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SAI BABBA



..... AVATARS

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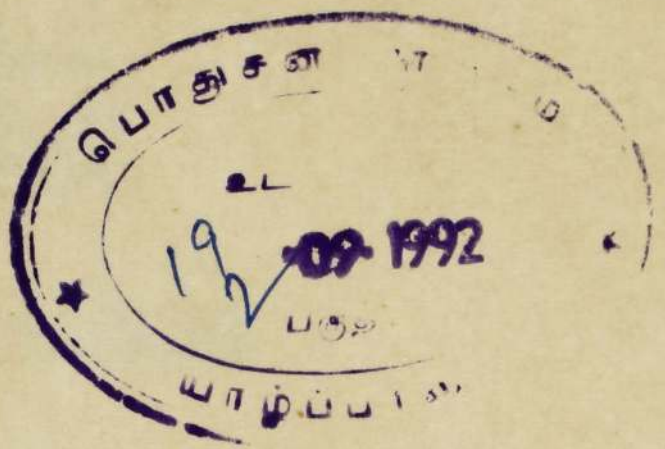


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By

VANATHY RAVINDRAN

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 யாழ்ப்பாணம்

SAI BABA

.....AVATARS

SAI BABA..... AVATARS

by

Mrs. VANATHY RAVINDRAN

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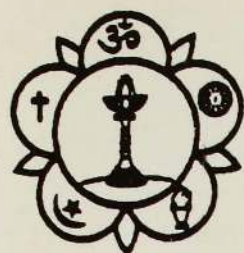


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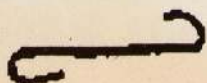
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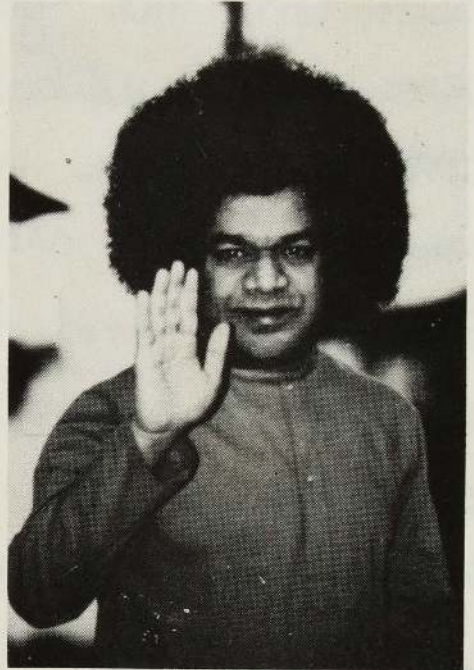
"The mother tortoise is on one bank of the river and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk nor warmth to them. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing but remember (meditate) upon their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a downpour of nectar, the only source of Sudhance and happiness. Similar is the relation between the Guru and the disciples..... If you take this story to heart and remember it well, your state will be as sweet as sugar candy. All your desires will be fulfilled and you will be happy."

— Bhagawan Sri Shirdi Sai Baba.

With Love
Baba

With Pranaams
at the lotus feet of
Sri Sathya Sai Baba.





Shirdi Sai and Parthi Sai



P.P. Devaraj, M.P

Minister of State for Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs

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FOREWORD

The radiance that emanates from Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in every aspect of his life, Mission and Teachings has profoundly influenced millions of people throughout the world.

Devotees from various walks of life, some holding the highest positions in society and others ordinary citizens have shared the joy and comfort of receiving Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's blessings and message.

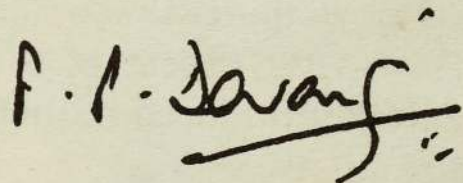
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba born a Hindu, teaches the universality of religions and the oneness of God. In Sri Lanka there is a vast movement consisting of deeply devoted adherents of Sri Sai Baba. The concept of prayers faith and knowledge integrated with human values and service to others has kindled the imagination of men and women and have drawn them towards Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In times of turbulence and trouble such as we are experiencing today the solace offered by Sri Sai Baba's teachings is indescribable.

Spiritual awareness can begin at any time in a person's life. Prayerful submissions to the almighty for guidance can mark the beginning of a new path, a new life. Neither age nor time is a barrier in identifying oneself with God. Hindu Religion has many such saints.

Many books have been written on Sathya Sai Baba and volumes of his teachings are available to the public.

The author of the present book had taken upon herself a stupendous yet rewarding and pleasant task to set down in writing the greatness of the Sai Avatar in the present Yuga of Kali and in his various other Avatars. She has gone back to Bhagavad Gita and even to Upanishads and drawn on the very valuable teachings of the past.

Mrs. Vanathy Ravindran must be congratulated on this remarkable task and for working on the book with such dedication and devotion. I am indeed happy that I have been asked to write this message for the book.



P.P. DEVARAJ

*Minister of State for Hindu Religious
and Cultural Affairs*

16th Nov, '90

MESSAGE

by

PROF. DR. H. W. TAMBIAH Q.C B.SC P.H.D L.L.B (LONDON)

This work entitled "Sai Baba - Avatars" is by Mrs. Vanathy Ravindran a Sri Lankan, who is a devotee of Sai Baba of Puttaparthi from 1972 when she was taken there by her mother who is also a devout devotee of Sai Baba.

The writer is narrating her personal experiences when she was at Prashanthi Nilayam, the Abode of His Holiness Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and is giving us an insight into the teachings, the messages, and the miracles of one who is venerated and loved by millions of people, both in the East and West. This book is full of well chosen quotations from various literature, like the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, volumes of Sathya Sai speaks, Sai Satcharita and Sathyam Shivam Sunderam.

The hamlet which was at one time infested with snakes in the arid land was inhabited by only a few people. It has now blossomed into a verdent land with the Advent of Sathya Sai Baba; it is today a town with Schools, Hospitals and an Ashram where people from the world over flock to see this great Saint.

Sai Baba's message is vividly described in this book as the one who believed in the Vedic stanza that there is but one God who is called by several Names. Today the fundamentalists and sectarians who belongs to different Religions have brought about quarrels and wars, although the founders of these religions believed in one God and yearned for peace and happiness among all people.

Christ said "Love the God with all your might" and "Love thy neighbour as thy self". In these two sentences He has summed up all the religious literature. This is the Message that Sai Baba has brought to this world. His teachings and His Life and His Mission clearly show that irrespective of different religions He regarded

God as Love and all humanity as His own family. People of different religions - Christians, Muslims, Jews when they are in the presence of Sai Baba, are united in prayer. He then may rightly be called an Avatar of God come to unite all humanity.

God in his mercy, at various times sends Avatars to manifest His Love and Care for mankind and bring Peace and happiness to the world. Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha and Christ are only a few examples of Avatars. Considering the teachings and the miracles performed daily, and his loving approach towards all mankind, it is established beyond doubt that He is God come to save a troubled world.

This book gives not only the life and teachings of Sathya Sai Baba but also that of Shirdi Sai Baba who was the previous incarnation of Sai Baba. Interesting episodes are described in this book of Shirdi; the most interesting is His pronouncement of the date of his rebirth eight years hence and it is therefore no coincidence that Sathya Sai Baba was reborn eight years after the death of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Rebirth is established in many ways scientifically today. Buddhism and Hinduism accept rebirth as a cardinal rule, and even Christ accepted rebirth when after the transfiguration while He was coming down when Peter asked Christ whether it was Elija who was reborn, referring to John the Baptist, Christ's answer was in the affirmative. Christ said "He came. They did not know who He was and they beheaded Him. He added "I have also come, they don't know who I am". This passage is found in the Gospel of St. Mathew. But the church following the tradition of Council of Trent deny re-birth. Sai Baba establishes the great Truth that we are caught in the cycle of births and deaths and He Himself has stated that He will be born again as Prema Sai in His next birth.

The book also deals with the miracles of Sai Baba. They are too numerous to record in one book. I may at this point venture to state a miracle which I personally saw in Jaffna. When I returned from Sierra Leone where I functioned as the

Judge of the Court of Appeal after my retirement here, during the holidays I visited Jaffna, my home town. There I stayed with a relative who informed me that there was a Bhajan going on in praise of Bhagawan Sai Baba in Dr. Somasundaram's house. The doctor took me to his shrine room and I could see all the pictures dubbed with holy ash. Then I went to the hall where the Bhajan was going on. The last song was in Tamil meaning, "show me your presence by giving us honey". After the Bhajan was over there was actually viscous liquid flowing from Bhagawan's picture. After the crowd dispersed I tasted the liquid which was honey. I removed the picture to find out whether there was some vessel kept behind. There was nothing for the honey to be stored! When in Canada, where I was the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka again I met a devotee of Bhagawan. He also had a picture where Holy Ash was being formed.

This book should be read by all for their own religious advancement. It is written in impeccable English by the devotee who is a graduate and I am sure whoever reads this book will be drawn closer to Bhagawan and will believe in God and His Avatars.

H W Tambiah

PROF. DR. H.W. TAMBIAH Q.C

*“yaj jnatva na punar moham
evam yasyasi pandava
Yena bhutany asesani
draksyasy atmany atho mayi”*

- Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter IV)

“Having obtained real knowledge from a self realised soul, you will never fall again into the illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine”.

“If any devotee meditated on *ME* day and night with complete self surrender, he experienced complete union with *ME* like sweetness and sugar, waves and sea, eye and its lustre. Do not try to get any Mantra or Upadesh from anybody. Make *ME* the sole object of your thoughts and actions and you will, no doubt, attain Paramartha. (*the spiritual goal of life*)..... Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks Him to be Hari, Hara, Brahma (*Trimurti*) incarnate”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA OF SHIRDI.

PREFACE

JAI SAIRAM

*“There is only one caste
The caste of humanity
There is only one religion
The religion of love
There is only one language
The language of the heart
There is only one God
And He is omnipresent.”*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the God for millions in human form, laying the foundation for Sanatana Dharma, treating all Religions as the various paths leading to the *ONE GOD*, and advocating this *TRUTH* in His Teachings has become a power from which millions of devotees are drawing their strength. Just as the flower gives selflessly its nectar to the bees, without conditions and without expectations of payments or gratitude, for their sustenance, coming from far and near in search of it for their existence, Bhagawan makes Himself available to His devotees (*who know themselves to be such or not*), as their mother, father, preceptor and God to benefit from the experience of seeing Him, hearing Him, being close to Him and thereby deriving maximum benefit for their own salvation.

Sathyanarayana, as He was christened, was born on November 23rd, 1926 to parents of modest means, in the obscure village of Puttaparthi, in the Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh, India. Having declared Himself as an Avatar in His 48th year, He has an ever growing following in India and throughout many countries of the world. His advice to His devotees that shedding ego to begin with, is a pre-requisite to be able to view

the world in its proper perspective and His Teachings on educational, social and moral uplift are among His major contributions to enable man to understand higher values in life. There is nothing new about it as it is the quintessence of Indian philosophy. But what is new is the way He gets His followers to observe it. It may perhaps be asked whether everyone of His followers conforms to it, and to this question it can safely be said that every one of them understands its importance in life and try to adhere to Bhagawan's Teachings to the best of their ability, for, He is known to take to task very severely if one tried to hide his faults and tried to communicate with Him.

The Sai Philosophy, particularly Unity of Faiths, represented by the Sri Sathya Sai Sarva Dharma Symbol, is being recognised as a significant force to bring about Peace on earth. "TRUTH IS ONE GOD IS ONE", He says, "Let the different Faiths exist. Let them flourish, Let the Glory of God be sung in all languages in a variety of tunes - that should be the ideal. Respect the differences between the Faiths and recognise them as valid as far as they do not extinguish the Flame of Unity". On spirituality Bhagawan says, "Freedom and Light are what man needs more than anything else. He needs them even more than breath. That is why he is miserable when bound and in the dark. Man struggles like the fish in a dry bowl frantically, to return to God which is his Home, his Ananda and which is his Element. He seeks God or Ananda (*which is but another Name for God*), up in space, down in the bowels of the earth, alone or in crowded congregations; in silence or in noise. But all the time the spring of Ananda lies in his own heart. He can tap it only if he knows how to delve into the poise of deep meditation."

The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation which was originated in Puttaparthi is unique in many respects. It has no parallel anywhere. Started for the welfare of the people, this service oriented spiritual Organisation has grown into a well knit purposeful global organisation of dedicated men and women. The Organisation offers opportunities for prayers in a lighter and enjoyable vein benefitting the participants as well as the

listeners through Nagarsangirtans (*walking, singing devotional songs at dawn down the streets of the neighbourhood*), Bhajans (*group singing of devotional songs*), Narayan Seva (*feeding of the poor*), Lakshaarchan (*prayers to the Lord offering rice instead of flowers to be used for Narayan Seva*), Satsang (*study circle of all spiritual and Religious studies and exchange of views*) and the program for the development of the child through the five components of prayers, group singing, story telling and study of the lives of great men and Scriptures, group activities and silent sitting called the "Bal Vikas". These classes are to be held away from school for children within the age group of 6 years to 16 years. Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has given the blue print for this ideal system of education and discipline for the growing mind has specified that "Every child in Bal Vikas should cultivate fear of doing wrong; have humility before elders, teachers and parents; and imbibe faith in God, in their own strength, and in their victory". Driving home the truth : "You don't fertilise the branches. It is done at the roots", a new pattern of education has emerged for the development of Human Excellence called *EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES (E.H.V.)*. This *E.H.V.* Programme is intended to draw out the best in a child and to enable him to develop his personality to perfection. As the child grows, he or she will have adequate grounding to appreciate the fundamental values of life - *SATHYA (TRUTH)*, *DHARMA (RIGHT CONDUCT)*, *SHANTHI (PEACE)*, *PREMA (LOVE)*, *AHIMSA (NON VIOLENCE)* as enunciated by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Every Religion teaches these fundamentals in one form or the other. No Religion can, therefore, take exception to them. There lies His Universal appeal. This scheme has been made relevant to the whole of India and even overseas countries with adequate scope for modification to suit the needs of individual countries.

Sri Sathya Sai Organisations have been established under the Divine Guidance of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba world wide, originating from India and expanding to over 50 countries. The primary objective of all activities in the Sathya Sai Organisation is the spiritual upliftment of the participant. This is a self enlightenment process, so the success is entirely dependent on the effort of the individual (*personal 'sadhana'*) and in

co-operating and expanding the self in group sadhana to see Divinity in all. The sadhak's guideline is Sri Sathya Sai Baba's significance laden message : "*MANAVA SEVA IS MADHAVA SEVA*" (*SERVICE TO MAN IS SERVICE TO GOD*). This in short is spiritualising every act done. He explains the process of this type of service thus :

"The quintessence of all Religions, the primary goal and aim of all paths and the sayings of Sastras and Scriptures is love and love alone. Once we inculcate this love in our daily life, we have sanctified our lives, So with this eye of divinity within you, plunge into service of fellow men. Through the medium of body serve the poor, the downtrodden, the hapless and those who have given up hope..... The person who serves is the person served. You serve yourself when you serve another, You serve another because his suffering causes you anguish and by relieving it, you want to free yourself of that anguish. Unless you have that anguish, your service will be hollow and insincere..... Just think for a moment. Are you serving God, or is God serving you? When a pilgrim stands waist deep in the Ganga, takes in his palm the sacred water, and reciting an invocatory formula, pours the water as an offering to the Deity, what he has done is only pouring Ganga into Ganga. When you offer milk to a hungry child, or a blanket to a shivering brother on the pavement you are but placing a gift of God into the hands of another gift of God. God serves. He allows you to claim that you have served..... Neither performances of austerities nor pilgrimage to all holy places, nor studies of all Sastras, nor immersion in japa will ever help one to cross the Ocean of Samsara (*cycle of births and deaths*). The only path that will help you to be liberated from samsara is dedicating yourself to the service of others."

Though He showed His Divinity even from before His Birth through instances of deep mystery and followed it throughout His childhood, it was only in His 14th year that He declared that He has a Mission and that He has to leave His home and hearth to be with His devotees on whose call He has come in this Form. On the 20th of October 1940, He explained to His inquirers that He was *SRI SAI BABA* of *SHIRDI* in His previous Body. He then called

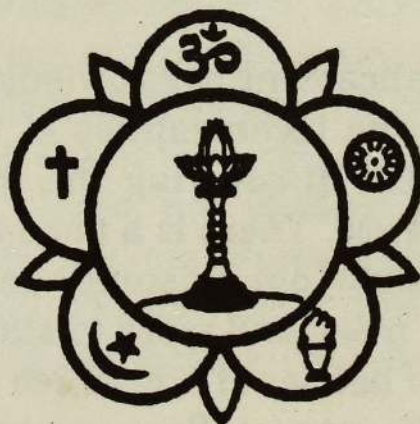
for jasmin flowers and threw them on the floor for all to see. They formed the words "SAI BABA" in Telugu - From then on, He started His Mission. He declared that not only had He a previous body but will also follow with another body in the next Birth as Prema Sai Baba. In His 48th year, He further declared His Avatarhood. he declared : "Realising the Lord within you as a motivator is the task for which He comes in human form. Avatars like Rama and Krishna had to kill one or more individuals who could be identified as enemies of the Dharmic way of life and thus restore the practice of virtue. But now, there is no one fully good. And so, who deserves the protection of God? All are tainted by wickedness, and so who will survive if the Avatar decides to uproot? Therefore, I have come to correct the "BUDDHI" - the intelligence, by various means. I have to counsel, help, command, condemn and stand by as a friend and well wisher to all, so that they may give up evil propensities and recognising the straight path, tread it and reach the goal. I have to reveal to the people the worth of the Vedas, the sastras and other spiritual texts, which lay down the norms. If you accept Me and say "yes", I too respond and say "yes", "yes", "yes". If you deny and say "No", I also echo "No". Come, examine, experience, have faith. That is the method of utilising Me."

With the advancement of knowledge in modern times, we have come to know the technicalities of the appearance of the Universe but are still discovering the many truths about the mystery of its existence. There is a need to know and to hold on the Truth of our origin, our existence and the end. An urgency which is being felt more and more to stabilise the outburst of sudden emergence of battles of life, which are rocking the boat in the already turbulent waters of Samsara is being felt by people all over the world.

Sai Baba has been announcing His Divinity slowly but firmly to His devotees through what He calls His visiting cards : the miracles and instances of the appearance of Vibhuti (*holy ash*), and Kumkum (*the auspicious red powder*) both of which indicate auspiciousness, blessings, solace, His presence etc. as the answer according to the need of the call the prayer.

