer and meditation. He said to the king, "The Lord has always taken care of my every need. Oh king. Give the cloak to someone who is poor - not to me." The holy man went on to say very sweetly to the king, "If you are so unhappy with all your riches that you

must conquer another kingdom, and cause your soldiers to risk their lives, then keep the cloak. You are a poor man; you need it more than I do."

The king was wise enough to understand the teaching the holy man was giving him. The king realized how poor and empty his life was. He asked the holy man for the secret to his peace and happiness.

The holy man answered, "I am happy because I have no desires; without desires you are the master of everything."

Then and there, the king called off the war and took his army home. The citizens of his country welcomed him as a hero, for the king indeed had conquered and won a great victory. He no longer had any desires!

Excerpted from *Bal Vikas Magazine for Children 1 to 99, Italy*
January/February 2004





Tender hearts

Test Your Spiritual Quotient - III

1. What is the most powerful force in life as told by Bhagawan Baba? Also, what is man's greatest asset?
2. After Lord Rama had killed the demon king Ravana, Lakshmana and Vibhishana requested Rama to become the King of Lanka as he rightfully won the kingdom after killing Ravana. What did Rama do?
 - a) He accepted the kingdom of Lanka to the delight of the people of Lanka and appointed Vibhishana as the special minister to look after the day to day affairs of the kingdom and returned to Ayodhya.
 - b) He made Lakshmana the King of Lanka and went to Ayodhya along with Mother Sita to rule over Ayodhya.
 - c) He refused to accept the kingdom of Lanka and made Vibhishana the king of Lanka.
 - d) He became the king of Lanka and ruled over Lanka for 14 years before returning to Ayodhya, His motherland.
3. Baba often says that one must live in this world like a lotus subsists in water. What is the message that He is conveying through this analogy?
4. Try filling up the blanks in this famous saying of Baba
"Money can buy you a house, but not a ____
Money can buy you a bed, but not ____
Money can buy you a clock, but not ____
Money can buy you a book, but not ____
Money can buy you a position, but not ____
Money can buy you medicine but not ____
Money can buy blood, but not ____."
5. What is the meaning of the term Sanskrit term "Avathar"?
6. We know that sage Vaalmeeeki was the author of the great epic Ramayana. Why was Vaalmeeeki called so? What was his original name and profession?
7. Baba has described the most beautiful attire for a person in one word. What is it?
8. We know that the famous biography of Baba 'Sathyam Shivam Sundaram' was authored by Late Sri N. Kasturi. Can you now match these other famous books on Baba with their respective authors?

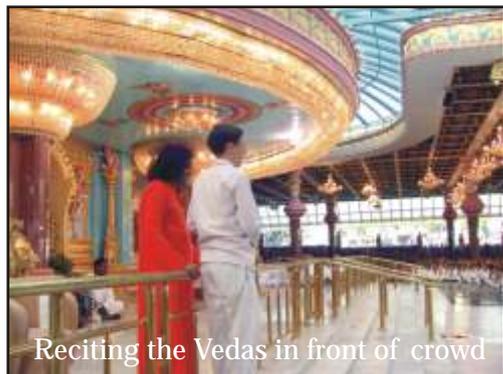
| Books | Authors |
|---|----------------------|
| a) Loving God | i) Howard Murphet |
| b) Living Divinity | ii) Joy Thomas |
| c) Sai Baba Man of Miracles | iii) Shakuntala Balu |
| d) My Baba and I | iv) John S Hislop |
| e) Sai Baba...Holy Man and the Psychiatrist | v) N.Kasturi |
| | vi) Samuel Sandweiss |
9. If the Vedas of the Hindus are in Sanskrit, in which language is the sacred book of Muslims 'The Holy Quran' written?
 - a) Arabic
 - b) Urdu
 - c) Persian
 - d) Hebrew
10. The two promises that Bhagawan Baba made to His mother, Eswaremma, which He adheres even to this day are
 - a) He will always wear red robe signifying holiness and never cut His hair.
 - b) He will remain in Puttaparthi, His birth place, and travel always by car within India along with His devotees.
 - c) He will always speak Telugu, His mother tongue and remain in Puttaparthi.
 - d) He will always speak Telugu and wear a red robe like a monk.
11. On which landmark occasion did Baba give Darshan from the sky in a helicopter to the thronging multitudes gathered in Prashanti Nilayam?
 - a) 60th Birthday Celebrations
 - b) 65th Birthday Celebrations
 - c) 50th Birthday Celebrations
 - d) 55th Birthday Celebrations
12. The Mahabharata war, we know, was a battle between the Pandavas (the good) and the Kauravas (the evil). Who were these Pandavas and why were they called so?
13. What is the sum and substance of 'Karma Yoga' or the Path of Action in the celebrated dialogue Bhagawad Geeta?
14. Where did Baba stay when He visited the capital city, New Delhi in the year 2000?
15. We know that Sage Veda Vyasa was the author of the great epic Mahabharata. But who actually wrote the Mahabharata while sage Vyasa dictated?
 - a) Lord Krishna
 - b) Sage Bharadwaja
 - c) Lord Ganesha
 - d) Sage Valmeeki

Look for answers in page 34



Prasanthi diary

Living With God Is True Education



Reciting the Vedas in front of crowd

It all started innocently enough! Swami had just come out for the Sunday morning *darshan*. The Sunday morning *darshan* is always a little special, as all the students including the Primary and the Secondary School students, both boys and girls, come to Sai Kulwant Hall for the Divine *darshan* on this day.

As is His won't, Swami came to the verandah to the sounds of Vedic chanting by the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institutes. Slowly He was walking from one end of the verandah towards the other side to talk and joke with the Primary School students. He happened to see a High School student from overseas, chanting Vedas with full feeling along with all His Indian brothers and fellow students. Visibly impressed, Swami beckoned to him to come up and listened carefully to the Sanskrit verses rolling easily off the tongue of this young man from the United States.

Swami then asked him to turn and face the crowd and continue the chanting in unison with the rest of the boys. Perhaps Swami wanted to hold this young man up as an example of how people from overseas come and drink deep from the fathomless well that is the *Bharatiya* culture, whereas *Bharatiyas* themselves neglect their cultural heritage and go West in pursuit of the Almighty Dollar.

Swami then called another young

primary school student to come up and join this young man. Pretty soon there was a collection of young students with varied backgrounds reciting the Vedas in front of the thousands who had assembled in Sai Kulwant Hall that morning. The entire assembled crowd listened spellbound and with rapt attention.

And Swami. He was bursting with pride that some of the very youngest of His students could recite the Vedas with such ease and correct diction. After all, an important facet of the *Avataric* mission is *Veda Poshana* or the nourishment of the



School Boys reciting for Swami

Vedas, enabling it to flourish without restriction or hindrance.

But the story does not end here. Swami then called an MBA college student from the Institute and asked him to not only recite the Vedas but also explain the meaning to the crowd. This young man recited and explained the *Narayana Upanishad*, the story of how the supreme person *Narayana*, willed to create all the beings. All things and all beings emerged from *Narayana*. Everything is sustained by Him and ultimately merges in Him.

Swami then called a Sanskrit teacher and asked him to recite and explain from the *Purusha Suktham*. This mantra describes the greatness of the *Purusha* or the Cosmic Person. It describes His omnipresence and omnipotence. From Him is born the

entire manifested Universe. From this Cosmic person, all the *Devas* (Celestial Beings) are born. Then the *Devas* performed a sacrifice (*yagna*). The *Vasantha* and the other seasons became the offerings of this sacrifice. (Swami then asked the teacher to name the six seasons, as they are not explicitly named in the *mantra*. The teacher correctly replied *Vasantha* (Spring), *Grishma* (Summer), *Varsha* (Rain), *Sharad* (Autumn), *Hemantha* (Spring), and *Shisira* (Winter.) As there was nothing else, the Cosmic Person Himself became the first 'animal' for the sacrifice. From that *Yagna* is born everything. As the teacher explained this part, Swami asked him, "What is the meaning of *Yagna*?" The teacher replied that *Yagna* or sacrifice refers to all the actions that we do. Clarifying, Swami replied, "Whatever we do, whatever we think, whatever we utter, should be considered as the sacrifice. Without expecting any fruit of the action, all actions must be offered to God. That is the true *Yagna*". What a simple explanation of one of the most profound truths of the Vedas!

A subtle fact that perhaps eluded most devotees present there, witness to the progression of these events on that day, is Swami's commentary on education. At the 'primary school'





Prasanthi diary

Living With God Is True Education



level, it is enough to learn by rote with perhaps some attention to diction. At a more advanced 'college' level, one should not only learn by rote but also understand the meaning in full. At the 'post-graduate' or 'teacher' level, one should not only know the literal meaning but also understand the inner significance. Additionally, the 'teacher' should also have a deep understanding of all connected and related material. Compare this simple truth with the situation prevalent today when all material is learnt by rote with the examinations in view, and college students go to court if even one question on their examination paper is from 'out of syllabus'.

And the story still does not end. On a couple more occasions, Swami asked the same young man from overseas to come up and recite in front of the crowd. On one occasion, while the young man was reciting, Swami called up the 'birthday boys' to come up and receive His blessings. (Note: On their birthdays, the students generally bring a tray with some cloves, dried fruits, and chocolates, to be blessed as *prasadam* by Swami. They also utilize this opportunity to give a letter to Swami or else have His photograph autographed by Him). After blessing the birthday boys, Swami asked the young man to stop, and said, "Here boy, this chocolate is for you". The boy's face lit up like a neon light, especially happy that Swami had singled him out for this

special attention and glad that he was given the opportunity to contribute his mite towards the *Avataric* mission.

The story still goes on. On New Year Day, Swami called the young man, yet again, and asked him to chant facing the mammoth festival crowd. Visibly nervous, he gamely did his best, closing his eyes to shut the crowd out and concentrating hard on the recitation to please his Lord. Swami also perhaps chose this most auspicious day and setting to appropriately reward this young man who had served Him well. Waving



His hand, He manifested a beautiful gold chain and personally put it around the neck of this young man. What a beautiful lesson to managers that you should publicly praise and reward everyone who has served you well.

The story also has an interesting post-script. On January 12th, 2004, Swami gave a sudden, but welcome, discourse in the morning. Touching upon a topic very dear to His heart, He exhorted the students, "You must respect your parents, whoever they may be and in whatever condition they may be. You must respect their words and obey their commands, without any reservation. Then only you will be able to command respect from society". Furthermore, Swami went on to explain that the ancient traditions of *Bharat* are

meant to promote humility, respect and reverence among people. He also explained that one must strive to earn the 'grace' of God, whereas people these days are craving only for the 'grass' of worldly desires. Then calling this American boy to the dais, Swami said, "This boy is securing first class not only in studies but also in the study of the Vedas. He has given immense joy to his parents with his good behaviour. His father is very happy that his son has earned a very good name and is appreciated by one and all". Swami then called the boy's father, who was present in the crowd up to the dais and asked him, "Are you happy?" In a choked, emotion-filled voice he replied, "Very happy, Swami". This moving scene is still etched on everyone's mind.

The sight of this lanky Yankee kid with braces on his teeth, but profound Sanskrit Vedic hymns on his tongue, and the sight of his equally tall father answering Swami in a moving voice, provided a simple but powerful imagery for the thousands to remember Swami's teaching that pleasing your parents is what pleases God the most.

Yes, verily living with God is true education. Heart to Heart captures for its readers these events and we hope you are as moved by them as we are. Do write and let us know. We can be reached at h2h@radiosai.org.