This is a humble presentation of the lives, from Birth, of Sai Baba in His first and second incarnations in chosen anecdotes with their Teachings, allowing the reader to delve into the undelvable depths of the mystery and significance of the Message given by these Avatars to mankind of the significance of life hidden in the dilapidated mosque to the Temple of Dwarakamai and the barren Puttaparthi to the slow but steady flourishing of Prashanthi Nilayam - The Abode of the Highest Peace, as, eventhough many books have been published, the thirst still remains for the knowledge on the Advent, Life and Teachings of Sai Baba, whom millions all over the world have come to worship as God.

VANATHY RAVINDRAN.



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*"naham vedair na tapasa
na danena na cejyaya
sakya evam-vidho drastum
drstavan asi mam yatha"*

The Bhagavad Gita.
(Chapter XI).

"The form you are seeing with your transcendental eyes cannot be understood simply by studying the Vedas, nor by undergoing serious penances, nor by charity, nor by worship. It is not by these means that one can see Me as I am"

"Since I move about with you, eat like you, and talk with you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but an instance of common humanity. This is a human form, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, all the Names and Forms ascribed by man to God, are manifest. Do not attempt to know Me through external eyes. When you go to the Temple and stand in front of the image of God, you pray with closed eyes don't you? Why? Because, you feel that the inner eye of wisdom alone can reveal Him to you. Therefore do not crave from Me trivial material objects, but crave for Me, and you will be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever object I give as a sign of Grace out of the fulness of love. "

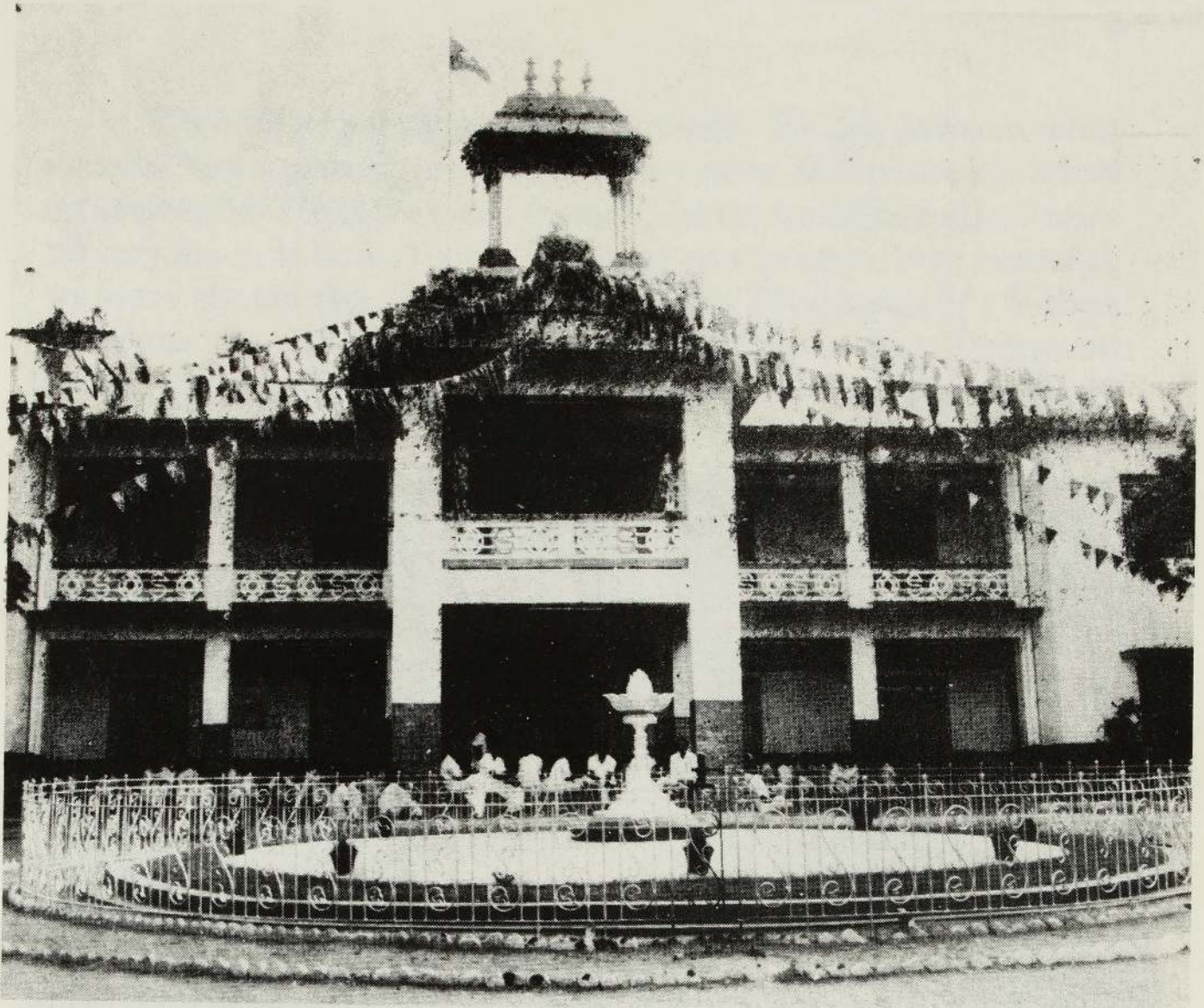
- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE FIRST VISIT

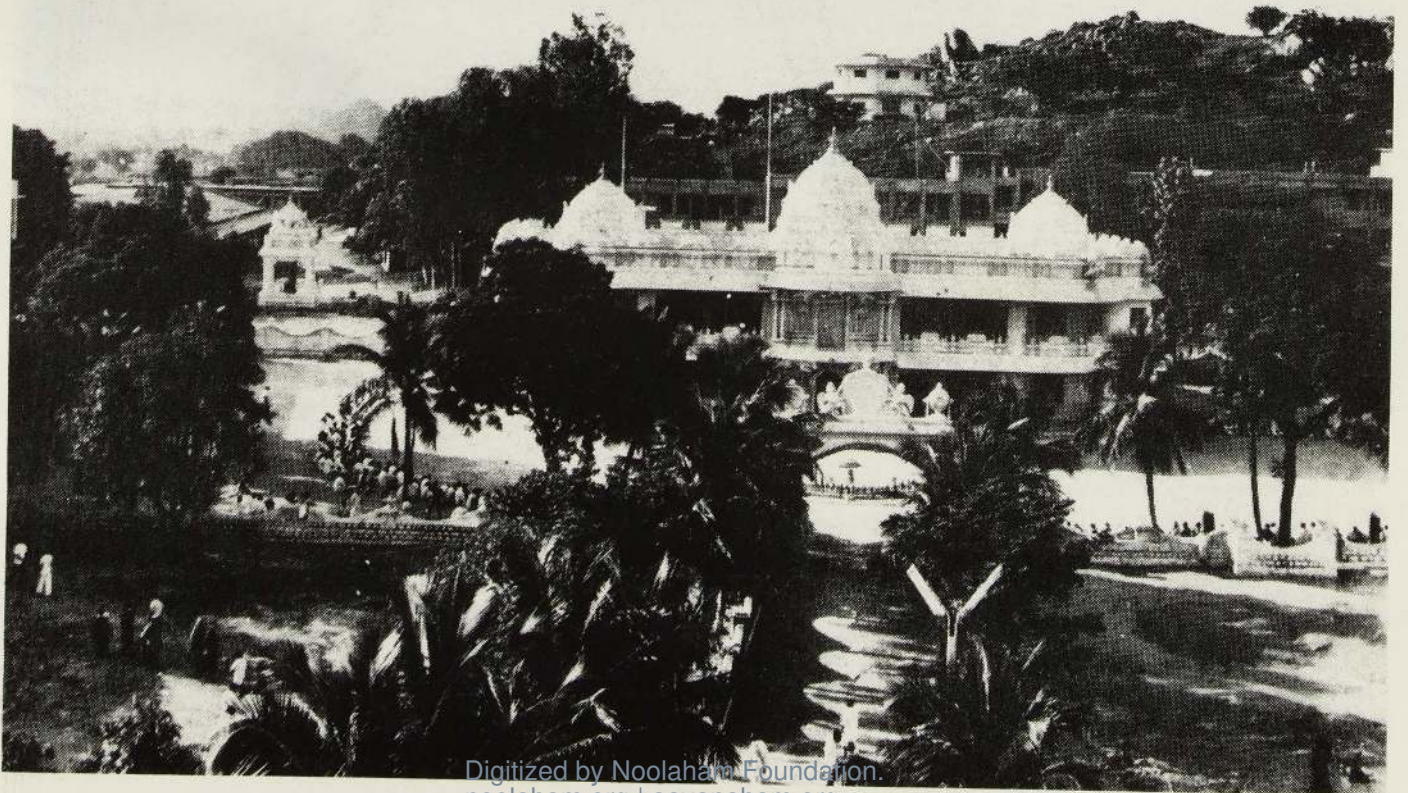
It was dawn. The rays of the sun were just able to begin to cast away the dusk through the misty dew. The crowd was gathered together in front of the Mandir (*The Temple*). There was a hush of silence ; all faces were turned upwards towards the square balcony with folded palms ; there was such expectancy that it was almost tangible. Then, the palms that were folded in prayers were lifted smiles and tears were on the faces that were focussed at the balcony. I turned my gaze towards that same balcony that seemed to fascinate so many. The rays of sun were stealing down to wrap the world with its warmth and through those rays that were lighting up the world, I suddenly saw a form so small in a red robe at the edge of the balcony, the face framed by a mane of curly hair. His look was compassionate, and at the same time He seemed to be in a world far away. His right hand turned upwards moving in a circular motion seemed to clear the air and bless those gathered there below Him, all at the same time. I then finally had the glimpse of the form, which when I first saw in a picture seemed to be frightening. The relief of seeing such a tiny form in real life, I could not help but laugh with relief, and even though it was hardly audible I felt that He had heard my laugh!

We had been there for about one week, my mother and I, waiting for Bhagawan who had left for Hyderabad just before we had reached Puttaparthi. Puttaparthi in 1972 was still a very remote place with narrow roads winding through wilderness leading the pilgrims from Bangalore into the depths of Andhra Pradesh. I was quite apprehensive of the place where we were going to; it was rough stones and bare hills all along the way and suddenly we came to a village so quaint that it took me quite by surprise. The road was so narrow that I felt that if I could just put my hand out I could touch the walls of the houses which were so white and clean lining the road. There were curious onlookers along the way but they seemed so warm, their faces so close to mine as the bus passed their houses.

Prashanthi Nilayam



then



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and now.....



The Dharshan

Then all of a sudden we were there. We got down in what seemed like a place in the middle of nowhere. But strangely it had an atmosphere that was very friendly and in no time at all we were all very much at home there. The place was so open, very peaceful, we were shown the Mandir, Residence of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. To our dismay we then got the news that Bhagawan whom the whole busload had come to see was not there. There were no hotels in that place but we were offered some accommodation by some very friendly people who managed to persuade us to stay on till the arrival of Bhagawan from Hyderabad in about a week's time. So we settled down to stay at Puttaparthi for one week.

The day started very early, well before sunrise ending as early as 7 p.m. There was no electricity. So all the chores for the day were done early, and then we would all get together and talk of Bhagawan's leelas and teachings and may even sing Bhajans (*devotional songs*). It was all very fascinating and interesting to me as I was anyway interested in music and listening to stories. Coming from the so called civilised world and having rejected the form and the teachings received from friends and wellwishers, this remote place and the people with their devotion made an indelible impression on me and stood me in good stead when faith was needed in God.

It was then that I also learnt the joy in doing service and sharing. The buildings were just coming up as accommodation for devotees and we as devotees took part in helping the builders. Being may be the youngest member in the group of devotees gathered there, I was asked to climb the ladder precariously kept from the ground to the floor being built with unfinished steps having jagged edges, to pass on the bricks and trays of sand being passed on from below. Promptly I gave my reply. "No". I was not going to risk my neck in that God forsaken place and also I was quite scared of the height at which I had to stand. It was the most shocking thing I could have apparently said and done in that place. All the people who had been so nice to me looked at

me now with scorn for lacking in faith. So I had no choice but to share in their faith by climbing the rickety steps and doing the work. It was fun and we were singing Bhajans all the time.

The daily routine went on as usual from day to day beginning with Prathikshina (walking around the Temple) starting 4 a.m. to the last evening Bhajan. When we used to go for prathikshina in the mornings at dawn it used to be quite dark and I was fascinated to see a little boy being taken around the Temple, practically being dragged by his mother as he could hardly walk. On inquiring we found out that this boy was completely paralysed waist downwards and the parents had brought him to Bhagawan as a last resort. Bhagawan had blessed the child and had asked the mother to take him on prathikshina every morning and had gone off to Hyderabad. Such was the mother's faith that she took the boy every day and dragged him around the Mandir (Temple), forcing him to walk and now he was just beginning to put his legs firmly on the ground to make the steps. Completely awed by the tale though not surprised as such miracles are common in our Religion, it was still an awe inspiring experience to witness it happening and little did I realise that eventually I will be drawn by a similar cry to that holy shrine again, years later.

*"May quietness descend upon my limbs, my speech my breath,
my eyes, my ears;
May all my senses wax clear and strong.
May Brahman show himself unto me.
Never may I deny Brahman, nor Brahman me.
I with Him and He with me - may we abide always together.
May there be revealed to me, who am devoted to Brahman,
the holy truths of the Upanishads.
Om... peace-peace-peace!"*

"The power behind every activity of nature and of man is the power of Brahman. To realise this truth is to be immortal".

- THE KENA UPANISHAD.

2

GOD IS THE REFUGE

*"When someone asks in great earnestness
Where the Lord is to be found, do not dodge,
Give them the answer that rises to your tongue
From your heart. Direct him to Puttaparthi
And invite him to share your joy"*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

When one is torn with grief, with ill fortune, with sickness, there is nothing more that he can do other than to hold on to the feet of the Lord with the firm faith, that, He the Lord is there to help him to tide over the calamities that have befallen him. It is not the miracles of circumstances which one should hold on to, which are as impermanent as the dew at dawn, but the miracle that should dawn on one's self which will help him to bear the burden, bear the sorrow, and rise above it all with the firm belief that all is the Lord's doing with no bitterness but with the firm conviction to eliminate that which had dogged him all along and have faith that all that happens is for the best and at the Lord's will. The Upanishads say....

*"Om tat Purushaya Vidmahe
Maha Devaya Deemahi
Thanno Rudra Prachyodayath".*

"Not an atom moves without the will of THAT ONE who is the Ultimate Reality. Let us pray to Him who protects and guards every animate and inanimate being in the universe".

The Bondage

However, experiencing extremes of joys and sorrows and the cycle of life and death have made man to inquire how to breakaway from this chain that ties one to this body and these circumstances. In this quest man underwent heavy penances, chanting mantras, performing of pujas and rituals, constant prayers through Japa and Dhyana (constant repetition of the Lord's name and the meditation of the Form) and even various sadhanas (*spiritual disciplines*).

He gave up worldly bondage and taking the robe went into mountains and forests looking for Peace and looking for the Lord. It has been the cry of the Yogis from time immemorial for the realisation of the self from the Power that is God that created the world and man, in their search for the ultimate Peace of the soul for the unification with the Lord to breakaway from the bondage of life and death.

"Asato Maa Sadgamaya

... lead us from Untruth to Truth

Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya

... Lead us from Darkness to Light

Mrutyor Maa Amrutamgamaya

... Lead us from Death to Immortality

OM. SHANTIH. SHANTIH. SHANTIH.

Power of the Universe. Grant us PEACE. PEACE. PEACE.

To which appeal the Lord responds from time to time and comes among men to be with them, to help deliver them from their bondage. This is the basis for the concept of Avatars or the Birth of the Ultimate Reality and His Messengers of all Faiths and Creeds of mankind from time immemorial on this earth to lead man in his journey back to where he came from to oneness with God.

The Avataric Ages

According to the Hindu Religion one creation goes through

four yugas or ages. In the first age of *KRITA YUGA* or Sathya Yuga man was extremely spiritual. The quest of man was exclusively for the final experience of Bliss of the soul and the realisation of the Reality. In *TRETA YUGA*, duty before self due to the involvement of the soul in the unreality of life and the deepening bondage it was being subjected to, was shown as the path to follow in order to keep afloat so as to say. This path was set as an example by the Avatar of the Ultimate Reality as RAMA, in this Yuga. It was a path in which man encompassed by the material aspects of the world had to rise above by his own conviction and determination and find the quest within himself.

In the *DWAPARA YUGA*, supremacy of the spirit over matter and worldly possessions still was upheld, but deterioration of mankind by his own actions dragging him down further into worldly bondage of his soul brought about the Advent of the Lord who declared Himself at the battle field of Kurukeshetra as the Supreme Preceptor. By His Teachings to Arjuna, who personified the man with firm belief in the Lord at all times, Krishna assured, the right and wrong of actions, their outcome and the illusions of thinking all actions are his own, can be rectified or alleviated by the Lord by requesting for His help and guidance.

“I have come not to disturb or destroy any Faith, but to confirm each in his own Faith, so that the Christian becomes a better Christian, the Muslim a better Muslim and a Hindu a better Hindu. I have come to reconstruct the ancient highway to God; to instruct all in the essence of Vedas, to shower on all this precious gift; to protect Sanatana Dharma, The ancient wisdom and to preserve it. My mission is to serve happiness and so I am always happy to come among you, not once but twice, thrice as often as you want me. To set right those who have taken to the wrong path and to protect the good people, Sai will be born again and again”, has declared Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in this *KALI YUGA*.

In every Yuga the Lord has taken Avatars to suit the needs and the climes of the period. In Treta Yuga He came as Rama and at the end of Dwapara Yuga He came as Krishna. These times saw great warriors and the expansion of great Kingdoms where Religion took second place to valour. Setting the wrong right and teaching by example were oriented to suit those times. But, however, with the dawn of Kali Yuga which predicts the end of the wicked to pave way to the spiritual of Krita Yuga, the Lord's coming is in the form of many Teachers and Leaders of the various Religious sects. The method of Teaching as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has declared has taken on a different perspective:

*"In this avatar, the wicked will not be destroyed
They will be corrected, reformed and educated and
Led back to the path from which they had strayed
The white ant infested tree will not be cut,
It will be saved*
*This avatar is for the bhaktas, the aspirants, the sadhus
and sadhaks only.
It has not Japa, Dhyana or Yoga: It knows no worship:
It will not pray to anything, for - it is the highest.
It only teaches you to worship and pray".*

This concept is shown in all religions and beliefs where the main task of their Leader/Founder has been the Teaching of the Absolute to man, to live a religious life, to love all and to break away the bondage that makes man just a body which houses a soul torn with grief, sickness and a barren heart by following various spiritual disciplines. All Teachings thus concentrate on the individual to uplift the inherent good, godly nature of man and destroy any deviation created by the mind in its illusionary search of all his desires. This is the time the Lord has chosen for Teaching and Leading.