Prasanthi diary

Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust

January 27 - 28, 2004

There was festive atmosphere everywhere as the Sai Kulwant hall resounded with the sonorous tunes of the brass band and Vedam chanting. To add to the joy of the devotees, Bhagawan walked down the red carpet, led by the students from Muddenahalli and Alike educational institutions of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust who had gathered to celebrate its Silver Jubilee year in the immediate presence of their mother, mentor and master Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust was formed with the noble intention of providing value-based education to the young minds so that they grow straight and strong to be exemplary leaders of society and the country. To achieve this end, the Trust currently runs two magnificent educational institutions, one being at the sylvan surroundings of Alike and the other at picturesque Muddenahalli, both these schools located in the state of Karnataka of South India. The Trust was founded by a great devotee of Bhagawan, late Sri Madiyal Narayana Bhat. After the sad demise of Sri Bhat, Bhagawan Baba, in 1978, graciously accepted these institutions into His fold to the delight of the Trust members. Including about 2000 students and staff from the educational institutions at Alike and Muddenahalli along with their parents and well-wishers, around

15,000 devotees had converged at His lotus feet to celebrate 25 golden years of their association with Bhagawan.

to Bhagawan for His infinite love, blessings and grace. After the student speakers, Bhagawan Baba graciously



consented to give His divine message and when He rose and started His discourse in chaste Kannada, the devotees could not contain their delight at this unexpected blessing. The audience listened in rapt attention, to Baba's message,

which came in an uninterrupted flow since there was no translation. Bhagawan praised the devotion of late Sri Narayan Bhat and lauded the dedication and commitment of the members of the Trust for their excellent work in moulding young minds.

The cultural programme in the afternoon consisted of a few folk dances of the state of Karnataka and a scintillating performance of Yaksha Gana, a traditional form of dance-

After the ceremonial welcome, Bhagawan lighted the lamp amidst thunderous applause to mark the inauguration of the celebrations on the beautiful Tuesday morning of 27th of January, the first day of the two-day celebrations. There were five speakers who addressed the gathering that eventful morning. The first speaker was Sri Gangadhar Bhat, Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust, who went down his memory lane in his soulful Kannada and narrated the story of the Trust with all its cataclysmic and ecstatic moments. Sri Narayan Rao, the Secretary of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions, Muddenahalli followed him and presented a report of the activities of the Trust in the last 25 years. On this occasion, Bhagawan also released three books published by the Loka Seva Trust. There were three student speakers following Sri Narayana Rao - two of them in English and one in Kannada- who expressed their love and gratitude



drama very popular in the southern regions of Karnataka, on the theme "Krishna Leela" depicting episodes from Lord Krishna's boyhood. After



Prasanthi diary

Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust

January 27 - 28, 2004



the programme, Bhagawan graciously granted group-photographs to the thrill of the participants.



The next day, the 28th of January, was a day of cultural extravaganza. After Swami arrived at about 7.30 a.m. in ceremonial procession just like the previous day, a dance drama entitled



"Sai Leela" was staged by the students. The presentation gave life to the legend about Baba's advent concerning Sage Bharadwaja and through dances and music, recreated the beautiful scenes of Swami's advent and His childhood. This was followed by a traditional ceremony called "Ashtavadhanam"

wherein various art forms, are offered to the lord in a ritualistic fashion. The first to be offered was

Veda Parayana (Chanting of hymns from all the four vedas), followed by puranas, shastras, the holy sound of the conch, the soothing music of the flute, the art of vocal music, dance and finally, reading of the panchanga (or the almanac). It ended with the rendering of "Sai Ashtakam", a string of eight hymns glorifying Bhagawan Baba. After the programme, Baba

came down the stage and blessed the members of the brass band and the pundits who had participated in the "Ashtavadhanam", spending lot of time with them, presenting them with gifts and posing for photographs with them.

At three in the afternoon of 28th, as Baba's car glided its way to the Kulwant Hall, students from Alike and Muddenahalli welcomed Bhagawan with a sweet welcome song even as the other boys chanted vedic hymns. There were some more beautiful

group songs to follow, in Kannada and English. The highlight of the day's proceedings was a dance-drama called "Jagadoddhara" depicting the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu - an hour long presentation, which concluded with Sai Avathar, the avathar of the Kali age. It was a fiesta of song, dance, music, melody and some very good acting talent. Each participant's heart was brimming with joy, which was amply reflected on their smiling faces as they stood next to Bhagawan for a once in a lifetime chance of being photographed with Him. Baba gave Himself to them, talking to them, blessing them and showering



gifts on them.

It was an unforgettable day not just for the staff and students of Alike and Muddenahalli schools alone, but for each individual present there that evening. For, such instances of witnessing the supreme love filling and overwhelming His children are memories that will be treasured for a long time.

Jai Sai Ram!

Window to sai seva

Sai Seva in Dominican Republic

There are over a million refugees from Haiti who live in the Dominican Republic. Haiti shares the same island with the Dominican Republic, but the cultures and languages are very different with one being a Spanish culture, and the other French. Over 95% of the Haitians were French slaves of African descent. But when Swamis' devotees go to work, the distinction barriers fall. In one community of Haitian refugees where the Sai devotees went to do service of giving food, they found a single mother with four children living in a cardboard covered hole. The devotees rallied together and personally built a home for this family. It took 3 months of working week ends to make a large one room dwelling, but the love which everyone experienced was beyond description. Many of the residents in this community came forward to offer something even though they themselves have nothing. When people see that someone is interested in them, they become interested in themselves. Close by, there was a one room school which didn't function because there were no teachers, and there was no bathroom. There was no blackboard, the floor had holes in it and the roof was falling in. The Sai devotees got together and repaired and painted the school and built a bathroom. Some mothers

from the community agreed to give classes up to 4th grade by rotation since the government didn't give any money for teachers in this school. The devotees take breakfast every morning to the school so that the children can get proper nutrition at least once a day. They also stay to give a human values class. They provide books, paper and pencils for the students. This is a humble start, but the community is becoming more self sufficient, and the children more loving. Devotees are also helping new mothers with gift baskets when they have a child. This community adoption program is taking on new dimensions each day.

The children who are born in this community are born at home. The mothers cannot get to the hospital as it is too far and too costly to get there by taxi. Thus all the children do not have birth certificates. This prevents them from enrolling in public schools, which as a matter of law, require a birth certificate. Members of the Sai Organization have taken up the difficult process of changing the authorities' view of this problem. It remains to be resolved, but with Swamis Grace, all these children will someday be able to attend school.



Baskets of essentials for new mothers given by devotees to refugees.



Window to sai seva

Sai Seva in Dominican Republic



Home being built by devotees for refugee family who were living in a cardboard covered hole.



Children of family who received the home built by devotees.



One room in a school building renovated by Sai Devotees which now serves first to 4th grades at the adopted community of Haitian refugees.



Home in Santo Domingo, Dominican republic, which was built by devotees for a destitute refugee family.

Answers

1. The most powerful force in life is Love. And man's greatest asset is Faith.
2. c
3. Through the analogy of the lotus in water, Baba is teaching us that like the lotus which is always on water but there is no water on the lotus, man must live in this world but not let the world get into him. In more practical terms, it means while one must live in this world and perform his duties to the family and society, he should not get too attached and possessive. One must have a spirit of detachment towards the world and attachment to God.
4. Money can buy you a house, but not a home
Money can buy you a bed, but not sleep
Money can buy you a clock, but not time
Money can buy you a book, but not knowledge
Money can buy you a position, but not respect
Money can buy you medicine but not health
Money can buy blood, but not life
5. An Avathar means the descent of the Divine in Human form. It's for this reason that Bhagawan Baba is addressed as Sathya Sai Avathar.
6. Valmeeki was called so because when he was single-pointedly doing penance chanting the divine name of Lord Rama for years, an ant-hill grew over him and an ant-hill in Sanskrit is called "Valmeeka". Since he arose out of an ant-hill he was called Valmeeki. His original name was Ratnaakara and he was a highway robber.
7. Smile!
8. Match the following answers :
a) - v
b)- iii
c)- i
d)-iv
e) -vi
9. a
10. c
11. c
12. The Pandavas were five brothers. The eldest being Yudhisthira followed by Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. They were called so because they were the sons of King Pandu.
13. The Karma Yoga in the Geeta says that renunciation in action is what matters and not renunciation of action. To put it simply, one should not desist from doing work. Rather, one must do all work without getting attached to the results. The fruits of all actions must be dedicated to God.
14. Googly! Baba never visited New Delhi in the year 2000. He visited in the month of March of 1999.
15. c



Down memory lane

Shivaratri of the Yesteryears

Dear Reader,

We present below, excerpts from some old issues of Sanathana Sarathi, offering you a glimpse of Sivarathri celebrations more than three decades ago. We have not been able to ascertain who the authors of these accounts were. Even so, we are sure you would be absolutely fascinated by the descriptions of the celebrations as they took place then.

We start with an account of what happened in 1960.

The *Mahasivarathri* at Prasanthi Nilayam was this year attended by a much larger crowd of devotees than usual. At 8 A.M. that day, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag on top of the *Mandir*, and blessed the vast assemblage. Explaining the meaning of the symbol on the flag, He exhorted all to



overcome the three great enemies of spiritual progress namely, desire, anger and jealousy.

At noon *Mahabhishekam* was performed and during the proceedings, Baba materialised a twin *Lingam*. In the evening, a Special Function was arranged by the readers of *Sanathana Sarathi*, to celebrate the completion of two years of its publication. Baba graced the occasion with His Presence. An address of Gratitude was presented to Him and poems were recited in Tamil, Telugu, English and Kannada, by T.A.Ramanatha Reddy, S.V.Rama Sarma, B.V.Raman, and N.Kasturi respectively.

The evening Bhajan began at 7 P.M. Baba, seated on a special dais gave *Darshan* to all. After *Veda* chant, Brahmasris Bairagi Sastry of Eluru and Lakshminarayana Sastry of

Salem spoke on the significance of the day and of *Lingathathwam* [Principle of the *Lingam*]. Even while the speeches were on, signs of the emergence of the *Lingams* were evident in Baba, but nevertheless, He started His Discourse at 8.40 P.M. Meanwhile, the *Lingams* within Him were pressing for Manifestation. Baba interrupted His Discourse and asked that Bhajan be resumed this happened at 9.20 P.M. The Prayer Hall resounded to the voices of the thousands gathered therein reciting, *Om Sivaya, Om Sivaya*, and exactly at 9.32 P.M. NINE *Lingams* fell from His Mouth on to His Palm. Baba then led the Bhajan. The Bhajan was continued throughout the night and the Hall was packed to the capacity even in the small hours of the night. *Mahamangalarathi* was performed at 7A.M.

On the evening of the 26th February, Baba gave *Darshan* at the Prayer Hall, reclining in a *Jhoola* [Swing] specially decorated for the occasion. Sri Dupati Thirumalchar spoke on the Real and the unreal while Sri Bairagi Sastry gave a talk on Sai Philosophy. Following this, Baba blessed the audience with a thrilling Discourse.

From the 27th February, Baba was engaged for long hours in the morning and again in the evening, granting interviews to the devotees, until the very moment of His departure to Kerala, at sunrise on the 7th March, via Bangalore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. The Divine Grace He showered on each and every one of the thousands that attended this year's *Mahasivarathri* was indeed Divine.

Next we have a brief account of the celebrations of 1961.

On the morning of 4th March, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag on the *Mandir*, to the delight of the thousands who had gathered from all parts of India. At 9 A.M. the magnificent new structure named *Sathya Sai Sabhamandiram* was opened by H.E. Dr. Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He said, "When I had the privilege, under Baba's Orders to lay the Foundation Stone for this building, Baba said that I will myself open the completed structure and that I will be arriving for the purpose from the North. I was then the Governor of Kerala and I was unaware what was awaiting me. But Baba knew the future; in fact. He shapes the future and so, I have come from Lucknow today, to discharge the duty He then cast upon me".