How was the world created and for that matter the entire universe? The vedas say it was Lord Brahma who created this world. Lord Vishnu became its Protector. Lord Maheshwara will be the one to decide the time for destruction. However the vedas

agree that it was Love that created this Universe. "I separated MYSELF from MYSELF so that I may love MYSELF", proclaimed the Lord. The scriptures say, "There was no one to know who I am till I created the world, at MY pleasure, with ONE WORD. Immediately mountains rose up, rivers started flowing, earth and sky were formed; oceans, seas, lands and water sheds; sun, moon and desert sands sprang out of nowhere to prove My existence. Come all forms of beings, men, beasts and birds - flying, speaking and hearing. All powers were bestowed upon them under MY orders. The first place was granted to mankind, and MY KNOWLEDGE was placed in man's mind".

*"I am the self in the heart of all people
I am the beginning, the middle and the end
I am Love Love Love"*

has stated - Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba commenting on His role as God to his devotees.

Realisation through knowledge

To all people He says "There are many kinds of knowledge in the world. But beyond all worldly knowledge is the supreme knowledge, the sacred knowledge."

"Worldly knowledge will help you to gain some transitory worldly pleasures, but it is only through knowledge of the self that you will be able to realise the eternal peace and the unending joy, which is your own true nature. Self knowledge and the knowledge of God are not different, they are the same spiritual wisdom, the one Divine Knowledge. This knowledge enables you to see the unity in all the diversity that is around you; it enables you to transcend this worldly existence and gain the immortality that you have been seeking. What is the basis for this supreme knowledge? The basis is purity of the mind".

“You purify your mind by engaging in sacred activities. When you associate yourself with spirituality minded people, when you observe good conduct in your daily life and engage yourself in good works, your mind becomes pure. Then you are able to discriminate between the permanent and the temporary, between that which is beneficial and that which is detrimental to your spiritual progress. For this the holy scriptures serve as guideposts. By carefully studying these teachings and putting them into daily practice, your actions become good action; they become sacred”.

“You may be highly learned in secular knowledge, you may be a great academician and a great scholar, but all your titles and achievements cannot confer on you real wisdom. To be truly wise and remove the grief from your heart, you must know yourself. You must realise the immortal self. You cannot transcend grief by any other path. “The knowledge of the self alone allows you to overcome all suffering and misery; it bestows on you all happiness. Once you are steeped in this Atmavidya, this knowledge of Atma, you will be ever blissful. For gaining this knowledge, caste or creed, colour or sex are of no consequence. The Lord comes to the one who has devotion to Him; he looks at the heart, not at the outer status. The philosophy of Love has an important place in human”.

“Lord Krishna said “Those devotees who serve Me with loving devotion are the ones dearest to Me”. However that does not mean that you should neglect secular knowledge. Even in acquiring secular knowledge you should take great care to learn it properly. Have faith in yourself, faith that you will be able to fulfill the role for which you have taken birth. “Faith in yourself and faith in God is the secret of greatness”, said Vivekananda. “First develop faith in yourself. That means having faith in your innate divinity. Secular knowledge will give you food and shelter, whereas the Atmavidya will give you the realisation of your own reality. Everything in the world is derived from Divinity.”

“When everything comes from Him, what can you possibly offer Him? The only thing that you can offer him is your love. That is all He expects from you. For the sake of human satisfaction you give name and form to the Lord, but in reality He does not have any form at all. Yet, He will take on a form so that you can worship Him and feel awe, reverence and love for him, and thereby satisfy your spiritual aspirations. It is for your own satisfaction that you give name and form to God and use these for worshipping Him. Whatever form of the Lord you choose to follow, all who worship Him with a loving heart will earn, within his capacity, the Atmavidya”.

- BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



*ajo 'pi' sann avyayatma
bhutanam isvaro 'pi' san
prakrtim svam adhisthaya
sambhavamy atma - mayaya*

Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter IV)

“Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form.”

“I am omnipresent, occupying land, air, country, world, light and heaven and that I am not limited. I require no door to enter, I have no form nor any extension I always am everywhere, I am the inner ruler of all and seated in their hearts. Barring your name and form, there exists in you, as well as in all beings, a sense of Being or Consciousness of Existence. That is MYSELF ... I carry on as the wire puller of all the actions of a man who trusts Me and merges in Me ... I run to manifest Myself to who lovingly call Me.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA

GOD INCARNATES AS AVATARS

“Rescuing a true Bhaktha is My Dharma. My Nature. Some one asked me whether it was Right on My part to plunge thousands into grief, in order to rescue one. Such Numerical calculations cannot apply to acts of grace, I act My Dharma regardless of how it affects you or Him”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Man finds it a deep mystery and hard to believe in the incarnations of God. He cannot most often visualise God in these incarnations without going deep into the reasons, causes and the consequences and wastes when he could utilise that time and energy in bettering himself and receiving God's Grace. It should be a prayer, no doubt that should be directed as the foremost thought for this enlightenment. Baba says “Why do you discuss and debate among yourselves about My nature and My mystery, My miracle, My reality? Fish cannot gauge the sky, the gross can grasp only the gross. The eye cannot see the ear, though it is so near. When you cannot reach down to your own reality why waste time trying to explore the essence of God? However much you offer yourself in surrender, it is not possible for you to enter God's abode without Srama (*effort*) and Dama (*patience*). God's power is like an electric power and our bodies are like the bulbs the light within will be visible to the extent to which we have faith”.

Baba explained further the mystery of Avatarhood on His Birthday festival in 1971, “Everyone of you is an Avatar. You are the Divine, encased like Me in human flesh and bone. Only you are unaware of it! You have come into this prison of incarnations, through the errors of many lives. But I have put on this mortal

body of My own free will. You are bound to the body with the ropes of three Gunas. I am free, untouched by them, for the Gunas are but My playthings. I am not bound by them. I use them to bind you. You are moved this way and that by desire. I have no desire except the one to make your desireless Why fear when I am here? Put all your faith in Me. I shall guide and guard you”.

Three disciplines have been set out as essential by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to become aware of the Divinity in all and in the Avatars; because, He says “Whenever Divinity comes down as Avatar, man is unable to pierce the veil and revere the Divine”.

These are that: No activity should be undertaken with individual aggrandisement in view, one should never bask in the glory of one’s achievements; intellect and emotion should be directed towards the contemplation and revelation of the Resident of the heart, the atma; every act, no matter how trivial, should be done sincerely with love and without yearning for acquiring personal profits, fame or benefit.

In this appearance Bhagawan says, “My Mission is fourfold: Vedaposhana, Vidwatposhana, Bhaktarakshana and Dharmarakshana. The Avatar behaves in a human way so that mankind feels kinship with the Avatar, but he rises to superhuman heights so that mankind may aspire to reach the heights and through that aspiration reach Him. Realising the Lord within you as the motivator, is the task for which He comes in human form. I have come to give you the key of treasure of “Ananda” or Bliss, and to tell you how to tap that spring because you have forgotten the way to blessedness”.

Dasa Avatars

It is the belief of the Hindu Religion that God incarnates from time to time for the establishment of Dharma

(*Righteousness*), whenever it is found to be on the decline. God is transcendent and beyond human understanding. The Bhagavata Purana says that through this incomprehensive creative ability, He expands Himself into the Universe. So that in Creation He pervades everywhere, in every being and He becomes the world. He then provides bodies for the individual souls, deciding on what are good deeds and bad deeds, reveals to them the scriptures from which they may learn the "*DHARMA*" (*Duties of Life*). The soul having been originated from God, being a spark of that Atmasakthi, can get guidance from God though able to act at his own discretion. His prayers for Guidance and submission to His Will, are the only avenues allowed for him to escape the Law of Karma (*action*). Man not only worships the Divine, but has a duty towards life itself. This is the Dharma He has to foster, and on its decline God comes to assist the downtrodden.

The scriptures assert that there would be ten such Avatars or Incarnations of Godhead, in this creation of Chatur Yugas (*Four Ages*).

The first Avatar, the Fish (*MATSYA*), was taken to save Vaivasvata Manu, the progenitor of the human race from destruction by a deluge that threatened the existence of the earth. The second Avatar, the form of a Tortoise (*KURMA*), was taken to recover things of value lost in the deluge. The object of the third Avatar, the Boar (*VARAHA*), was to raise from the waters the Earth which had been dragged down by the demon named Hiranyaksha. The *NARASIMHA* Avatar, the half-lion and half-man Avatar taken on the fourth appearance was to deliver the world from the tyranny of Hiranyakasipu who had become invincible through the favour of the Creator - Brahma. The object of the *VAMANA* (*Dwarf*) Avatar was to restore the power of the Gods, which had been overshadowed by the devotion and austerities of the Daitiya King Bali. *PARASURAMA*, the son of sage Jamadagni was the sixth Avatar, taken to free the country from the tyranny of the Kshatriya rulers whose race He is said to have destroyed for twenty-one generations till the advent of *SRI RAMA* as the seventh Avatar in the kingdom of

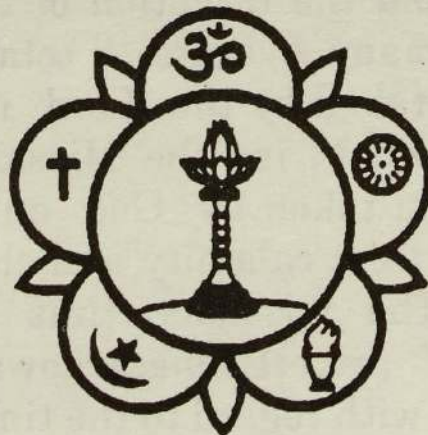
Ayodhya. He was born to uphold the Dharmic way of life, to be an example and to destroy the tyrannical Asura king of Lanka, Ravana. The object of *SRI KRISHNA* as the eighth Avatar was threefold - for the destruction of the wicked demons, for the establishment of Dharma, and as the propounder of the Path of Salvation to mankind through His renderings in His famous Message of the Bhagavad Gita in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, to the ideal disciple Arjuna. Surprisingly, the ninth Avatar has been accepted as the founder of Buddhism whom the orthodox Hindu writers at first looked upon as a heretic for having neglected the teachings of the Vedas. Though born a prince, Siddhartha gave up all comforts for the life of an ascetic to learn the cause and the salvation of the miseries experienced by man during his lifetime. His Teachings, as a way of life, are being followed by Buddhists all over the world. The tenth Avatar, prophesied as a Horse (*KALKI*), is for the destruction of the wicked and the reestablishment of virtue, have proclaimed the scriptures. Sometimes, the number of Avatars is said to be even over twenty-two. And the Bhagavatha Purana says - "The incarnations of Vishnu are innumerable like the streams flowing from an inexhaustible lake".

Sai Baba, considered by millions as the Kalki Avatar has proclaimed that, Sai will take three continuous bodies spanning three centuries. The first body He has said, established itself at Shirdi as Shirdi Sai Baba, the second body at Puttaparthi as Sathya Sai Baba, and the third body as Prema Sai Baba will be established in the state of Karnataka. "*BRAHMAN*, source, sustenance, and end of the universe, partakes of every phase of existence. He wakes with the waking man, dreams with the dreamer, and sleeps the deep sleep of the dreamless sleeper; but he transcends these three states to become himself. His true nature is pure consciousness" says the Aitareya Upanishad.

"Man can realise his mission on earth only when he knows himself as Divine. And man has to worship God in the form of man. God appears before him as a blind beggar, an

idiot, a leper, a child, a decrepit old man, a criminal or a mad man. You must see even behind these veils, the Divine Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom, the Sai and worship him through Seva. God cannot be identified with one Name and one Form. He is all Names and all Forms. All Names are His; all Forms are His; your names too are His; you are His Forms. You appear as separate individual bodies because the eyes that seek them seek only bodies, the outer encasements. When you clarify and sanctify your vision and look at them through the Atmic eye, the eye that penetrates behind the physical (*with all its attributes and appurtenances*), then you will see others as waves on the ocean of the Absolute, as the "thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet" of the Supreme Sovereign Person or Purusha sung in the Rig Veda. Strive to win that vision and to saturate yourself with that Bliss."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



THE AVATARIC MISSION

"This is a human form, in which every divine entity, every divine principle, that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by Man to God, are manifest. Do not allow doubt to distract you, if you only me install in the alter of your heart, have steady faith in my divinity, you can win a vision of my reality"... "I had to tell you so much about my truth, for I desire that you should contemplate on this and derive joy therefrom, so that you may be inspired to observe the disciplines laid down, and progress towards the goal of self realisation, the realisation of Sai shining in your hearts".

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

In the picturesque valley surrounded by rocky hills lies the township of "Prashanthi Nilayam" - "The Abode of Highest Peace" - where Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba considered by millions to be the Avatar of Maha Vishnu, Shiva Shakti or their chosen God, has taken His abode in this Kali Yuga. From the inception of this Universe, God as Vishnu has taken many Avatars. A total of ten Avatars have been expected to be taken by the Lord in this creation. What is an Avatar and what is the Mission of these Avatars? The Avatar is a Form taken by God on His descent to earth to protect the world from calamity and chaos and bring about order and peace. The missions, thus having the same basic application of protectiveness towards all creation, has different aspects with regard to the times and needs of such an appearance.

“My task is not merely to cure and console and remove individual misery, but it is something far more important. The removal of misery and distress is incidental to My Mission. My task is the re-establishment of the Vedas and Sastras, and revealing the knowledge about them to all people”, - He has declared, and continues to state “your worldly intelligence cannot fathom the ways of God. He cannot be recognized by mere cleverness or intelligence. You may benefit from God, but you cannot explain Him. Your explanations are merely guesses, attempts to cloak your ignorance in pompous expressions. Bring something into your daily practice as evidence of your having known that secret of higher life from Me. Show that you have great brotherliness; sweetness and self-control, bear defeat as well as victory with calm resignation.”

“I am always aware of the future, the past, as well as the present of every one of you. So I am not so moved by mercy. Since I know the past, the background - the reaction is different. It is your consequence of evil deliberately done in the previous birth and so I allow your suffering to continue, often modified by some little compensation. I do not cause either joy or grief. You are the designer of both these chains that bind you. I am Anandaswarupa, come take Ananda from Me, dwell on that Ananda and be full of Shanthi.”

The Avatar comes to earth on the request and as the answer to the prayers of the good, the oppressed and the needy. On His 48th Birthday at the First World Conference held in Bombay, Bhagawan declared that in Him man would find God. When He decreed His Mission at the age of fourteen His elder brother was aghast and asked Sathya not to make a fool of Himself and disgrace the family by falling prey to the many temptations and pitfalls of the cities. Pained by His brother's insistent ignorance Baba wrote him a letter on the 25th May 1947 which read thus:

“To all who are devoted to ME,

My dear one! I received the communication that you wrote and sent; I found in it the surging floods of your devotion and affection, with the undercurrents of doubts and anxiety. Let Me tell you that it is impossible to plumb the hearts and discover the nature of Jnanis, Yogis, Ascetics, Saints, Sages and the like. People are endowed with a variety of characteristics and mental attitudes; so each one judges according to his own angle, talks and argues in the light of his own nature. But, we have to stick to our own path, our own wisdom, our own resolution without getting affected by popular appraisal. As the proverb says, it is only the fruit laden tree that receives the shower of stones from passersby. The good always provoke the bad into calumny; the bad always provoke the good into derision. This is the nature of the world. One must be surprised if such things do not happen.

The people too have to be pitied, rather than condemned. They do not know. They have no patience to judge aright. They are too full of lust, anger and conceit to see clearly and know fully. So they write all manner of things. If they only know, they would not talk or write like that. We too should not attach any value to such comments and take them to heart, as you seem to do. Truth will certainly triumph some day. Untruth can never win. Untruth might appear to overpower Truth, but its victory will fade away and Truth will establish itself.

It is not the way of the great to swell when people offer worship and shrink when people scoff. As a matter of fact, no sacred text lays down rules to regulate the lives of the great, prescribing the lives and the attitudes that they must adopt. They themselves know the path they must tread; their wisdom regulates and makes their acts holy. Self-reliance, beneficial activity—these two are their special marks. They may also be engaged in the promotion of the welfare of devotees and allotting them the fruits of their actions. Why should you be affected by doubt and worry, so long as I am adhering to these two? After all

the praise and blame of the populace do not touch the Atma, the reality; they can touch only the outer physical frame.

I have a 'Task' : To foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of Ananda. I have a 'Vow' : To lead all who stray away from the straight path, again into goodness and save them. I am attached to a 'Work' that I love : To remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack. I have a 'reason to be proud', for, I rescue all who worship and adore Me, aright. I have My definition of the 'devotion'. I expect that those devoted to Me have to treat joy and grief, gain and loss, with equal fortitude. This means that I will never give up those who attach themselves to Me. When I am thus engaged in My beneficial task, how can My name be ever tarnished, as you apprehend? I would advice you not to heed such absurd talk. Mahatmas do not acquire greatness through someone calling them so; they do not become small, when someone calls them small. Only those low ones who revel in opium and ganja but claim to be unexcelled yogis, only those who quote scriptural texts to justify their gourmandry and pride, only those who are dry - as - dust scholars exalting in their casuistry and argumentative skill, are moved by praise or blame.

You must have read life-stories of saints and Divine personages; in those books you must have read of even worse falsehood and more heinous imputations cast against them. This is the lot of Mahatmas, everywhere, at all times. Why then do you take these things too much to heart? Have you not heard of dogs that howl at the stars? How long can they go on? Authenticity will soon win.

I will not give up My Mission, nor My determination. I know I will carry them out; I treat honour and dishonour, the fame and blame that may be the consequence with equal equanimity. Internally I am unconcerned. I act but in the outer world; I talk and move about, for the sake of the outer world and for announcing My coming to the people; else, I have no concern even with these.

I do not belong to any place; I am not attached to any name. I have no 'mine' or 'thine'. I answer whatever the name you use. I go wherever I am taken. This is My very First Vow. I have not disclosed this to anyone so far. For Me the world is something afar, apart. I act and move only for the sake of mankind. No one can comprehend My Glory, whoever he is, whatever his method of inquiry, however long his attempt.

You can yourself see the full Glory in the coming years. Devotees must have patience and forbearance.

I am not concerned nor am I anxious that these facts should be made known; I have no need to write these words; I wrote them because I felt you will be pained if I do not reply. Thus, your Baba."