At noon, *Abhishekam* was done to Shirdi Sai at the *Sabhamandiram* itself. Baba created a *Lingam* and placing it on the Head of the image He profusely poured on it the *Vibhuthi* which emanated in inexhaustible



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quantity and heavenly fragrance by the very contact of His Divine Hand.

At 4 P.M. the *Sanathana Sarathi* celebrated its Anniversary, in the immediate presence of Baba. Sri D. Thirumalacharulu, the author of the Telugu Version of *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram* placed at Baba's Lotus Feet the Second Edition of that book and Baba blessed him as well as N.Kasturi (the author of the book in English and Kannada) with shawls, which He lovingly wrapped around them.

In the night Baba spoke for over an hour. Later, while the sky echoed with the sound of Bhajan, two Gold *Lingams* emerged from the Divine Body of Bhagavan. Bhajan was held throughout the night and *Mahamangalarathi* was offered at 7 A.M. on the 5th. Truly, it was a thrilling elevating experience for all.

On 5,6,7,8,9 and 10, March there were Discourses every evening, when Baba gave Seekers, Scholars and Poets like Swami Abhedananda, Koochi Veerabhadram, Narasimharaju, Bairagi Sastry, Thirumalacharulu, S.V.L.Narasimham, P. Venkatanarasimhacharya and G. Suryanarayanamurthy the chance to address the gathering. Every day, Baba Himself elaborated, in His own sweet and simple manner, the principles touched upon by the speakers.

On the 5th, with Baba seated in a flower-bedecked *Jhoola*, Brahmasri Dikshitadas Bhagavathar dedicated

to Baba his musical narrative of *Baba's Life*, which captivated the devotees. On 8,9 and 10th March, Sri K. Veerabhadram read and explained in the traditional style, the *Puranic* version of the *Sivarathi* Festival. Altogether, this year's celebration was a feast to the eye and a banquet to the Soul.

Follows now a brief account of what happened in 1964 [we think!].

The gathering of devotees on *Mahasivarathi* Day was unprecedented and Baba showered His Grace on them all during



Abhishekam and Bhajan at noon, sprinkling the Holy water with His own Hand. In the evening Baba gave a Discourse and at about 8-50 P.M., while twenty thousand persons were immersed in the Divine Delight of Bhajan singing, one unique Oval *Lingam* symbolising the *Brahmanda* [Cosmos], with all its complex components reduced to the harmony of Beauty and Truth, materialised itself and emerged out of Baba's Divine Mouth.

On the 12th, after Baba's inspiring Discourse, the dear little students of the *Vedasastra Patasala* [Vedic School] enacted before an enthralled audience of 20,000 the Telugu Musical Play *Markandeya*, written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself. Later Smt. K. B Sunderambal of Madras, the celebrated devotee of Muruga, sang for about two hours, flooding the atmosphere with *Bhakthi*. Brahmasri Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastry, Kuppa Bairaga Sastry and

Prabhakara Umamaheswara Pandit spoke during the meetings and Brahmasri Kutumba Rao gave a *Kathakalashepam* [musical narration] on *Parvathi Kalyanam* on the 13th February.

This is the account we have of the events of 1965.

To a doubting world filled with disbelief, doubt, and ignorance, *Sivaratri* at Prasanthi Nilayam is in the nature of a Revelation, a challenge and a clarion call to people to rekindle their faith in the supremacy of the Principle of the *Atma*. *Sivaratri* this year drew an unprecedented crowd of devotees from all over the country and several from abroad from Africa, U.S.A. and U.K. The spacious grounds of the Nilayam were a seething mass of humanity, people occupying every available inch of space, under the trees, on the verandas of the rooms, in the open spaces all around, on the road side, everywhere. Scores of tents were erected. An endless stream of private cars and taxis brought hundreds, while special buses from different parts of South India poured large numbers of ardent pilgrims into the ever hospitable lap of Baba's Prasanthi Nilayam. Undeterred by the rigours of a long and tedious journey, eager, expectant and joyful, these thousands of men women and children revealed the strength of their faith and their Love for Baba, while Prasanthi Nilayam looked magnificent - with flags and festoons everywhere. The 'shed' had been trans

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g labour of scores of dedicated volunteers, working day and night for the sake of Bhagavan. The crowd must certainly have exceeded 25000 on 28th February and 1st March.



The morning is fresh, a gentle breeze is blowing and already, Prasanthi Nilayam is filled with activity even at that early hour. The buzz of voices, speaking in whispers, is clearly audible. A vast crowd has already gathered in front of the *Mandir* waiting for Bhagavan's *Darshan*. The melodious strains of *nadaswaram* soon fill the air. The door of the *Mandir* is opened. A long line of boys, bathed and fresh, each wearing a saffron-dyed piece of cloth round the waist and an *angavastram* [upper cloth] of the same colour, their foreheads adorned with the sacred ash, accompanied by their fathers or guardians, is waiting to enter the *Mandir*. This is the morning of the *Upanayanam* ceremony when nearly 400 Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya boys are to be initiated into the Sacred *Gayatri Mantra* and enter into a new life of dedication to God.

The *Upanayanam* is one of the most sacred ceremonies of Hinduism, marking the entry of a young boy into a new status, that of a *Brahmachari*. The boy is no longer an irresponsible lad but an initiate, on whom rests the duty of fulfilling the obligations of *Dharma*. Baba's love for His devotees and His keen desire to preserve the spirit of the *Sanathana Dharma* are responsible for His agreeing to have the *Upanayana Samskara* performed at the Prasanthi Nilayam in His Divine presence. Fortunate are the boys and their parents who are given this rare privilege to participate in this unique sacrament in the very presence of Baba and receive His blessing.