When young one is often with an open mind, and this usually leads to question traditions, faiths, beliefs and practices followed blindly. Being in addition a sceptic, on my first trip to Puttaparthi I regretted many times my folly in having come to this far off place to see this God man. However, as time passed, specially after I made this first pact with Bhagawan that He should bring me down safely as He got me up on that precarious contraption made to build the first block of flats which was to be the beginning of the expansion for devotees in Puttaparthi, but which now seem to reach out to the four corners of the world, I somehow or other began to have a change of heart, sitting in this beautiful stark valley, surrounded by rocky mountains and the picturesque little cottages scattered around the Mandir. May be there is more to it here than it being just an Ashram, I began to think.

God reveals Himself to us in many ways. He takes on the Form which we choose to worship. If we worship Him as Vishnu, He will come to us as Vishnu. If we worship Him

as Shiva, He will come to us as Shiva. If we worship Him as Devi, God is Devi to us. Or if we choose to worship any of the Avatar Forms, He will reveal Himself as such. To Tulsidas, He was Rama. To Ramakrishna Paramahansa He appeared as Mother Kali. The Vedic sages have said "*EKAM SAT, VIPRA BAHUDHA VADANTI*" (*The Reality is One, but the wise speak of it in different ways*). At the end of Dwapara Yuga which marked the beginning of the Kali Yuga, Sri Krishna, assured that the Lord will be born again in the Kali Yuga for the salvation of mankind, not once but many times as it will see the worst kind of deterioration of all moral, ethical and spiritual values.

Though the Hindu philosophy with the help of Hindu Mythology expounds the theory of Avatars, there is also the Advaita Vedanta which insists on the oneness of man and God, and prescribes the path of jnana for realising this oneness as against the path of devotion (*Bhakti*) of the Dwaitha philosophy, where man tries to attain God seeing Him as a separate personality. However, though the Vedas proclaim the identity of jivatman or the individual soul and Paramatman or the Supreme Spirit to rediscover this lost identity and to purify and elevate the soul immersed in sin and sorrow to its original level of pure consciousness there is a large body of scriptures known as the Tantras. These scriptures by means of puja (*ritualistic worship*), mantra (*mystic utterance*), yantra (*mystic diagram*), upasana (*contemplation of a form*), and yoga (*mystic exercise*), provide a graded course for rousing the mysterious coiled power (*Kundalini*) in man and making it pass through the six chakras or mystic nerve centres in the body which are conceived to be in the form of symbolic lotus, raise him to the great cosmic consciousness, which the Upanishads describe as the goal of man. Bhagawan has always stressed on the importance of a Guru who is well versed in this yoga, if not this exercise may end the sadhaka's mind and body.

"God is the goal of every prayer, in whatever language or

dialect it is spoken. You may see people kneeling or prostrating with folded palms or arms extended in Church or Mosque or Temple, but they are all asking for help, succour strength, wisdom, security or happiness from the inexhaustible reservoir of happiness, wisdom and power that is God.....God is everywhere. He is the self. But this inner reality is being screened out by one's sense of ego."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



*"paritranaya sadhunam
 vinasaya ca duskritam
 dharma samsthapanarthaya
 sambhavami yuge yuge"*

Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter IV)

"For the protection of the good (the pious), and for the destruction of the wicked (the miscreants), and as well as for the re-establishment of righteousness (principles of Religion), I, Myself am born age to age".

"This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family the entire mankind through the bond of brotherhood of affirming and illumining the Atmic Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all to realise the common Divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise into the Divinity which is his goal I have come not to disturb or destroy any Faith, but to confirm each in his own Faith, so that the Christian becomes a better Christian, the Muslim a better Muslim and a Hindu a better Hindu. I have come to reconstruct the ancient highway to God; to protect Sanatana Dharma - the ancient wisdom - and to preserve it."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE ADVENT

"I shall be with you, wherever you are, guarding you and guiding you, March on; have no fear."

- BHAGAWA SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

The Lord incarnates from Age to Age due to the prayers of the good and the pious. So also a need or a necessity is created for the birth of the Lord in a particular place, so the prayers are intensified to expedite the arrival of the Lord. The place and the people are also important for the Avataric Mission to be a success, and it is chosen by the Lord Himself for His alleviatory Mission by His Sankalpa. This concept is not particular only to the Hindu Mythology, but can be found to be true in respect of other Messiahs of other Religions and places. Baba has said that, one special point to be noted regarding this manifestation is that He has chosen this place and time for this Mission and His habitation and would out of His own Will, will manifest had declare one by one, the Divine Attributes of Godhead as and when He feels that they should be announced.

Puttaparthi which was an insignificant hamlet forgotten by the rest of the world in its struggle to survive the onslaught of misfortune was the blessed place the Lord chose to incarnate and save as an example to all humanity not only as the survival of the place that was desolate but even as that of life. Hopes and prayers are the only refuge in times of need and desperateness when everything seems hopeless and lost. Puttaparthi, which has now become a world famous spiritual and educational centre derives its name from the words "Putta" which means an ant-hill in which snakes live and "Parthi" which is a modified form of multiplier. So the name described the state of the village



Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Baba and his Parents

which was desolate and practically surrounded by ant-hills. The place chosen by Bhagawan for this manifestation, has a legend to explain the origin of the place name.

A long time ago this place was lush and rich with greenery and cattle. The people there farmed the land and raised cattle which were healthy and strong giving copious milk. However, into this land of plenty came badluck in the form of a cowherd who killed a snake with a stone for drinking the milk of his best cow. The fact that the cow had wandered off on its own to this particular ant-hill day after day dripping milk for the snake to drink did not make an impact on that poor man as being an extraordinary occurrence have been the unusual reason through the Divine Will. Just enraged that he was being deprived of the milk that belongs to him day after day, the cowherd took a stone and threw it at the snake which was in the act of drinking the milk. Writhing with pain, the dying snake threw a curse at the whole village that henceforth this place which had denied him of food shall be covered by multiplying ant-hills and so they will not be able to raise cattle any more.

The frightened cowherd ran back to the village and gathering the other villagers, brought them all to plead with the snake, to withdraw the terrible curse. The snake which was Divine forgave the short tempered cowherd but said that unfortunately a curse once thrown by a Divine creature cannot be withdrawn, however it said, that when the Lord comes down to earth in His next manifestation choosing this to be His place of birth, the land would regain its lost splendour. So saying died the divine snake form, to the dismay of the entire village.

Soon after this incident, the rains failed and the vardinis appeared and soon there was a scene of desolateness surrounding the village. The villagers however kept the stone that had killed the snake in a simple shrine prayed to it regularly seeking forgiveness and redemption. Many of the inhabitants left

the place searching for better places unable to withstand the effects of the curse and soon the population dwindled to just a few hundreds. However there appeared one family which kept the morale of the whole village going, believing that the Lord will be born among them in His Avataric Mission in this Kali Yuga. And that was the family of the Rajus.

Strangely the stone that was worshipped had acquired a feature which was revealed by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. As directed by Him, the stone was washed and sandal paste was applied on the jammed side. When this was done a clear outline of a picture of Sri Gopalaswami with the world captivating flute was discerned. This was replaced in the shrine and a Gokulam of cows was established by Bhagawan to show that the curse has now been lifted.

The Parents

"I resolved on My Birth. I decided who should be My Mother," has declared Bhagawan. In a place called Kolimikuntala in the Kurnool District lived Subbha Raju who was an ardent devotee of Lord Eshwara. He built a temple for this deity in his village and even named his daughter after him and called her Eshwaramma. True to her name she too continued in the worship of Eshwara to the great pride and joy of her parents and the villagers. She was very simple and loving person and in return was loved by all. She was barely fourteen when Kondama Raju, the head of the Raju family of Puttaparthi visited Kolimikuntala with his eldest born Pedda Venkappa Raju who was a strapping young man. To the great joy of his relatives they were unharmed by the highway robbers of the area on their travel. On seeing the girl Eshwaramma Kondama Raju was impressed and wanted her as his daughter-in-law.

Both families were happy with the alliance and so the marriage was fixed and on the suggestion of Kondama Raju,

Subbha Raju too agreed to come and live on the banks of the Chitravathi river of Puttaparthi. Eshwaramma was welcomed into the Raju household with open arms. Kondama Raju household was the centre of all activities of the tiny village of Puttaparthi. He was a very pious and charitable man and so was his wife Lakshamma. Theirs was a household of music and faith and they were both liked and respected by the entire village. Eshwaramma fitted in very well with the Ratnakaram Raju family. She was soon blessed with three children, one son and two daughters. Then came four miscarriages one after the other. Lakshamma was an ardent devotee of Lord Sathyanarayana and so suggested that they should pray to Him to grant the boon of a child. Having lost four children Eshwaramma was longing to have another son. So diligently she started following the Sathyanarayana Puja.

The Birth

The boon bestowing Sathyanarayana Puja is generally held on full moon days. This puja and its rituals have been introduced to the people of this world says the Hindu Religion, by the celestial bard Narada who is always singing the praises of Lord Narayana (*Sri Vishnu*), as the prayer of salvation to receive boons direct from the Lord Himself in order to overcome the misfortunes that the present life offers to the people. However this Puja and its rituals had to be adhered to very strictly for it to confer the boon for which the Puja is being held. On every full moon day Lakshamma and the daughter-in-law Eshwaramma meticulously followed the Sathyanarayana Vrat. Soon the pregnancy was confirmed and the entire household was full of joy when it was confirmed by the astrologers and learned pundits that the mysterious happenings of the Tambura and the Maddala making melodious music and beating their own rhythms many times during the day were phenomena heralding the arrival of a Divine incarnation. This confirmed to them the Divine nature of the child to be born in their household. It was on a full moon day when the Sathyanarayana Puja was being observed that Eshwaramma felt the pangs announcing the arrival of her eighth child. This full moon day was made still more auspicious by the rare occasion when the month, day and the star (*it was Ardra*) coincide

in the holy month of Karthika (*November*) and in the Akshaya year - "the never declining the ever full" and Eshwaramma had completed ten months of carrying the child.

Lakshamma was at the Temple waiting for the offerings of the Puja to bring to her daughter-in-law for the safe delivery of her child. Eshwaramma at home with labour pains completed the Sathyanarayana Puja right through the pangs of delivery. Being also a Monday, an auspicious day for Shiva worship, the villagers were chanting the names of Shiva. Eshwaramma partook the sacred offerings of the Sathyanarayana Puja brought to her from the Temple by her pious mother-in-law Lakshamma and it was almost dawn when the baby boy was born to Eshwaramma - the Holy Mother.

The One Divine

"The Divine is now denoted by various words that are common currency in limited human vocabularies. They name phenomena revealing the Divine, 'miracles', 'magic', 'wonders', etc. Of course, man cannot contain in his mind more than he can hold. He cannot express in words the Inexpressible. Only those who have delved deep and contacted the underlying principles of Love can picture Divinity with some clarity. The Divinity that is Me has not been acquired or earned, nor has it been added or evinced after the lapse of some years in the middle of this life.

The Divine has to reveal itself through these manifestations, largely shaped and modified by the nature of the times, the region and the cultural environment. The signs and wonders that I manifest are given names that do not connote the purpose or effect. They can be called *CHAMATKARA* (*acts that attract and cause wonder*), leading on to *SAMSKARA* (*life-which is a process in which man is transformed, reconstructed and reformed*), which urges one on towards *PROPAKARA* (*Immortality*). *CHAMATKARA* is any act which attracts on account of its inexplicability. This aspect of attraction is inherent in the *AVATAR*.

The very name, *RAMA*, means He who pleases or causes delight. *KRISHNA*, means He who attracts, draws towards Himself (*KARSHATHITHI KRISHNA*). This attribute of attraction is a characteristic of Divinity.

Why does the Divine attract? Is it to deceive or mislead? No. It is to transform, reconstruct, reform - a process called *SAMSKARA*? What is the purpose of the reconstruction? To make the person useful and serviceable for society, to efface his ego, and to affirm in him the unity of all beings in God. The person who has undergone *SAMSKARA* becomes a humble servant of those who need help. This is the stage of *PAROPAKARA*. Service of this kind, done with reverence and selflessness prepares man to realise the One that pervades the many. The last stage is *SAKSHATKARA*. The Vedas proclaim that Immortality (*the stage when one is merged in the birthless, deathless, Universal Entity*), is feasible through renunciation and detachment only, and not through rituals, His love expands unto the farthest regions of the Universe, until he becomes aware of the Cosmic Love that feeds all the four processes mentioned above. It is important that you know this underlying urge in all as I do.

"The eye can but see, the tongue can but talk and the ear can but hear. Each has to accept its limitations and be content. The Divine can be grasped only through love, faith and sadhana, surcharged with Universal Love. Reason is too feeble an instrument to measure it. Denial of the Divine cannot negate it. Logic cannot reveal it."

-BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



SAI BABA - HIS APPEARANCE

"I have no residence, I am the attributeless absolute. By the action of karma, I got embroiled and came to a body. My name is the Embodied Dehi. The world is my abode. Brahman is my Father and Maya my Mother. By their interlocking, I got this body ... those who think I reside at Shirdi do not know the real Sai for I am formless and everywhere".

- BHAGAWAN SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA

This is what Sai used to say to His devotees at Shirdi. Throughout his life span of around eighty odd years and the unbroken stay of sixty years at Shirdi, Sri Sai Baba had successfully been evasive about his birth, childhood and life till his appearance at Shirdi. However many assumptions had been made on whether he belonged to the Hindu Religion or Muslim, whether his parents were Brahmins and whether he was brought up by a Muslim fakir with no positive proof. However from time to time he made utterances which could have related to his past. "My fakir's wife left me with "Venkusa" at Selu and I stayed with him 12 years and left Selu" and again "My Guru became my all in all, my home and property, mother, father every thing". He spoke of Eshwara and Allah in the same breath as does Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Narayana and Christ.

In his youth, since Sathya Sai Baba declared His as the re-incarnation of Shirdi Sai, it has been proved many times over by his devotees and even experienced by the devotees of Shirdi Sai to be such. Once in the presence of his devotees at the

age of 14, when he saw his mother approaching them, He said "Here Comes Maya!" and later it was revealed by Eshwaramma in the presence of Bhagawan Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Kasturi and other pundits that her pregnancy of Sri Sathya Sai was due to Pravesha - this detail has been recorded by Sri Kasturi in his book "Eshwaramma - the Holy Mother". The continuity of an incarnation of Sai is upheld throughout the life of Sathya Sai Baba and on the insistent request of devotees, Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave an eloquent description of the Birth and childhood of Sri Shirdi Sai an information which was unavailable till then, to the group of devotees who insisted that these details should now be revealed.

The Blessing

He stated that Sri Shirdi Sai Baba was born as the result of years of penence and prayers to Lord Shiva and His consort Parvati by a childless couple living in the banks of the river Godavari by the village of Pathri near Manmad. He was a boatman called Ganga Bavadia and his wife was called Devagiramma. They had been living peacefully by the riverside leading a quiet and contented life. However they had been childless for many years, which was the only worry that they had. For this worry, they found solace and hope in prayers to Lord Shiva and His consort Parvati requesting for the boon of progenity.

In their calm life came a day which was to mark the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind. It was an unusual weather condition which frightened the boatman Bavadia. The clouds had gathered over the surrounding areas of Pathri and it was dark as hell, the sun got hidden completely by the black clouds gathering more and more over it. The wind was blowing so hard that the trees in the forest were rocking and the leaves blown off from the branches joined the gushing river waters. The sound was deafening. The banks were being broken by the turbulent waters of the river. Bavadia worried about the moorings of the boat, warning the wife to be careful went

out into the brewing storm to fasten tight his boat to the moorings, just then the thunderstorm broke out and the rain joined the wind.

Left alone in their humble abode, Devagiramma started saying her evening prayers, hoping her husband would return soon safely. During her prayers, she heard a hard knock on the front door. Wondering whether her husband had returned so quickly, she rushed to open the door, but she was astonished to find a stranger, an old man, seated in the verandah. On seeing her, he apologised for inconveniencing her, but could she give him shelter for the night and some food to eat, he asked her. Having no other answer she agreed for both his requests. She gave him dinner from whatever food she had made for herself and her husband and asked him to rest in the verandah.

Closing the front door she went back to her prayers. She was soon disturbed by another knock. This time too it was the same old man. He complained that his legs were hurting and asked whether she could help him by massaging them to relieve the pain. Assuring assistance she closed the front door. She was shocked and moved to tears at this strange request. Her husband was not there to help her to deal with this man in this bizarre situation. However, feeling sorry for the age, she left the house by the back door and went to the houses of the courtesans of the village to request someone to come for her assistance. She could not find anyone in that rain. Helpless she returned home and in desperation went back to the puja room and began to cry.

Once again she heard a knock but this time it was from the back door. She opened it and found a woman standing there. She said she got the news of an old man needing assistance and she had come to offer her services and help. Relieved and happy that someone had been able to come to her aid in

the storming rain, Devagiriamma took the woman to the verandah, introduced the old man and closed the doors again. Almost immediately there was a sharp knock. Exasperated and angry she opened the front door again.

What a vision she had!. In the place of the old man and the woman, there appeared Lord Shiva and consort Parvathi in the same form as she and Ganga Bavadia had been praying to all these years.

They had come to test they said, as they were happy with their devotion and wanted to give them the boon they prayed for. Mother Parvathi then blessed Devagiriamma with two children. Lord Shiva said he was pleased with her devotion to the Lord and her husband, therefore He Himself would be born to her as her third child.

Happy and filled with emotion she fell at their feet to accept their blessings. When she looked up she found them to have disappeared. A similar circumstance has been recorded regarding the birth of Sathya Sai in Part 1 of His biographical work "Sathyam Shivam Sundaram" by N Kasturi. When the grandfather Kondama Raju had a vision of Sathyabhama the consort of Sri Krishna standing forlorn in a raging thunderstorm requesting him to provide shelter for her to await the arrival of her Lord Sri Krishna at that village.

However, coming back to the story of Devagiriamma, Ganga Bavadia on returning home in the early hours of the morning when the storm had abated, found it very difficult to accept the veracity of this story of his wife's Divine Experience. Tired and in humility he thought why would the Lord choose me to father Him or for that matter personally appear with Parvathi in front of his wife. He chided his wife and told her not to be so excited and forget the whole episode.

The Birth

Events that followed proved her story right. Soon she mothered two children and they were very happy to find the prophecy coming true. A few years passed by when the whole family got more and more engrossed in prayers and tapas. Then the final promise of Lord Shiva came true. Devagiriamma started expecting her third child. Ganga Bavadia started losing all interest in family life around that time. While Devagiriamma was happy to foster the Lord in her womb, Ganga Bavadia wanted to see God, to know God and to experience Him direct in all His Glory. This yearning increased as the months advanced and the baby was about to be born.