At 8 A.M. the preliminary ceremonies begin inside the *Mandir*. The sacrificial fire is lit and the *Homa* is performed. It is a ceremony of

purification - to make the participants conscious of the sanctity of what they are to do. The *Mandir* is soon filled with the solemn chant of Vedic *Mantras* recited by the Pandits, many of whom have specially come here to take part in the ceremony. At 8.45 A.M. the *Brahmacharis* come out of the *Mandir* and form into a procession. The music of the *nadaswaram* again fills the atmosphere. Everyone is waiting for Baba to come down and lead the lads.

Lo! He comes- the familiar, beloved, resplendent figure with an enchanting smile playing on His lips walking with quiet dignity to lead the procession which marches slowly to the Auditorium where thousands have already gathered to witness the unique ceremony. The boys and their fathers and guardians and the Pandits take their appointed places in a series of rows- on the ground. Before each *Brahmachari* is lit the sacrificial fire in which chips and scraps of sandalwood are placed, filling the whole place with fragrance. It is a magnificent sight to see so many boys, now on the threshold of a new life, a rebirth into the kingdom of the Spirit.

Affirming, as their ancestors did on the banks of India's sacred rivers, these boys assert through the rituals they perform, the ceaseless validity of that most beautiful aspect in our *Sanathana Dharma*, namely the fact that the individual is an integral part of the larger world, and that the individual *Dharma* should merge harmoniously with the Eternal, Unchanging Law of God. The *Brahmachari* is now, in this unique sense, a citizen of the Universe, dedicating himself to the ideal of *Lokasangraha* or world-welfare. It is an inspiring sight to see, these hundreds of eager lads being initiated into the most sacred of all our *Mantras* - the *Gayatri Mantra*, for *Gayatri* truly is the Light of the World, the radiant principle that illumines the whole of Creation, dispelling darkness, ignorance and

evil. The culmination of this solemn ceremony is reached when each boy receives the sacred *Upadesha* [teaching] from his father or guardian and the whole auditorium reverberates with the accents of the *Gayatri* led by Veda samrat Brahmasri Kamavadhanulu in His characteristically solemn and clear tone. It is a uniquely sacred moment as hundreds of *Brahmacharis* chant the *Gayatri*, Baba standing on the dais watching and listening. Then comes the *Bhiksha* [alms] offered by Baba Himself as He goes round and blesses each *Brahmachari*, giving to each boy His benediction for which, to use the language of our *Puranas*, the sages have struggled and agonised through ages of penance and austerities.

An interval of four days and the great day arrives - *Sivaratri*. Crowds continue to pour in thousands and thousands! This year's *Sivaratri* at



the Nilayam demonstrated once more the spell that Baba has cast in the hearts and minds of thousands of His devotees, far and near.

The day dawns. Even as the rosy dawn over the hills flickers out and the Sun fills the world with radiant presence, the Nilayam Bell rings out its sonorous peals. The crowd have waited in silence from the early hours, and to many it has been a night long vigil. It is 8 A.M. and time for the flag hoisting ceremony by Baba. A ripple of expectation seems to spread over the vast sea of men, women and children. You can see the crowd up to the main front gate, even



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beyond the outer gate, in the streets outside over the entire area, overflowing the sheds, on to the open grounds behind the *Mandir* and all around, everywhere and yet so silent, vibrant with expectation to have *Darshan* of Baba, and hear His Divine message on this most sacred day dedicated to Siva.

Baba appears on the balcony. He walks to the marble figure of Lord Krishna. He stands there in the morning light, His hair encircled, as it were, by a flaming halo of the Sun's rays. Truly a resplendent figure. There is a moment of tumultuous applause as Baba raises His right hand in benediction.

The function begins with a vedic chant by the boys of the *Veda*



Pathasala, followed by a few speeches on the significance of the day dedicated to Siva. Only Baba can make even the profoundest things simple. Finishing His speech, Baba goes up to the terrace of the *Mandir*, pulls the string and the Prasanthi Nilayam flag flutters gaily in the morning Sun, the symbol of Bhagavan's Four-fold Path, *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema*, a perennial sign of hope and of Divine assurance to all those who labour and are heavy laden.

The flag-hoisting is over. There is no visible movement in the crowd. The people are just there rooted as it were to the spot, spell-bound, enchanted by what they had seen and experienced. Some get out of the crowd - with great difficulty and walk away for a little relaxation. But they too return for the *Vibhuti Abhishekam* ceremony at the Auditorium, which is gaily decorated. The people wait for hours, silent and disciplined, a

unique example of discipline willingly accepted, and dutifully carried out.

It is nearly 10.30 A.M Baba now enters, takes His seat on the silver throne on the dais. On His left is the silver figure of His previous incarnation, the beloved Baba of Shirdi. It is time for the *Abhishekam*. Baba steps down from His seat and stands on the right of the figure of Shirdi Baba. A small vessel is held up by Sri Kasturi with its mouth over the figure's head. Baba puts His right hand into the mouth of the vessel, rotates the Hand, and the *Vibhuti* falls down, slowly at first, a thin line of greyish smoke. Baba continues to stir the inside and soon cascades of *Vibhuti* pour out of the vessel and the whole place is filled with the fragrance of the *Vibhuti*. This goes on for about 10 minutes. *Vibhuti* is heaped over the figure of Shirdi Baba. Pearls, beads of *Rudraksha* and *Tulasi* are found mixed with the *Vibhuti* a wonderful, breathtaking spectacle. There is Bhajan for a while and Baba returns to the *Mandir* and the morning functions are over.

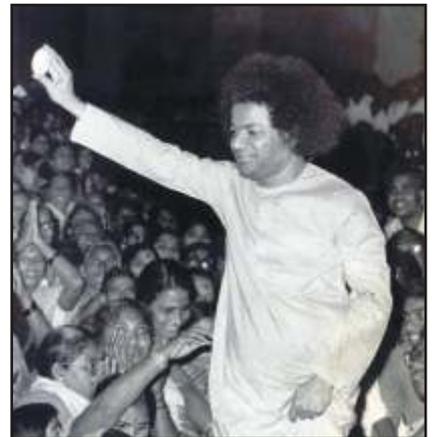
The programme of this particular evening has a significance of its own. It is the evening of *Lingodbhavam*. Thousands are waiting for the miracle. 7-30 P.M, Baba comes to the dais and sits on the throne.

It looks as though He is in the throes of Creation, His chest heaving, His body swaying slightly and His mouth trying to eject something that is pressing up within Him. We watch breathlessly this unique and solemn process of *Srishti*- of Creation. It is difficult to describe in words the deep silence and tension that prevail among the people. Nothing like this has been seen before- a whole crowd watching the miracle of *Srishti* by the living God, their eyes riveted on the spare, resplendent figure on the platform, *Paramatma* showing one of His *Leelas*.

There is a momentary hush, deep as the silence of the stars in a vast blue sky. The tension mounts to a climax,

as a shining, brilliantly transparent green *Lingam* comes out of Bhagavan's mouth. It is a lovely object, smooth, shining and transparent, its green sheen almost dazzling the eyes, a veritable symbol of *Brahmanda*, the Universe over which Mahasiva keeps His eternal vigil through the ages, creating, destroying and resurrecting, a cosmic Drama of tremendous dimensions, comprising the destinies of millions of His creatures.

The *Lingam* that comes out of



Bhagavan's mouth is a tremendous symbol of something too infinite, too stupendous, for our little minds to grasp. Its green glory that moved and dazzled thousands of us who sat watching Him on that sacred night, is part of the infinite glory and beauty of His Creation. Blessed indeed are those who have seen the emanation of the Great Light from the Lord. May this Light be ever our guide.

Tamasoma Jyotigamaya. From Darkness lead us to Light!

We move on now to an account of the events of the year 1966

At 7.30A.M., on that holy day, Baba hoisted the Prasanthi Flag, over the Nilayam. In a short Discourse, Baba exhorted every one to hoist a flag over his Heart, after vanquishing the internal enemies.

By the 5 P.M the vast open space in front of the *Santhi Vedika* (the newly constructed Hexagonal stage with a dome), was a sea of expectant faith. The Principal of the Markandeya



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Sanskrit College Aukirpalle, Brahmasri Deepala Pichayya Sastry and Sri Paturi Madhusudhan Rao addressed the gathering. Bhaghavan, in His Divine discourse, described the inner significance of rituals that according to the scriptures, ought to be performed on *Sivarathri* day. He also spoke on the methods by which man has to sanctify his senses, intellect and life.

Then, when the 30000 devotees were singing exultantly, *Om Sivaya, Om Sivaya* an emerald *Lingam*, (three inches high and five inches broad, complete with base) that had been forming in Him, emerged from His mouth, to the supreme delight of everyone!

Exhilarated beyond words by this Divine event, the vast assemblage spent the entire night in Bhajan and on the 19th.

On the 20th, Prof.P.V. Suryanarayana of Narasaraopet, addressed the gathering on the subject of *Bhakthi*. Baba later referred to the handicaps which the devotee has to overcome, the chief of them being the cynical opposition from unbelievers, who revel in falsehood and vicious scandal. Devotees can approach God only through detachment and though service, without thought of reward.

On the 27th, Baba presided over the Annual Day celebrations of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Zilla Parishad High School at Bukkapatnam. He spoke of the need to supplement the present curriculum of studies in schools by giving the students training in spiritual discipline also, so that they may acquire equanimity and peace of mind, to face the travails of life. He called upon the elders to provide good examples to the younger generation, examples of good conduct, sweet speech, reverence to parents, faith in God, fear of vice, etc. He called for full of cooperation between the home, the school and society, in shaping the children into useful citizens and good individuals.

On the 2nd March, Baba left for Hyderabad on the first lap of a long

tour.

On now to what happened in 1967.

At 11 A.M., during the Bhajan sessions, Baba had *Abhishekam* performed for Shirdi Sai Baba, during which the mammoth gathering was privileged to witness the miracles of the creation of and idol of Ganesa and the unending stream of *Vibhuthi*. At 6 P.M., Baba gave *Darshan* to the immense gathering from the *Shanthi Vedika*, where a meeting was held, and short talks were given by Dr. M.P.Pai of the Kasturba Medical College, Mysore State and Sri Subbaramaniya, an Editor from Hyderabad. Brahmasri Doopati Thirumalacharyulu of Venkatagiri dedicated to Bhagavan His Telugu translation and commentary on the famous *Sivamahima Stotra*; Sri Raghunath Patro of Berhampore placed in His Hands the Oriya book *Satya Sai Charithamrutha* written by Him. Sri P. Appukutta Menon, M.A., L.T., of Palghat dedicated the Malayalam book *Sayi Mitayi* containing the stories on spiritual truths which Baba has given in His Discourses. The Satya Sai Seva Samithi, Bombay placed in His hands the book *Divine Heritage of Prashanthi Nilayam* prepared by Opal Macrae of New York and published by them. Sri Alike Narayana Bhat placed in His hands the Kannada book *Satya Sai Darsanam*.

Thirty thousand hearts pounded quicker and thirty thousand throats called on Siva more intensely, as they watched Baba on the *Santhi Vedika*, until the *Viswalinga* (a deep pink oval *Lingam* with the orbits of all the planets luminously clear inside it) and a smaller *Jyothirlinga* emerged. Baba held out the *Lingams* for all to see and they were kept on the *Vedika* during the night-long Bhajan, with which the devotees celebrated *Sivarathri*.

On the 10th March, at 7:30 A.M., the night-long Bhajan ended and *Mahamangalarathi* was performed, amidst the acclamations of thousands.