Devagiriamma was aghast at the turn of events. She could not believe her husband would want to free himself of all worldly bonds when Eshwara Himself was growing in her womb waiting to be born to them. But as was the God's will Bavadia refused to see God as his son. He wanted to see God in His own splendour as God. He could not be stopped and Devagiriamma being the good wife that she was agreed to leave with her husband to assist him in his quest.

Thus even before he was born Sai Baba was destined to have a life of no attachments, nor family bonds, but just an embodiment of God in human form with no beginnings and an endless end.

The first two born were sent to Devagiriamma's mother's house and she followed her husband in her full term condition. Very soon she was experiencing the pangs of delivery but Bavadia refused to rest and continued on his journey with determination. In the end she had to settle herself under a Banyan Tree and with God's Grace she gave birth to her third child and as expected it was a Boy!.

But by now, one with her husband's desire for renunciation, she left the new born baby covered with the fallen leaves of the Banyan Tree, with detachment of the boon for which she had been craving all these years and followed her husband into the forest.

Very soon there came a tonga from another direction carrying Mr & Mrs Patil, a moslem couple who had gone visiting Mrs Patil's mother in a nearby village. She stopped the tonga to answer the call of nature and as she neared the Banyan Tree she heard a baby cry. She discovered the child under the Banyan leaves still fresh as new born. She called out to her husband who went around looking for the mother of the child, but they could find none.

Foster Home

Being childless themselves they took this to be God's Grace towards them and decided to adopt the child to bring him up as their own. They called him Babu.

Mr Patil died before Babu even reached his boyhood and Mrs Patil was left with the task of bringing up this most extraordinary child. Though being brought up in a Moslem house from birth as a moslem, Babu was found worshipping a Lingam in the Mosque. He visited the Hindu temples but recited the Koran. Thus he began upsetting both communities of the village who in a rage went to Mrs Patil with complaints and abuse. She was confused also at her son's behaviour but helpless at curbing his activities she finally decided to send him to an Ashram for orphans at a distance away run by a Sadhu called Venkusa. She thought Babu will be safe from distractions and play at their own village.

The night before Baba arrived at Venkusa's Ashram, Venkusa had a dream. In this dream Lord Shiva appeared to him and

told him that he himself would be coming to see him the next morning. Puzzled, Venkusa went about his daily chores as usual wondering if Lord Shiva would really come and if so how.

Around 10 O' clock in the morning Shrimati Patil arrived with the little boy Babu whose pranks she had been unable to control or correct. She explained her reasons for bringing Babu to the Ashram and implored Venkusa to accept Babu as an inmate of the Ashram and try to correct him.

With Guru Venkusa

Recognising the Lord's words Venkusa realised the Divine Nature of the boy. He was immensely delighted and with due reverence he accepted Babu into the Ashram. He told the mother, he was happy that the pupil he had been waiting for had at last come so to leave Babu in his care. The foster mother happy and relieved left for her village.

"He took care of Me as tenderly as a mother bird does of her young ones...He put Me into His School; How beautiful it was! ... My Guru was My sole refuge and My mind was always fixed on Him".

He was well looked after under the guidance of his Guru Venkusa. But soon the other boys in the Ashram got jealous of the attention Babu was getting. They thought that Venkusa liked him more than them. This made them dislike Babu and even got them to persecute him. Babu was very tolerant towards their ill treatment and never uttered a word of complaint.

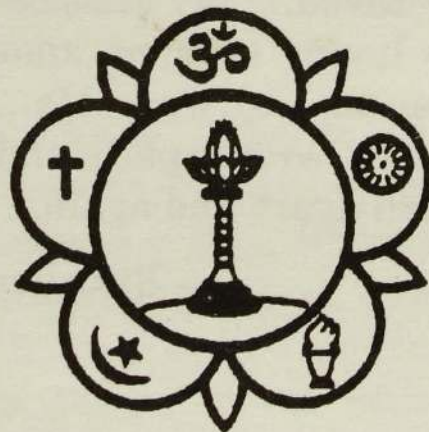
However one day when Babu was sent into the woods to fetch some Bilva leaves for worship, the other boys of the Ashram followed him and over-powering him, began to beat him up

mercilessly. One of the boys threw a brick at him which cut his forehead so deep that blood started pouring out, this finally frightened the boys away. He was bleeding profusely all the way back to the Ashram, but he remembered to bring back the brick with him. He laid no complaint against the other boys. Only showed the blood stained brick to Venkusa which Venkusa returned to him as Guru Diksha.

Soon Babu left the Ashram, but he remembered to take the brick with him. This was his only tangible companion till his death almost seven decades later. He held it very precious and one day in October 1918 a few days before Babu reached Mahasamadhi this brick was accidentally dropped by a devotee while cleaning and broke into two.

“My Guru was full of love nay, He was love incarnate. How can I describe it? He loved Me most. Rare is a Guru like Him.... My Guru never expected anything from me than Faith and Patience”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA



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*“Yada Yada hi dharmasya
 glanir bhavati Bharata
 abhyuthanam adharmasya
 tadatmanam srijamy aham”*

Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter IV)

“Whenever and wherever there is certainly a decline in the observance of Righteousness O descendant of Bharata, and a pre-dominance of unrighteousness, then and there I manifest Myself.”

“I have come for the restoration of Dharma (*Righteousness*), for saving the good from harassment and harm and for educating the ‘blind,’ who miss the way and wander into the wilderness..... In this Avatar the wicked will not be destroyed, they will be corrected and reformed and educated and led back to the path from which they had strayed. The white ant infested tree will not be cut, it will be saved ... My Mission is to serve happiness and so I am always happy to come among you, not once but twice, thrice as often as you want Me To set right those who have taken to the wrong path and to protect the good people, Sai will be born again and again.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE DIVINE BORN

"My life is my message."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

It was on the 23rd of November 1926 when the baby was born into the Ratnakaram Raju family of the tiny hamlet called Puttaparthi in the remote corner of the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. He was charming beyond description. Fair and beautiful with a halo of curly hair and a lovely mold on his left cheek smiling charmingly all the time. He was bathed and laid on the mat in the corner of the room and left to sleep. Soon after when a few ladies walked into the room to check on the child, they shrieked with terror at the wanderous sight, though frightening of finding a cobra swaying over the sleeping child with its hood open like an umbrella held over the child. Part of its body was under the mat moving the mat slowly like the waves on the ocean. The child seemed to be in a very comfortable slumber. At this noise and the entrance of the other members of the household, the snake made its escape as quietly and quickly as possible without disturbing the still sleeping child and soon disappeared from sight.

Ratnakaram Kondama Raju, the grand father of the Avatar, years before the advent of Sathyanarayana, had a strange dream one day. He accosted a lady, beautiful and well dressed standing in the midst of a raging storm looking quite distressed. In his dream he found himself to be inquiring of her why she was standing there in the raging storm without going to find a shelter. She answered that she was the consort of Lord Krishna, Satyabhama. She was there waiting for Krishna who had asked her to wait there till he returned from getting the Paarijatha flower for which she had asked Him. So she did not want to leave there, however she wondered if he, Kondama Raju, could provide

her with shelter there for her, so that she could wait there for Sri Krishna's return. As there was still no sign of Him and as she had to wait for Him to come there as promised. On waking up Kondama Raju did not waste any time in building a Temple for Satyabhama (*The first in that part of India*). There were no artisans who could make an idol of her at Puttaparthi, but as he did not want to waste any time, he went ahead and installed a stone and consecrated it as the Deity (*Satyabhama*), in that Temple.

This news about the dream and the building of the Temple for Gopalaswami's consort brought about a lot of hope and joy to the people of Puttaparthi. They now remembering the word of hope that was given by the Divine Snake, began to think once again with faith that the advent of the Lord was now imminent and redemption would soon follow. So the dream of Sri Kondama Raju was welcomed by the whole village and hopes a new crept into their hearts. They awaited the day for the Birth of the Lord when the curse would be lifted and Puttaparthi (*The Abode of Snake Mounds*) would once again become a place of prosperity to equal and better that of Gollapalli (*The Abode of Cowherds*), the previous place name. Though Puttaparthi was a small village there were Temples for Lord Shiva and Narayana and now the Temple for the consort of Sri Krishna was also added and pujas were held regularly. Of all the Temples still the Temple of Gopalaswami was considered most important due to the word given by the dying Divine snake that this was the land chosen by the Lord for His incarnation and that they should pray that He should come early not only for the regeneration of this place but also of all humanity. The legend brought down from generation to generation had always been the focal point of the prayers of the entire village.

Venkavadhootha

At the time the Temple for Mother Sathyabhama was built by Sri Kondama Raju in this remote village of Puttaparthi tucked away in a far away valley of the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, he had for his Guru the wandering sage

Venkavadhootha. No one knew from where he comes and to where he goes. There were also some who insisted that he was indeed the Venkusa from the state of Maharashtra under whose patriarchal care Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi had spent his boyhood and not a member belonging to the Raju family. However, he brought home to Puttaparthi and to Sri Kondama Raju in particular the undying legend of the ill fortune that had befallen the village of Puttaparthi and the hope that the Lord will be born there. He insisted on the Faith that the Lord will incarnate among them. He told the venerable old gentlemen to have faith that Narayana will come. This ageless saint was a tower of strength and a beacon of hope. He had forewarned and advised on the strange events that would take over the household of the Raju family. So the fact that the conception of the eighth child of Eswaramma was through the grace of God in circumstances most unusual was almost expected by the parents-in-law. The fact that He was conceived by divine entrance was revealed by His mother much later to a group of learned pundits at a question raised by them, though she had held back this information all these years on the advise of her mother-in-law to avoid unnecessary speculation which had helped the Avatar to declare Himself at the proper time.

Eswaramma then also revealed that one day when Bhagawan was about nine months old she had seen a halo of brilliant light all around him. It was a special day and she had applied on him vibhuti from the Shiva Temple and Kumkum from the Sathyabhama Temple after bathing him. She had left him to sleep and had gone to the kitchen to boil the milk. Suddenly she had heard him cry. She was quite surprised as she had never heard him cry in hunger or pain or discomfort of any nature since birth. So wondering why he is calling her now she had hurried to him picked him up and kept him on her lap. It was then that she had the vision of the brilliant halo around him.

They named Baby Sathyanarayana by way of thinking the God on the realisation of the mother's cherished desire for the birth of a son. Narayana is the name given to the protector God Vishnu as the refuge (AYANA) of man (NARA). As declared

by the Vedas, the ancient Hindu scripts, the essence of life principle symbolised by the flow of water (*NARA*) also rests in Narayana. Sathya is the highest Truth and in Sathyanarayana rests the meaning of the highest Truth. Thus the name aptly suited Bhagawan as the Highest Truth became His Message and His Life's principle in the years that followed.

The traditional rituals after a birth were performed for Sathyanarayana and what a horoscope he seemed to have. It was a horoscope extolled in the palmyrahnadi scrolls of hundreds of years' antiquity containing predictions by exalted personages like Agastya, Buddha, Sukra, Bhrgu and Brahma. The Sukra Nadi observed that he will establish eternal happiness in this world through love, grace and knowledge (*light*). The Temple He lives in will be a "Repository of Penance"; it further denotes Him as delighting in the service to humanity and in a crowning crescendo declares Him an Avatar of the Kali Yuga.

"If you take a drop of water from the ocean and keep it in the palm of your hand, compared with the ocean the drop appears very very small. But put that same drop of water back into the ocean and it becomes part of the infinite ocean. If your smallness as a human being is joined together with the vast power of the Lord, you become infinite and all powerful; you become one with God. In the scriptures it says: "*BRAHMAVID BRAHMAIVA BHAVATI*" - "Know Brahman and you become Brahman". The process which joins God and you together is called Bhakthi, the Path of Devotion."

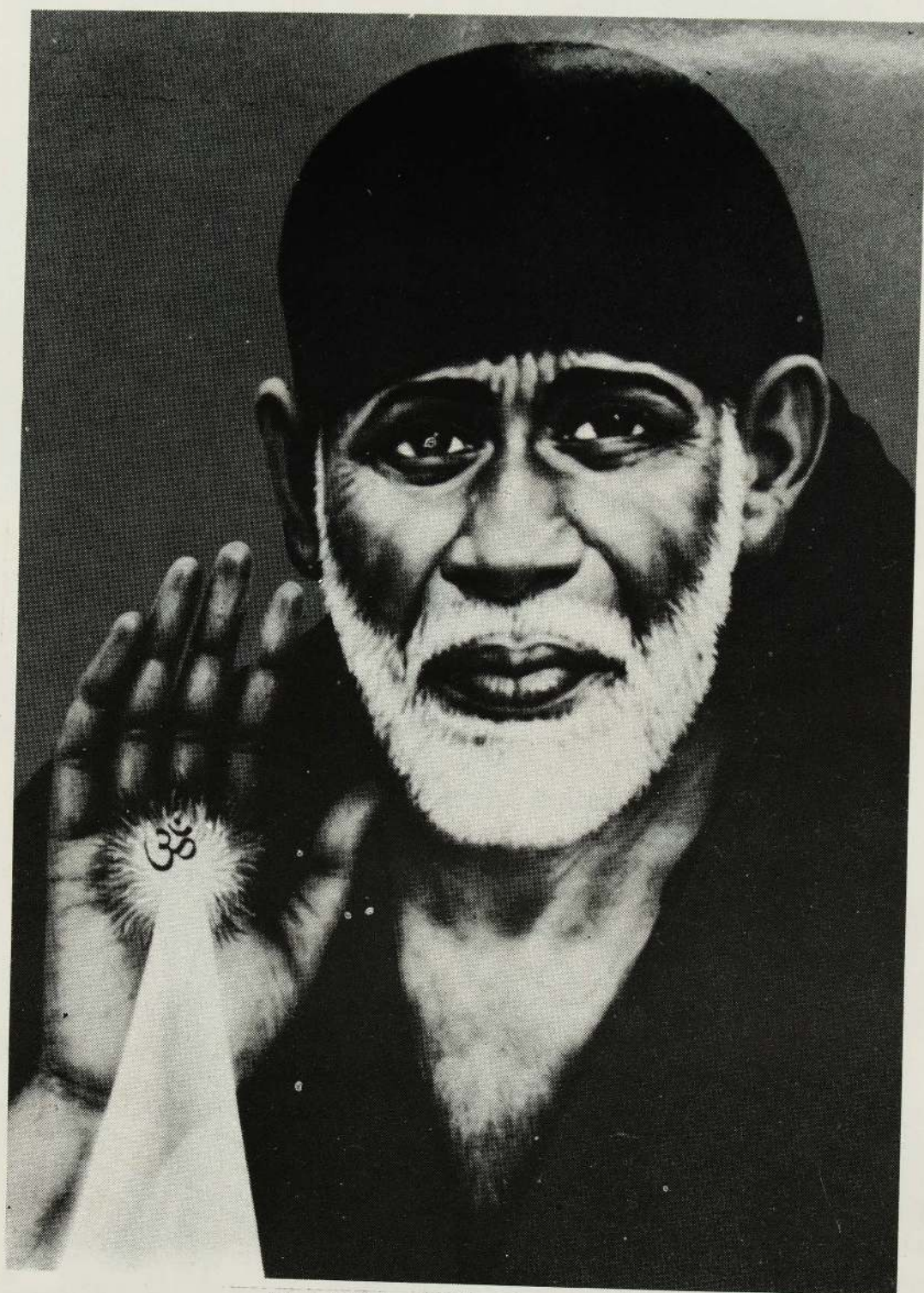
*"If you want happiness and if you want peace,
you must give love;
Only through love will you find true happiness,
Only through love will you find inner peace.
Therefore, develop your love, live in love.
Love lives by giving and forgiving.
This word of Sai is a stream of love
That is flowing out to you."*

-BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH OF 1

To Lendi Baug



Sri Shirdi Sai Baba

SAI AT SHIRDI

“It is my special characteristic that I always look to, and provide for the welfare of those devotees who worship me whole heartedly with their minds ever fixed on me. Lord Krishna has also said the same in the Gita. Therefore, strive not much for food and clothes. If you want anything, beg of the Lord, leave worldly honour, try to get the Lord’s Grace and blessings and be honoured in His court. Do not be deluded by worldly honour”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA

Shirdi is a small village in Kopargaom Taluk in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra State in India. It has become a place of worship since the advent of Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Shirdi around 1858 and his demise in 1918.

தேசிய நூலகப் பிரிவு
மாநகர நூலக சேவை
சிந்திப்பாணம்.

A few years before Mahasamadhi, Sai Baba of Shirdi had predicted that he will speak through His Samadhi even after His passing away. This has come true as devotees experienced this Grace then and continue to do so even now (*in physical, moral, spiritual and hygienic conditions*) and within 15 years after His Samadhi, His fame has spread far and wide throughout the country. Now it has become rare to meet a man who has not heard of HIM. Thousands of devotees are even now trekking their way to Shirdi to pay their homage at the Temple of Sai.

“I was striking the flint and lighting the fire, when a traveller turned up, sat My side, bowed to me politely, invited Me to his house for meals and rest”.

It was in a very interesting manner that Baba made his appearance at Shirdi. In a village called Dhoop in the Aurangabad District lived a well to do Mahomedan called Chand Patil. Once when he was travelling to Aurangabad he had lost his horse. He searched on for his horse for months as it was very dear to him, but could find no trace. As he was sadly returning home after two months, with the horse's saddle on his shoulders, he met at the foot of a mango tree a young fakir with his head covered and wearing a Kafni (*long robe*). He had a short stick under his arm pit and was preparing to smoke a clay pipe. He called out to the passing by Chand Patil who was looking dejected, to also rest under the tree.

Looking kindly at him, the young fakir asked him why he was carrying a saddle, and Chand Patil told him his tale of woe. The fakir asked him to go to the waterhole nearby and search thereabouts. When Chand Patil went near the Nala, he found the horse that had evaded him all these months to be just standing there. He was amazed, and thrilled at meeting such a great man he returned to pay his homage to the young fakir.

Years later Chand Patil was worried as his mare which Baba had so miraculously retrieved for him, would not give him any issues. He went back to Shirdi and requested Baba for His blessings and since then the mare gave birth to many more issues. As a token of gratitude Chand Patil presented Baba with the first born, which had a red body and black ears. He named the horse “Shyamsunder”. It used to participate in the morning Arati and subsequently used to also precede the procession which took Baba to the Lendi Baug (*Baba's Tapovan*). After the Arati, Shyamasunder approaching Baba would bow to Him and Baba would apply Udi on his forehead before He

would apply to the other devotees. Today the Samadhi of this horse is situated in the Lendi Baug with other great devotees of Baba.