In the evening, Brahmasri

Chandramouli Sastri, President of the Bhagavatha Bhaktha Samaj of the Krishna-Guntur Districts gave a discourse on 'Krishna'; Baba, in His Discourse elaborated on the same theme and introduced the Telugu musical play, "Radha Bhakthi" which was later enacted with inspiring devotion by the little students of the *Satya Sai Vedasastra Patasala*.

On the evening of the 11th too, devotees had the pleasure of listening to valuable speeches. That evening Sri K.R.K. Bhat of Madurai and Dr.G.V.L.N. Murthy of Jamshepur spoke on their experiences of Baba's *Prema* and *Karuna*. Bhagavan, in His Discourse, wanted that each devotee demonstrate through His behaviour, speech and actions that he has understood the great purpose for which He is born, viz., to cultivate the Divinity within Him.

Since Baba had to leave for Bombay on the 15th, He was engaged on 12th, 13th, and 14th March in healing and attending on the sick, the infirm and the disabled among those who had gathered for the festival. The others too, of course, had an ample measure of His Grace and the precious gift of the Vision of the *Atma* within them, which Baba grants to all who come under His Care.

Follows now an account for the year 1970, and we believe the author is none other than Kasturi himself.

More than 50,000 persons arrived at the Nilayam by the morning of the 6th; a long unbroken train of hundreds of omni buses, and cars, scooters and motorcycles, brought thousands in. There were thousands who came by rail, and trekked the distance from Bukkapatnam or even boarded trucks to reach the place in time. When the *Sivarathri* Day dawned the gathering cheered in joy when Baba gave *Darshan* prior to the Hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam.

Dr.Diwakarla Venkatavadhanulu,



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Prof. of Telugu, Osmania University, addressed the gathering on the significance of *Sivarathri*. Bhagavan discoursed on the basic faults that corrode into individual and social life. He stressed that greed is the root of all the banal competitions in the current world, greed for riches, for power, for authority over fellowmen. He said this can be overcome by the cultivation of detachment, of tolerance, of the spirit of service and the deepening of Faith in an Ever-present Immanent God. He referred to the narrow-minded promotion of one's language, community, province or religion, and the exaggerated emphasis on the Love for the Nation. The loyalty to the Nation is built on the loyalty to the village, the family, the language spoken at home, the religion learnt at the mother's lap etc. "You cannot separate the limbs and name the trunk as the source of all strength!" Baba said.

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

At 11 A.M. Baba proceeded to the Auditorium, for the *Abhishekam*. Bhajan from 50,000 throats filled the air with the Divine fragrance; the path was a lovely carpet of flowers. The richly caparisoned Sai Geetha (elephant) walked majestically in front. To the right and left, priests chanting *Vedas* moved with Baba. During the Bhajan, Baba gave the gathering the unique chance of witnessing the creation of a nine-jewelled locket for Sai Baba's silver idol, and when He placed it on the forehead, between the eyebrows, it stuck! Then, He poured from a wooden pot an unbroken stream of sacred ash on the idol, precious stones too falling from the pot, when His palm drew the sacred substance created by His touch.

In the evening, devotees gathered before the *Santhi Vedika*, and the vast expanse of open space was tight packed with men and women,

eagerly awaiting the Discourse, the emergence of the *Lingam*, and the night long vigil and Bhajan. Dr.V.K.Gokak, and Sri.Nakul Sen. I.C.S., Lt.Governor of Goa spoke in English on Bhagavan and His Universal Message of Love. Dr.Divakarla Venkatavadhanlu spoke in Telugu. Then, Baba delivered His Divine Discourse.

He said: *Sai Bhakthas have to be pioneers in a new revolution, a transformation of the character and endeavour; so, they have to fill themselves with Love so that the shower of unselfish Universal Love can scotch the flames of anger, hatred, fear and anxiety that are consuming the world today.*

After the Discourse, which lasted for one hour, Bhagavan sang a few *Namavalis* and enthralled the huge gathering into ecstasy. Meanwhile, the first indications of the emergence of the *Lingam* became apparent, and Baba sat in the Silver Chair. The gathering sang in chorus, in anxious expectation of the Miracle, the uplifting song, *Om Sivaya, Om Sivaya*. About fifteen minutes later, a heavy oval *Lingam*, glowing with the Divine effulgence, composed of a substance very much akin to opal emerged and manifested its splendour to the vast multitude, making it soar in a wave of adoration and Bliss.

On the morning of the seventh, when the all-night Bhajan session ended, Bhagavan gave Darshan at the *Santhi Vedika* and He blessed the mass of devotees with a short Discourse. After the Discourse, Baba blessed the devotees and had Divine *Prasadam* distributed to every one of the 50,000 persons, so that they may break the ritual fast they had vowed the previous day.

On the previous evening of the 7th, the Meeting held in the Auditorium was addressed by Kuppa Bairagi Sastry and by Swami Karunyanandaji of the *Jeeva Karyunyasangha*, Rajahmundry. Bhagawan spoke about the *Guru* and His responsibilities. Instead of elevating the *Guru*, who is only a sign-post to God, as God, it is much better to accept the God resident in you as the *Guru* and pray to Him to guide you

and take you nearer to Him. You cannot cross a river sitting in a boat of stone! You must surrender completely to His Will and dedicate thought, word and deed to Him.

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

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

Well, that brings us the end of this down memory lane. Hope you enjoyed the walk! Catching some of the glorious Sivaratri moments described above are the following photographs!



God incarnates for the revival of Dharma (righteousness) which includes morality, truth, virtue, love and a host of other qualities that sustain individuals and communities. The Divine punishes even those who either do not oppose or remain passive while injustice and wrong-doing is perpetrated. To remain silent in such circumstances is an indication that they too are tainted by the same guilt. It is only when we resist acts of unrighteousness and injustice and try to weed out malpractices in society that we can claim to be assisting in the task of restoring Dharma.

- Baba



Love All Serve All