Coming back to the incident, the fakir had by then his clay pipe ready for smoking. But in that spot there was no water nearby to wet the cloth that should be put on the pipe before smoking, and also he did not seem to have any fire to light the pipe with. As Chand Patil watched in amazement, the fakir took his little stick and thrust it into the ground hard. Out came a live coal, which he put on the pipe. Once again he did the same action and this time water began to ooze, in which he wet the cloth that should go on the pipe.

Realising that here was a person with Divine attributes, Chand Patil invited Him home to Dhoop. Soon, they had to leave for Shirdi for the wedding of Chand Patil's nephew. The young fakir too joined the marriage party and re-entered Shirdi. As they alighted at the foot of a Banyan tree near Khandoba's temple, the temple priest Mahlaspati seeing the young Fakir getting down, greeted Him "YA SAI" (*welcome Sai*). Then onwards everybody started calling Him Sai and later as Sai Baba.

When the marriage party left Shirdi, Sai Baba decided to stay back at the village. He then came to Khandoba's Temple and wanted to reside there. But Mahlaspati the priest (*who later turned out to be a great and close devotee of Sai Baba*) refused to allow a muslim (*as Baba looked like a muslim*) to get into his Hindu Mandir and asked Baba to take His residence at the Masjid. So started Baba's stay at the Masjid which He named "Dwarakamayi".

He cleared the Masjid and on the dry land near it, He planted plants which He brought from nearby villages and watered them Himself everyday with fresh clay pots given to him by a devotee. At the end of watering the plants he

would take the clay pot and leave it under the Neem Tree. It would then break there. This practice went on continuously for three years, at the end of which period there was a flower garden on the once dry earth. Today the "Samadhi Mandir" of Baba stands there.

Perseverence and Faith was the motto on which this garden grew. So should life bloom with the flowers brought out by these Sadhana. Sai Baba always preached on two essential Sadhana at the feet of the Guru. They were Faith and Patient Perseverance. These are the best Guru dakshina any disciple could give, He used to say.

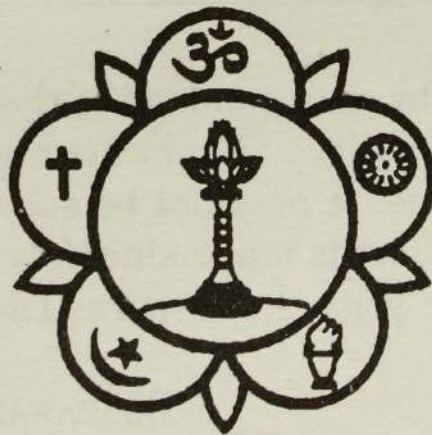
The Masjid when Baba moved in was old and dilapidated. However with His Sankalpa He made it clean and welcome. He had a Dhuni lit which used to burn continuously day and night. Even now after more than 125 years His devotees are still keeping it burning. He at the beginning got the firewood as His dakshina and used to give the Udi (*Holy Ash which was formed in this Homakunda*) to His devotees after Arati, at the time of departure, and as a medicine for the ailments of his devotees. Taken with faith everyday with water, it not only eradicated their physical ailments, but helped them too in their spiritual path to eradicate their Karma.

The Masjid and the Chavadi where Baba spent his days remained very simple. It was a great task for the devotees to get even simple repairs done. He insisted on simplicity but comforts to all. However, He corrected the dilapidated Masjid where he lived and made it a place of worship and improved the Temples of Shirdi. He begged for his own food but loved to give "Annadaan" (*food for the needy*). He looked after not only human beings, but even animals in hunger took precedence before he would appease His own needs. He dressed like a muslim but sometimes claimed He was a brahmin. He lived in a Mosque, The Masjid, but called

it Dwarakamayi (*Krishna's birth place*). His favourite utterances were "Allah Malik" (*God-Allah is Great*) and "Allah achcha Karega" (*God does good*) but preached the teachings of Krishna and Shivatatva. Mahlaspati the priest at the Hindu Temple who refused to allow Baba calling him a muslim ended up sleeping at the Masjid himself.

"The Lord will protect you. Yoga, sacrifice, penance, knowledge are the means to attain God. If you do not succeed in this by any means, vain is your birth. If anyone does any evil unto you, do not retaliate. If you can do anything do some good unto others".

- BHAGAWAN SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA



*“Vadesu yajnesu tapahsu caiva
danesu yat punya phalam pradistam
atyeti tat sarvam idam veditva
Yogi param sthanam upaiti cadyam”*

Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter VIII)

“ A person who accepts the path of devotional service is not bereft of the results derived from the study of the vedas, in the performance of sacrifice, in undergoing different types of austerities, in giving charities or in pursuing philosophical and fruitive activities. Simply by performing devotional service, he attains all these, and at the end he reaches the supreme eternal abode.”

“The service of man by man can lead to the discovery by man of God that is his own reality ... Every act must be regarded as an offering to the Divine. It may not be easy to develop such an attitude. But if the effort is made sincerely, it can be achieved ... Selfless service is the yoga that secures Divine Grace”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

SELFLESS SERVICE

“Manava Seva is Madhava Seva - Service to man is service to God.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

Even at the tender age of four, whenever a beggar appeared at the door and raised his cry, Sathya left off his play and rushed in, to force his sisters to dole out grain or food. When the adults lost their temper at the endless charity, they would shout the beggars off. This made the child weep so long that only by bringing the dismissed beggar back could the elders stop the wailing.

Once when his mother warned him by saying, “Look here. You may give him food, but mind you, you will have to starve”. He however continued to feed the hungry but stayed away from dinner or lunch himself. Nothing and nobody could persuade him to partake of his food, which was left untouched. But he never starved, Eswaramma said that he always insisted that he has already had food and that an old man had fed him with milk rice. He would then hold out his little palm for proof and she inhaled from that palm fragrance of a type she never enjoyed before. When he got older he sought out the maimed, the blind, the decrepit and the deceased and led them by the hand to the door step of his parents; the sisters had to get from the store or the kitchen some grain or food and put it into the beggar’s bowl while the “Little Master” looked on gladly.

The Teacher

Baba had said that His life is His Message and Expansion is His Life. In his life he has given us the path

and shown us the way. He behaved just as an ordinary human would, leading his life from that of an ordinary child to that of the Jagat Guru (*The world Teacher*). Sathya, as he was called, was held up before the other children of the village as the ideal by every mother and father so that the children started referring to him as "Guru". Once on a Ramnavami day Sathya was found seated on the flower decked bullock cart underneath the picture of Rama. When his companions were asked by his family why Sathya was seated on top and not walking with them on the street, prompt came the reply "He is our Guru." And he was only five years old. Since then all started calling him "Bidla Guruvu" (*The Little Teacher*). His friends were all singing Rama songs taught by Sathya but who had taught Him?

"Manasa bhajare Guru charanam

Dusthara bhava sagara tharanam" was the first teaching of Bhagawan at the age of fourteen to the devotees gathered around him under the tree in the garden of his devotee Anjaneyalu at the town of Uravakonda. This sermon is the sum total of the rendering of the Bhagavad Gita by Sri Krishna to his chosen disciple Arjuna at the battle field of Kurukshetra. It means "Meditate O Mind on the feet of the Guru (*the mentor*) for, that which alone can take you across the sea of samsara (*the life cycle of births and deaths*)".

Sathyanarayana from small age had collected devotees around him who had realised the Divine Nature which was His. He, true to his nature was one by one declared His divine nature and power so that it could generally be revealed to the people. All along his life he has been an example to others to serve the poor, the needy, the helpless. He took great joy in doing it himself and doing it with others to give them the incentive and show this path of joy and expansion of the self to see God in all.

There was a tamarind tree on top of a little hill on the left bank of the river Chitravati that ran along the village of Puttaparthi. This tree grew solitarily between two rocks. The shade of this tree was a favourite spot for little Sathya who acted out his role of "The Little Guru" to perfection. He sang Bhajans and spoke of religious matters seated on a rock to his friends who sat at his feet awe stricken. He then would pluck any fruit (*even those which were out of season and unavailable*) of his friends' choice from the tree. Because of this the tree came to be known as the "Kalpatharu" The wish fulfilling Tree. Often Sathyanarayana used to challenge his friends to race him up the hill and would in a trice reach the top and wave and laugh at his friends who were panting to climb the steep rocks.

Seva

The kind and charitable nature of Sathya created legends wherever he went. As an ordinary child would at the proper age, Sathya too went to school. He received his elementary school education in Puttaparthi and he was brilliant in his studies. This school in Puttaparthi had at that time an interesting scheme of punishment to ensure punctuality. The lucky ones who came in first and second were exempt from punishment, but every child who for whatever reason arrived late was given lashings of the cane, the number of cuts depending on his place in the list of late-comers. Often Sathya who was always early to school was asked to mete out the punishment and he in his compassion used to beat as gently as possible. So it became a popular demand that he should come early every day. Even though he hated meting out the punishment he would rather do it to protect his classmates from being beaten hard by others.

His compassionate nature often got him into trouble with his people as much as it did to help others. Even on the earlier occasion once the school master got wind of what is happening gave hard lashings to Sathya to show how he should have meted out the punishment. On another occasion

at the same school it was on a rainy day that Sathya got into trouble with his family. Scared of the punishment for the latecomers the children used to get to school some times even before the school was opened. One day it was raining and the children who had come early had got into standing outside the classrooms which were not yet opened. Many were not even sufficiently clad to protect them from the cold and stood shivering in the sharp spray of the shower. Sathya saw this plight of his schoolmates and true to his compassionate nature ran back home, rolled up all the shirts, towels, dhoties anything he could lay his hands on in his house to give them protection from the cold. Disregarding the protest of those at home who were aghast at his action, he carried the bundle on his head and set off for school.

In the face of his compassionate anguish even the elders decided to keep quiet as generally Sathya had been a child who seldom complained and was content with whatever was given to him. As Pedda Venkappa's was an undivided family, when clothes and other items were brought in for the children of the family, Sathya would always ask the others to have the first choice and would always accept what others had left out as not wanting. When Sathya reached the school the rains had stopped and the children were still standing out shivering in their wet clothes. To these boys drenched in the downpour he brought comfort.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba all along His life had been an example to others to serve the poor, the needy, the helpless. He took great joy in doing these deeds by Himself and with His devotees to encourage them in helping others and to expand the self to see God in all. To give them courage to do the right things and be fearless in that action, He encouraged the human values inherent in man. He obeyed his parents even when he knew what they asked of him would deter him from his path of action in his Mission. It was not long after, the very same parents realising His Divinity paid obeisance to Him.

The Mundaka Upanishad says -

“Since the manifold objects of sense are merely emanations of Brahman, to know them in themselves is not enough. Since all the actions of men are but phases of the universal process of creation, action alone is not enough. The sage must distinguish between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is of things, acts, and relations. But wisdom is of Brahman alone; and, beyond all things, acts, and relations, he abides forever. To become one with him is the only wisdom.”

To those who go to Him with pain He says

“Why is man so pathetically afflicted today with fear and anxiety? Are we to search for the reasons outside us or do they lie within us? The reason lies in the false emphasis we have laid on things of the material world, ignoring things of the spirit. The body that man bears is essentially the receptacle of God. It is a Temple where God is installed and where God is the Master. It does not deserve all the attention you now pay to fulfil its whims. It is equipped with very valuable instruments which can help you in the journey, but which you seldom use. The senses bring you impression from the outside world, but you do not evaluate these impressions by the touch stone of clear reasons or a balanced mind. You do not proceed from one step to another in the march towards the elimination of the ego and the mergence into the one. City dwellers are buffeted by storms of passion and emotion, and they are hunted or haunted by phantom desires and wild imaginings. They have neither the inclination nor the insight to dedicate their time, their skills and their activity to Divine ends”.

“The Divine is the core, the essence of your being. God is everywhere; when life is recognised and adored as the indweller

of your body, it is no more a burden. God is shining, announcing Himself through you. He is expressing Himself through every thought, word and deed that emanates from you. In the Temple that is built and put together, we have an idol that is sculptured and moulded by man. But, in this Temple that is gifted by God, He shines in His own right, and manifests in His own Glory as Love, Power and Wisdom. He thus shines and manifests Himself not only in your body, but in all bodies. He is the indweller in each; so when you insult, injure or inflict infamy on another, remember you are inviting the pain to visit your own self - for, the other is none other than your own self'.

-BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



TO GOD THROUGH SERVICE

“The service of man by man can lead to the discovery by man of God that is His own reality In rendering service (Seva), members of the Sai Seva Dal should not think that their services should be confined to the poor and the destitute. There is no need to make any artificial distinction between the rich and the poor in the sphere of service. What matters is the service done to a person that needs it ... The first requisite is a genuine spirit of love and fellow feeling. If there is no feeling of kindness and compassion whatever service that is done becomes an artificial exercise, done for getting publicity or recognition. Sai Sevakas do not need name or position. Ostentation in rendering service is totally out of place. It will only inflate the Ego. You should render service to the limit of your capacity, neither more nor less.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Love is what created this world and only through that love man can see and realise God, the scriptures assert. God is in all beings. To know God, one must first learn to expand oneself to love all beings and see God in all. Seva is an apt vehicle for this realisation to see God in all. The Isha Upanishad says ... “Life in the world and life in the spirit are not incompatible. Work or action is not contrary to knowledge of God, but indeed, if performed without attachment, is a means to it. On the other hand renunciation is renunciation of the ego, of selfishness not of life. The end, both work and of renunciation, is to know the Self within and Brahman without, and to realise their identity. The self is Brahman, and Brahman is all.”

If man worships Brahman, thinking Brahman is one and he another, he has not the true knowledge; if man thinks he and Brahman are one and not another he has still not the true knowledge.

Narayan Service

Baba living a life of a mendicant used to beg for His food everyday in the village of Shirdi. He would eat anything that was given to Him after He shared with all those around Him including animals and birds. Many a time He would give all what He had and be happy just to see the hunger of those around Him appeased. He never had a regular timing or routine for the begging of food. The food collected was then put in an earthen pot by Him; dogs, cats and crows ate freely from it and the woman who swept the Masjid floor would take the pieces of bread from the pot to her house. In that village there was a blessed lady named Bayajabai who would not rest till she saw Baba ate something at noon time. When He is not found in the Masjid or begging for food in the village, she would carry a basket containing bread and vegetables on her head and would roam the jungles till she found Him either in deep meditation or being with the creatures of the woods. She would then prostrate before Him and placing a leaf in front of Him would serve the food she had brought and forced Baba to partake of lunch.

Her service, upasana or penance by whatever name her action can be termed, was never forgotten by Baba till His Maha Samadhi. He blessed her and her son Tatyia Kote profoundly. Both the son and the mother had great Faith in Him who was their God. Baba often said to them that "Fakiri (*mendicancy*) was the real Lordship as it was everlasting, and the so called Lordship (*riches*) was evanescent". After some years Baba left off going into the woods and began to live in the village and take His food in the Masjid. From that time Bayajabai's troubles of roaming in the jungles ended.

Many are His Leelas, but here is an anecdote from the book "Shri Sai Satcharita" in which He acknowledges His being in all creatures to His devotee Mrs. Tarkhad. "Once Mrs. Tarkhad was staying in a certain house in Shirdi. At noon, meals were ready and dishes were being served, when a hungry dog turned up there and began to cry. Mrs. Tarkhad got up at once and threw a piece of bread, which the dog gulped with great relish. In the afternoon when she went to the Masjid and sat at some distance, Sai Baba said to her "Mother, you have fed me sumptuously up to my throat, my afflicted pranas (life forces) have been satisfied. Always act like this, and this will stand you in good stead. Sitting in this masjid I shall never, never speak untruth. Take pity on Me like this. First give bread to the hungry and then eat yourself. Note this well". She could not at first understand the meaning of what Baba said. So she replied, "Baba how could I feed you? I am myself dependent on others and take my food from them on payment". Then Baba replied "Eating that lovely bread I am heartily contented and I am still belching. The dog which you saw before meals and to which you gave the piece of bread is one with Me, so also other creatures (*cats, pigs, flies, cows etc*) are one with Me. I am roaming in their forms. He who sees Me in all these creatures is My beloved. So abandon the sense of duality and distinction and serve Me as you did today". Drinking these nectar like words, she was moved, her eyes were filled with tears, her throat was choked and her joy knew no bounds."

"There will never be any derth or scarcity regarding food and clothes in My devotees home. It is My special characteristic that I look always to, and provide for the welfare of those devotees who worship Me whole-heartedly with their minds ever fixed on Me".

- Bhagawan Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi

Always referring to Shirdi Sai as His previous body Sri Sathya Sai Baba has put into practice this call and this act of seva for the benefit of His devotees through the Seva wing of

the Sai Organisation. Though keeping Himself aloof He makes this wing a vehicle of seva to be carried to the depths of the villages where few hands reach out to help.

“The years of life allotted to man is very short; the world in which he lives is very wide; time extends far behind and far beyond. What little man has to do here has to be done quickly, at the place that is assigned to him. And man has such a formidable task before him; it is to fulfil that he has come as man, exchanging for this human habitat, all the merit he has acquired during many past lives. The task is no less than the manifestation of the Divinity latent in man. The easiest and the most pleasant means by which this can be accomplished is Seva-the service of man done in the spirit of dedication and devotion. And, in villages like this, seva is a potent and a profitable discipline. And, the best type of seva is feeding the hungry. The first step in this discipline is the establishment of mutual help and co-operation in all seva activities among the residents. This will ensure peace, security and prosperity for the village.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



*“sa evayam maya te ‘dya
yogah proktah puratanah
bhakto si me sakha ceti
rahasyam hy etad uttamam.”*

- Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter IV)

“That very ancient science of the relationship with the supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.”

*“Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu
Gurur Devo Maheshvaraha
Gurur saakshaat Parabrahma
Thasmai Shree Gurave Namaha.”*

“Guru is like Lord Brahma the creator (in the way He creates our character),; He is like Vishnu the Protector (in the way He corrects and protects the good qualities in the disciple); He is like Maheshvara the Destroyer (in the way He destroys the bad habits and qualities); He is indeed the Supreme Consciousness itself and our salutations to Him the Preceptor.”

- The Guru Mantra.

“The Guru is needed when you have the Guri (goal). If you do not have that urge what can the Teacher do? On sand or rock, if seeds are strewn it is a sheer waste of precious stuff. Inner prompting to see the Light must send the aspirant to the Teacher or must draw the Teacher to wherever he is ... Between you and Me, it is not the relationship between Guru and Shisya that prevails, or that of the Guide and the pilgrim. The external Guru should not be equated with the inner Sarvantharyami. Even Garuda cannot reach the Goal if it does not spread its wings and leap into the sky. So make a move, put a step forward. .. Light will be shed by the Grace of the Lord. The Lord has come to help you.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE ROLE OF THE SAI AVATAR

"Baba, where to go?"

Baba said "High Up".

"How is the way?"

Baba said "There is one way also from here (Shirdi).

The way is difficult. There are tigers and wolves in the jungles on the way".

"But Baba, what if we take a guide with us"?

Baba answered "Then there is no difficulty. The guide will take you straight to your destinations, avoiding wolves, tigers and ditches, etc., on the way. If there be no guide, there is the danger of your being lost in the jungles or falling into ditches".

- BHAGAWAN SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba while talking on His Mission has said "I have come for the restoration of Dharma (*Righteousness*), for saving the good from harassment and harm, and for educating the 'blind' who miss the way and wander into the wilderness. When the Gita says "Be engaged in My Work" it means only this; engage yourself in these three tasks, to the extent of your ability. That is the Puja I appreciate; that is the Sadhana I bless. Foster Dharma, help the good, befriend the ignorant, the indigent, the diseased, the distressed, the neglected. I will be pleased, when you do all this, without caring for the consequence or reward in a spirit of dedication".

But time and again He had impressed upon the fact that He has come mainly as the Jagad Guru to teach mankind



With the Jagad Guru



the best and the easy way to reach God through the path of Selfless Devotion. He is also firm in that he has not come to start a new cult. "I do not want people to be misled on this point. I affirm that this Sai Form is the Form of all the various Names that man uses for the adoration of the Divine. So I am teaching that no distinction should be made between the Names Rama, Krishna, Ishwara or Sai for they are all My Names".

Training of The Mind

A Guru becomes essential the minute the Atma gets enfolded in a body and is born on earth.

The first Guru, the body and the mind of a child has is its mother, then the father and the teacher comes next in line as the one who educates it linguistically and later even in it's search for it's identity. Then comes the final stage, when one gets as one's Guru, the Lord himself. Matha, Pitha, Guru and then the Lord help along in the Samsaric lives of the Jivatma till its union with the Paramathma.

The training and the harnessing of the mind becomes most essential in this pursuit. As Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says "Jivatma and Paramatma are not two different entities. The characteristic of Jivatma is to waste the entire life in worldly things and associate the mind with this phenomenal world. This is the externalised vision, which is full of illusion and delusion. When it is associated with delusion, it is jiva tatva, then it is one with the principle of Paramathma".

"With the help of the mind, a man can rise from the level of the human to the highest level of Divinity. But he can also descend to the animal nature, or demonic level. Once you

turn the mind towards worldly objects, it tends to become animal and demonic in nature. If the mind is turned upwards towards God and freed from thought process, it tends to merge with the Nirguna Niraakaara and thus become liberated”.

“The most important reason for bondage is giving too much freedom to the mind. For example, when an animal is lethered to a post, it will not be able to go to another place and spoil it. It will not be able to show anger or violence or to do harm to any person. But if it is untied and let loose, then it can roam over various fields, destroy the crops and cause loss and harm to others. It gets beaten for the mischief done by it. Similarly the mind must be bound by certain regulations and limits and disciplines, certain rules and regulations. He will be able to maintain a good name and lead a happy and useful life. Once he crosses these limits He will go astray”.

But the controlling of the mind to these limits is very difficult and to learn the knowledge of the self which is subtle and mystic, is more difficult by individual effort alone. To attain the final self realisation through this knowledge involves the assistance of another person the Guru (*A Teacher who should have Himself got self realisation*) is absolutely necessary.

In this context Sai Baba of Shirdi has said to his devotees “The body is the chariot and the self is its Master, intellect is the charioteer and the mind is the reins. The senses are the horses and the sense objects their paths. He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained, his senses unmanageable like the vicious horse of the charioteer, does not reach his destination (*get realisation*) but goes through the round, of births and deaths; but he who has understanding and whose mind is restrained, his senses being under control like the good horse of a charioteer, reaches that place, (*i.e.*) the state of self realisation”.

Reverence towards the Guru is essential for the attainment of the ultimate Goal. Faith and unquestioning submission should form the basis of the relationship between the Guru and his disciple. The reverence should be heartfelt and not an outward obeisance alone.

To one of His devotees Shirdi Sai speaks on this relationship thus“Nana, is it enough to make prostration merely? Why does Krishna refer Arjuna to Jnanis? or Tattwadarshis to do his prostration, interrogation and service? Was not Krishna a Tattwadarshi, infact Jnani Himself? Nana, it is not enough merely to prostrate before the Jnanis. We must make Sarwaswa Saranagati (*complete surrender*) to Sadguru. (*And also*) Mere questioning is not enough. The question must not be made with any improper motive or attitude or to trap the Guru and catch at mistakes in the answer, or out of curiosity. It must be serious and with a view to achieve moksha or spiritual progress”.

24770.c.c.

“Education, to be complete must be humane it must include not only the intellect but also the refinement of the heart and the discipline of the spirit.”, has stated Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, setting up Educational Institutions in many parts of India. He insists on spiritual overtones in the Educational systems and methods in His Institutions. He also encouraged the development of the Bal Vikas, a children's religious and spiritual educational system to be conducted outside the Educational Institutions, and the Education in Human Values programme for the blossoming of Human Excellence to be incorporated into the Bal Vikas System as well as the normal school curriculum having a non partial religious attitudes concentrating of the development of the individual development of the Human Values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence.

He says to all students “I want each one of you to grow into a strong, steady and straightforward person. Your eyes

should not seek out evil sights. Your tongue should not seek out evil speech. Your hands should not seek evil acts. Your mind should not seek evil thoughts. Be pure and full of Love. Help those who are in worse condition and serve those who need your help ... Students are not equipped to face the fortunes of life, and to bring the best that is in them and place it at the service of the community. No effort is being made to introduce the pupil to the sweet experiences of meditation or of the joy of inquiry into one's own reality."

"Education has to be welcomed as the sadhana for the establishment of shanthi in the individual heart as well as in society, including the human commonwealth. Education is a spiritual endeavour, over which Goddess Saraswathi presides Devotion and Faith must be cultivated by every student. Be as devoted and disciplined as Arjuna; be as intelligent and strong as Bhima; be steadfast and sincere like Dharmaja. Then no harm can come to you; you will achieve victory in all your efforts.

"There are four 'F's that you will have to fix before your attention. *FOLLOW THE MASTER; FACE THE DEVIL; FIGHT TO THE END; FINISH AT THE GOAL.* These 'F's are fundamental for the pursuit of the four Purusharthas - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Follow the Master means-Observe Dharma; Face the Devil means-Overcome the Temptations that beset you when you try to earn Artha or wealth Fight to the end means-struggle ceaselessly, wage war against the six enemies that are led by Kama or lust; Finish at the goal means-Do not stop until the Goal of Moksha or Liberation from ignorance and delusion is reached."

The Role

To guide man through life, through its ups and downs, ditches and drudges, towards what seems like an unbelievable or unreachable goal by man, that of God realisa-

tion through self realisation is the role set by the Avatar in the Kali Yuga. The path they show is that of devotion and living a righteous life. To educate man on the values of life and to love and respect his fellow human beings is the beginning.

“I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular spiritual practice or Hindu philosophy. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect, or creed, or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plans to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this Universal Faith, this Divine Conciousness, this Path of Love, this Duty of Love, this Obligation of Love”.

.....“I have a task; to foster all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness, and save them. This Sai has come, (*Sri Sathya Sai*), in order to achieve the Supreme task of uniting as one family, the entire mankind, through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine, which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests”.

.....“My Grace is ever available to devotees who have steady Love and Faith. Since I move freely among them, talking and singing, even intellectuals are unable to grasp My Truth, My Power, My Glory, or My Real Task as Avatar. I can solve any problem however knotty. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive inquiry and the most meticulous measurement. Only those who have recognised My Love and experienced that Love can assert that they have glimpsed My Reality. For, the path of Love is the Royal Road that leads mankind to Me.”

-BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

*“abhyasa yoga yuktena
cetasa nanya gamina
paramam purusam divyam
yati parthanucintayan.”*

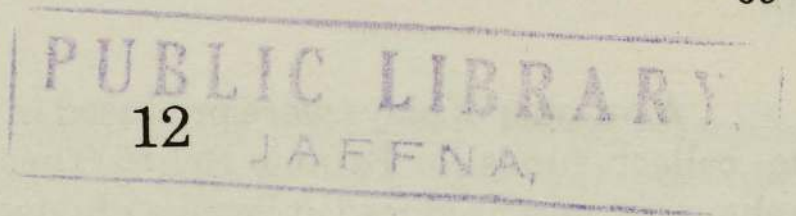
Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter VIII)

“He who meditates on Me as the Supreme personality of Godhead, his mind constantly engaged in remembering Me, undeviated from the path, he, O Partha, is sure to reach Me.”

“SRAVANAM (hearing the Glory of the Lord), KIRTANAM (singing the Glory oneself), VISHNOSMARANAM (allowing the mind to dwell on that Glory), PADASEVANAM (adoring the feet of the Lord), VANDANAM (experiencing gratitude and joy at His Grace), DASYAM (feeling oneself as His instrument), SAKHYAM (awareness of His being one’s constant companion) and ATMANIVEDANAM (dedicating one’s full being to Him) - these are the nine steps in the Path of Devotion”.

“Listen, O People! Revel in this KALIYUGA, for there is none so propitious for liberation, that is the mere remembrance of the Name of the Lord and adoring Him thus are enough to win His Grace and set you free”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



ABHYASA YOGA

*“Name is the link between the devotee and Sai.
It brings the devotee face to face with Sai
and enables Him to attain the knowledge
Of His oneness with Him..... cultivate the habit
Of remembering the lord with every breath;
Then only you can remember Him with the last breath.”*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

When he was about ten years old, Sathya found in the village of Puttaparthi a “Pandari Bhajan Group”. He taught the village children Bhajans on Lord Panduranga and Lord Krishna. He added dialogue and music to enhance the charm of the Bhajans. They all dressed in gerua clothes holding a flag in their hands and they carried lamps when they went on Nagarsankirtan (going around the village in a group singing Bhajans in the early hours of the morning). They gave parched rice as Prasadam to the people. The oil for the lamps were collected from the houses and parched rice they bought with the cash given to them by their parents as gifts.

When there was an epidemic of cholera in the nearby villages, Puttaparthi alone did not feel the blast of death. It was widely believed that it was due to the Namasmaran done around the village everyday which had kept the evil away. They invited the “Pandari Bhajan Group” to have Nagarsankirtans around their villages too and hoped that the Divine Atmosphere generated by the Bhajan Group would ward off the anger of the Gods! Very often they sent their bullock carts to bring the Group, but sometimes the little saviours had to walk ten or twelve miles, carrying their food with them, resting during the hottest part of the day under some shade on the way.

A number of plays were produced in the village at that time to collect funds for Famine Relief. These plays were written, rehearsed and produced at Sathya's household. The themes were mainly Puranic, where the Asuras and the Powers of Evil were defeated by the Gods. Sathya also took some roles by popular demand, especially Krishna and Mohini. The audience loved his acting, singing and above all his dance with feet full of agile movements and with a sense of time and rhythm they had seldom seen. Not only the beauty of the scenes, but also he used to bring the characters he was acting to life, so that the onlookers almost believed that they were seeing the actual person on stage and even began to worship Sathya on stage 1.

There are thousands of Bhajan mandalis under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis active all over the world. They sing the Glory of God under His various Names and describing His various Forms. When sung, the message that the various lyrics impart and the Name and the Form described should be dwelt upon by the listener. The Bhajans have to be sung and offered to God in an attitude of utter humility to create the atmosphere of holiness and peace that comes with it. With each Bhajan song Bhagawan had said, the mind must be rendered purer, free from passion and stronger in faith.

At Prashanthi Nilayam, Omkar (*repetition of the syllable AUM 21 times*), Suprabhatam (*the song of dawn awakening the Lord*), and Nagarsankirtan are held early each morning and Bhajans are held twice a day in the Prayer Hall, where the atmosphere is felt to be highly inspiring with Baba being present there. Baba Himself has composed and often sings them as the finale after His Divine Discourses. However He does only for the benefit of the devotees as an example of singing aloud the Glory of God aloud and to get joy from that experience. He explains it further thus — “The father might be a Ph.D., but when he puts his son through the alphabet, he has to take on the slate and write on it the letters A, B, C and D; but do not infer from that behaviour that he is learning the alphabet himself. “The purpose of this type of loud congregational prayers is different from the silent

individual prayers. Bhajans are a joint effort being mutually helpful to cleanse and overcome the six internal foes of man: lust, anger, greed, attachment, conceit and hatred. Bhagawan has compared this cleansing to the nocturnal birds infesting the tree of life and fouling the heart where they build their nests, getting frightened and flying away, not being able to bear the heart which gets illumined with light when the Glory of God is sung aloud.

Bhakthi

“Be attached under all conditions to the source, substance and sum of all the power that you need. This attachment is called Bhakthi. For the bird in the mid ocean flying over the dark, deep blue waters, the only resting place is the mast of the ship that sails across. In the same way, the Lord is the only refuge for man, who is swept by storms over a restless sea. However far the bird may fly, it knows where it can rest; that knowledge gives it confidence. It has the picture of that mast steady in its mind; its form is fixed in the eye. The Name of the Lord is the mast for you; remember it ever. Associate with the Form and have that Form fixed in the mind’s eye. It is the lamp shedding light in the recesses of your heart”.

“Have the Name on the tongue and it will drive away the inner darkness as well as the outer. Peace within, brotherliness without - that is the sign of a person engaged in Namajapam (*recitation of the Name of the Lord*). Those who argue that the spiritual path is for the individual only and that the society should not be involved in it, are committing a great mistake. It is like insisting that there should be light inside the house, and saying that it does not matter if there is darkness outside. Devotion towards God goes ill with hatred towards fellow-men. The spirit of renunciation, adherence to virtue, the eagerness to co-operate, the sense of kinship - these are the characteristic signs of man. Life which considers these as encumbrances cannot be valued as life”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

THE SADHANA IN KALI YUGA

*“Select any name of his, any name that appeals to you,
 Select any form of his; everyday when you awaken
 To the call of the brightening east, recite the
 Name, meditate on the form; have the name and the
 Form as your companion, guide and guardian throughout
 The toils of the waking hours; when you retire for
 The night offer grateful homage to God in that form
 With that name, for being with you, by you, beside
 You, before you, behind you, all day long. If you
 Stick to this discipline you cannot falter or fail”.*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

The aim of all mankind is the final salvation and oneness with God. Each Age or Yuga advocates according to the times and progress (*or regress*) of human mind different spiritual disciplines called Sadhana. In Krita Yuga the Sadhana was tranquility of mind and body, for Treta Yuga sacrifice, Dwapara Yuga worship and for Kali Yuga (*the present Age*) it is Namasmaran. (*singing and hearing the name and glory of the Lord*). The other Sadhanas viz, Yoga, Yaga (*sacrifice*) Dhyana (*meditation*) and Dharana (*concentration*) also can be practised side by side, however it is the lord's decree that in this Age the easier path of Namasmaran, the listening and singing of the stories will remove the attachment to the senses and their objects and will make the devotees dispassionate and will ultimately lead them to self-realisation.

In the sphere of science and technology, mankind has

progressed step by step from the known to the unknown. Similarly the spiritual progress of man has also to proceed from the known to the unknown. God is incomprehensible to man, because only God can know God. Man has to merge with God to know God. So how is man going to start this journey towards God? Which is the starting point from the known to the unknown? This is where an Avatar provides the rare opportunity for one to seek his own True reflection within the Divine Incarnation and gives one the direct experience of Divinity or The Self or Truth. Only an Avatar can do this for man, through His Grace.

He is God (*in*) Man. God is an unknown quantity to be reached via the known quantity viz Man. Baba is both, the known and the unknown, a complete full Divine Incarnation. Thus He gives one an opportunity not only to start from the known, but also points the way to the Goal.

Namasmaran

In the Kali Yuga, it is said that the easiest path to God is the path of Devotion. Devotion or Bhakthi is not merely the repetition of the Name of the Lord. It should be a love, a devotion that should be practised constantly in our lives. Devotion to God should be completely selfless and bereft of any worldly desires. It should be pure, permanent and eternal. Devotion is the expression of love. Love is synonymous with Atma. It is the very nature of Atma. It is the very nature of God. This principle of Love emanating from the core of the heart, must saturate every action, word and thought; therefore, one must orient oneself to perform every action for the love of the Lord, and offer everything that one does and the fruits therefrom to Him.

“Remember. If there is anything sweeter than all things sweet, more auspicious than any auspicious things, holier than any holier objects, verily, it is the name of the Lord..... or the lord Himself. Worship the Hari who lives in the cavity of your heart sincerely and with single mindedness. Surrender your heart to

Him. He desires naught else from you. He can be won by no other means, no, neither by unlimited scholarship nor by pompous vows and colourful rituals”, says Sri Sathya Sai.

One of the Bhajans sung by Baba at His Discourses begins with the line “Bhajana bina sukha shanthi nahin; Hari nama bina anand nahin” to mean “There is no peace or happiness greater than singing the Glory of the Lord, no joy greater than that of remembering the Lord’s name”. On this Bhagawan has said “Sravanam (*Hearing the Glory of the Lord*) Kirtanam (*Singing the Glory oneself*), Vishnosmaranam (*allowing the mind to dwell on that Glory*), Padasevanam (*Adoring the feet of the Lord*) Vandanam (*Experiencing gratitude and joy at His Grace*), Dasyam (*Feeling oneself as His Instrument*), Sakhyam (*Awareness of His being one’s constant and closest companion*), Atmanivedanam (*Dedicating one’s full being to Him*) these are the nine steps in the path of devotion..... Bhajan or Kirtan is “singing aloud the Glory of God”. Sam-Kirtan is the “process of singing, that originates in the heart, not from the lips or tongue”.

“It is the expression of the joyous thrill that wells up from the heart when the Glory of God is remembered. The vibrations of the Nama - Sam - Kirtans can cleanse the atmosphere and render it pure, calm and ennobling. No man can escape the influence of the pollution in the air he breathes. The sounds that we produce with good intent or bad spreads throughout the air around us. The vibrations travel vast distances and affect the nature of those who inhale them. The atmosphere also affects the food man consumes. The pollution in the atmosphere is imbibed by the plants, the plants supply the grain, the grain is the basis of the meal and the meal shapes the character and behaviour of the person. When the environment is clean and free from evil vibrations, food is pure and the person develops a tendency to be loving and simple”.

The Power of Namasmaran

Sai Baba of Shirdi always uttered “Allah Malik” remembering

the Lord and was also fond of singing the Lord's name. He used to have Namasaptaha singing, the Lord's name continuously day and night for 7 days, at the Masjid. The power of Namasmaran is such that when sincerely thought the Lord would appear to the Sadhak.

So when Baba asked Das Ganu Maharaj to do the Namasaptaha he wanted an assurance from Baba that Lord Vitthal would appear at the end of the 7th day.

Baba assured that if Das Ganu was "earnest and devout" Lord Vitthal would certainly appear. However he added "The Dankapuri (*Dakore*) of Dakurnath, the Pandhari of Vitthal, the Dwarka of Ranchhod (*Krishna*) is here (*Shirdi*). One need not go far out to see Dwarka. Will Vitthal come here from some outside place? He is here. Only when the devotee is bursting with Love and Devotion, Vitthal will manifest Himself here (*Shirdi*)".

After the Saptaha was over while in meditation Kakasaheb Dixit saw Vitthal in a vision. When he went at noon for Baba's Darshan, Baba asked him point blank - "Did Vitthal Patil come? Did you see him? He is a very truant fellow, catch Him firmly, otherwise he will escape if you be a little inattentive". This happened in the morning, at noon again he had another vision of Vitthal. Just then a hawker came selling pictures of Vithoba and to his surprise Kakasaheb found the figures tallying with that which appeared in his vision. Seeing this and remembering Baba's words, immediately he bought one picture of Vithoba and placed it in his shrine for worship.

"If a man utters my name with Love, I shall fulfill all his wishes, increase his devotion. And if he sings earnestly my life and my deeds, him I shall beset in front and back and on all sides. Those devotees, who are attached to me heart and soul, will naturally feel happiness when they hear these stories. Believe me that if anybody sings my Leelas, I will give him infinite joy and ever-lasting contentment."

“It is my special characteristic to free any person who surrenders completely to me and who does not worship me faithfully and who remembers me and meditates on me constantly. How can they be conscious of worldly objects and sensations, who utter my name, who worship me, who think of my stories and my life and who thus always remember me?” stated Sai Baba of Shirdi, and continued to assure thus-

“I shall draw out my devotees from the jaws of death. If my stories are listened to, all the diseases will be got rid of. So hear my stories with respect and think and meditate on them, assimilate them. This is the way of happiness and contentment. The pride and egoism of my devotees will vanish, the mind of the hearers will be set at rest and if it has whole hearted and complete faith, it will be one with Supreme Consciousness. The simple remembrance of my name as “Sai”, Sai will do away with sins of speech and hearing”.

- SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI.

*“Sri-bhagavan uvaca
 bahuni me vyatitani
 janmani tava carjuna
 tany aham veda sarvani
 na twam vettha parantapa”*

Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter IV)

“The God Supreme said : Many births both you and I have taken O Arjuna. I know (remember) of them all but you know (remember) not O subduer of the enemy”.

“Just as a person who desires to save a drowning man has perforce to jump into the same tank or well, so also the Lord has to come in human form in order to speak to people in their own language. If the Lord comes down as He is, with His effulgence unimpaired, then no one can benefit from Him. The gap between man and God-man would be too great for ordinary human beings to comprehend. Therefore God must take on a form similar to that of an ordinary man and also act and behave like an ordinary person but strictly within the boundaries established by Dharma You and I, we both are God. Only I know it but you do not”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

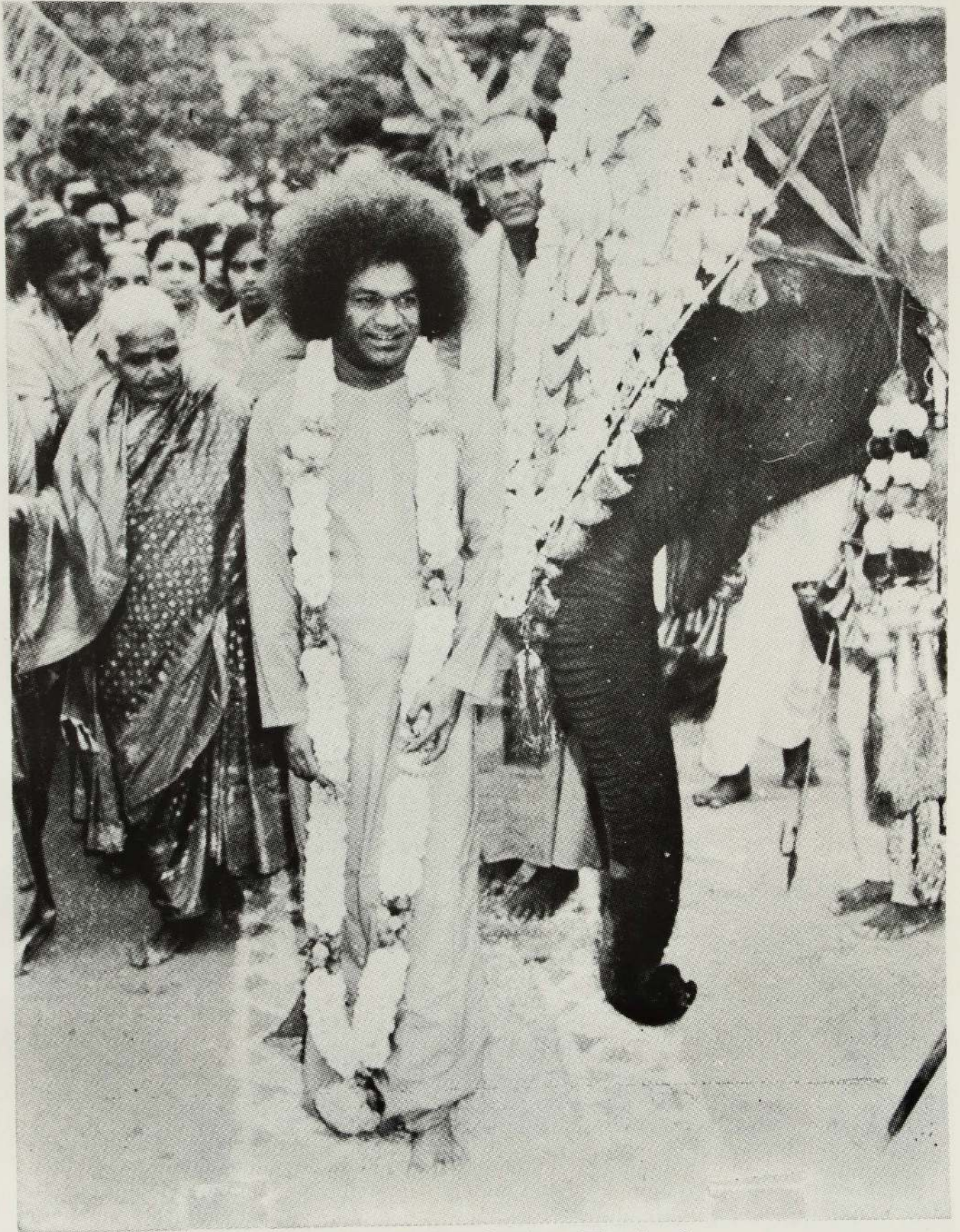
THE DECLARATION

"I am Sai Baba."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

At the age of fourteen throwing his books away, Sathya declared that the time had come for Him to go to His devotees who were waiting for Him. Accosted by His father who was getting increasingly worried about Him and the state of His mind, who asked Him angrily who He thought He was, Sathya answered that question with the sprinkling of jasmin flowers which formed the Telugu letters to read the name "SAI BABA". So that was who He was, Sai Baba of Shirdi in the first part of His life in His avataric Mission. God takes continuous Avatars in this Kali Yuga in which the worst kind of holocaust in every aspect of life is expected, as explained by Sri Krishna at the end of Dwapara Yuga to Uddhava. Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba while confirming His Avatarhood, further explains thus- "I eat as you do, move about as you do, talk in your language and behave as you can recognise and understand. This is for your sake, not My sake. I turn you towards the Divine, winning your confidence, your love, your submission, by being among you as one of yourselves; one whom you can see, listen to, touch and treat with devotion and reverence."

Shirdi was an unheard name in that remote part of India, but just as the Lord would will it, there came soon more and more news of this place called Shirdi and the Saint of Shirdi called Sai Baba who had left this earthly abode just eight years prior to the birth of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Sathyanarayana in the household of the Raju family in the remote village of Puttaparthi very far away from the village of Shirdi in the northern part of India. At that time Sai Baba



Sai Baba during Festival



Kasturi with Baba

of Shirdi has assured His close devotees that He will soon be born again in eight years and the declaration of His re-birth will be made with jasmin flowers. Bhagawan had declared that He knew prior to His birth where exactly He would be born and not only that, He had chosen the mother to whom he will be born and also the place where this manifestation would also take place.

Another special point to be noted about His declaration is that this incarnation will not be transplanted away from the place where this body has been born, for He has chosen that very place as the centre for His alleviatory mission and habitation. He has said that He has been born with all the miraculous powers which later, He will out of His own Will, will manifest one by one as and when He feels each could be announced. The village of Puttaparthi which was an insignificant hamlet has now become a world famous spiritual and educational centre with the origination of the land blessed and named by Bhagawan as Prashanthi Nilayam (*The abode of Highest Peace*) for people of all walks of life and from all over the world. It has become a refuge and haven for those looking for the inner peace of the Atma (*soul*).

The one-ness Of The Two

He has since been questioned many times for proof of His declaration that He was Sai Baba of Shirdi born again. Many a time has He shown proof, cleared doubt to those who still needed Him as Shirdi Sai. To a Government Officer who could not accept this boy in the place of the elderly Fakir to whom he has been worshipping, Bhagawan has said that being just a 'pujari' (*a person who worshipped only on the surface, giving importance to the figure*), naturally he could not recognise his God in this Form. And so saying He manifested Vibhuti (*holy ash*) in handfuls and scattered it in all directions in the room where they were seated. On another occasion, it was a Thursday, the day of the worship of the Guru, a group of people who had come to worship Sathya-narayana pleaded for proof that He was one and

the same Sai Baba of Shirdi. Baba produced pictures of Shirdi Sai Baba, Date fruits-which were the offerings made at the Temple of Shirdi as well as flowers, fruits, sugar candy and vibhuti. At another occasion He requested a devotee to photograph Him and a stone that was near Him at his feet. In the developed picture, the stone that was at Baba's feet had become the statue of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba. The Isha Upanishad explains the Brahman in all thus :

*"Filled with Brahman are the things we see,
Filled with Brahman are the things we see not,
From out of Brahman floweth all that is:
From Brahman all -yet is He still the same.
Om ... Peace-peace-peace."*

"Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only install, in the altar of your heart, steady faith in My Divinity, you can win a vision of My Reality. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the Bliss of that Vision of the Sarvadaivathwaswaroopam (*The Form which is all Forms of all Gods*) now, in this life itself."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

He acknowledged Himself to be an Avatar at the age of forty eight. He emphasised that He was Rama in the Treta Yuga, Krishna in the Dwapara Yuga and Sai Baba in the Kali Yuga. He has assured that in this Yuga the best form of worship to wash away all the sins and bring the devotee close to God is through Namasmaran (*repetition of the Lord's Name*), The worship need not be elaborate or accompanied by chantings of Mantras, it is the pure heart's yearning that is required to bring the Lord to you. He further states that pomp has no place in the worship of the Lord. Closeness in the heart and purity of thought, word, and deed are what required. The realisation of the self is made possible and so the realisation of God to finally come to know that the Lord and the devotee are one, inseparable entities. The realisation of this Truth will confer upon all, the eternal bliss and joy. This soul which has taken so many births will be helped at this birth when one expands oneself in this experience.

As a child Sathyanarayana soon became the pet of the entire village. He was always meticulously clean and delighted in marking his forehead with vibhuti and kumkum everyday. He insisted on the marks being renewed as and when they wore off. He stopped putting on the sacred ash only when his own hands started pouring them out in profusion. Soon he was being treated as a Divine Avatar and when He used to be taken out in procession as the Mother during Dasera Festival resplendent in red robe, kumkum used to shower from out of his forehead on all sides. These phenomena he controlled and displayed at his own Will. He would never retaliate to bullying by the other children, always spoke the truth and even would not eat any kind of meat. He infact used to influence the elders also to refrain from having meat. These qualities which were so much appreciated by all earned him the names "Brahmana Baludu" (*The Brahmin Child*), and "Brahmajnani" (*The enlightened One*). He would often go to his grandparents house for his meals who brimmed with pride and joy in Him. Another house he treated as his own and would always go for food was that of the village Karnam's house (*The village headman*). Subbamma was Brahmin lady and though it was not allowed for one belonging to any other caste to be fed in a Brahmin house, specially then, with no thought of a social reform but with the love for the little Sathya started in her own humble way and was soon called the 'mother' of Sathya just as Yashoda was called in the lifetime of Sri Krishna.

"Man is immortal; dust he is and to dust returneth. But, in him, there shines Atma, as a spark of the immortal Flame. This is not a term of flattery invented by the vedantists. The Atma is the source, the sustenance of every being. It is the one and only Source, Substance and Sustenance. The Atma is God; the particular is the Universal, no less. Therefore recognise in each man, a brother, the child of God, and ignore all limiting thoughts and prejudices based on status, colour, class, nativity and caste.

The spirit of renunciation, adherence to virtue, the

eagerness to co-operate, the sense of kinship - these are the characteristic signs of man. The brotherhood of man can be translated into life, only on the basis of the Atmic Vision. All men thirst for peace, happiness and bliss. They are the precious heritage which is their right, for they are God's treasure. They can be earned only by recognising the bond that knits man to man. All men are of one lineage; they are of Divine lineage. All men are cells in the One Divine Organism, in the Divine Body. That should be your Faith, your Fortune, your Part, your Fulness. Awareness of this alone gives you the right to call yourself a man. Learn to live as men.

This is the Sadhana. This is the Message of Sai."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



WHO IS SAI BABA?

"Be wherever you like, do whatever you choose, remember this well that all what you do is known to me. I am the inner ruler of all and seated in their hearts. I envelope all the creatures, the movable and immovable world. I am the controller - the wire puller of the show of this universe. I am the mother - origin of all beings. The harmony of the three Gunas, the Propeller of all Senses, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Nothing will harm who turns His attention towards me, but Maya will lash or whip Him who forgets me."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, now a God to millions declared in his 14th year in 1940 that he was *Sai Baba*. Who was this Sai Baba?

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, has said that this body He has taken is the second of a Trinity of births He would be taking for the guidance and salvation of humanity, in this Kali Yuga. He, in the first body as Shirdi Sai had appeared around 1858 in the hamlet of Shirdi in North India as a poor, wandering fakir.

Sai Baba in Shirdi

No one knew the origin or the birth of Sai Baba. He, himself had been illusive about revealing about Himself, when pressed too much, He said He came from Naurangabad and He was in His mama's house and His name was Nasatya, and His Guru was Venkusa. His creed He said was Kabir and His cast was

Parvardigar(*God*). It seemed that He had spent His early years with His Guru and then having been left alone came looking for His Guru's Samadhi. He was first seen in Shirdi under a Neem Tree around the time when He was about 17 years of age by the mother of Nana Chopdar a later devotee of Baba's in Shirdi.

He had lived there for a few years unobtrusively near the Neem tree, in from in Sathe's wada the only pilgrims' rest available there. He returned in 1858, a few years later, with the marriage Party of Chand Patil, a Muslim who revered Him when he realised the Divinity that was inherent in Him. Sai Baba lived in Shirdi for 60 years till His Mahasamadhi in 1918.

As people tend to see things and people superficially it is difficult for them to realise the greatness of a person. Sai Baba of Shirdi was considered by many at first contact as a mad fakir who lived year after year in a worn out and dilapidated Mosque at Shirdi, wearing a worn out Kafni. He also added fuel to fire by asking for Dakshina from people who went to see him. But those who came to know Him ultimately regarded Him then and now as God incarnate.

The proof requested.

Prof. G.C. Narke in the book "Devotees' Experiences" by B V Narasimhaswamy says "I have placed Sai Baba amongst the household Gods we worship daily at home. Sai Baba is God not an ordinary Satpurusha. My father-in-law, Mr Buti, my wife and my mother were all great devotees of Sai Baba and worshipped Him as God.

At an Arati, in my early visit, Sai Baba was in a towering passion. He fumed, cursed and threatened for no visible cause.

I doubted if He was a mad man. That was a passing thought. The Arati was completed in the usual way. In the afternoon (of that day) I went and massaged His feet and legs. Then He stroked my head and said, "I am not mad", Lo! He is seeing my heart. Nothing is concealed from Him. He is my Antarayami the inner soul of my soul, I thought. Thence forward numerous instances occurred in my own experience of His Antarayamitwa. When he talked, He spoke as one seated in my heart, knowing all its thoughts and all its wishes etc. This God within. I had no hesitation in deciding that He was God. I tested Him at times. Each test produced the same conviction that He was all knowing and able to mould all things to His Will".

It was definite that all those who came to see a mad man or a saint, when they left, were convinced that they have come into contact with God incarnate. Many had been the instances when He seemed to know the innermost thoughts of everybody, relieved their wants and brought comforts to all. Though He seemed confined to His Form in many ways He seemed to convince His devotees of His Divine Nature and attributes.

Sai Baba in Parthi

In his 14th year on the 23rd May 1940, Sathyanarayana as Sri Sathya Sai Baba was then called, gathered the members of his family around him and materialised from thin air sugar candy and flowers for all to see and distributed to all present. Pedda Venkappa Raju, the father who was away from home at that time was informed of the phenomenal happenings at home. Horrified he returned home suspecting that his son was possessed by a spirit. He armed Himself with a stick and asked the question "What are You?". Promptly answered the fourteen year old Sathyanarayana "I AM SAI BABA".

His elder brother now went close to him and asked him "what do you mean by Sai Baba?" Patiently the

answer came "Your Venkavadhootha prayed that I be born in your family; so I came".

Venkavadhootha was the ancestral sage of the Raju family and was looked upon as Guru by hundreds of villages around the little hamlet of Puttaparthi in the Andhra Pradesh of South India. He ended his days at Huseinpura in the Mysore State where his Samadhi is situated.

His father asked "What are we to do with you?" Came the reply *"WORSHIP ME EVERY THURSDAY AND KEEP YOUR MINDS AND HOUSES PURE"*.

Before His Mahasamadhi Sai Baba of Shirdi revealed to His close devotees that He would return to them eight years later.

Kakasaheb Dixit to whom it was revealed could not understand the implication of the revelation at that time. Later in 1917 when a young lady who had lost four children approached Baba and asked Him permission to stay with him in Shirdi for good, he had said, "Not now. When I come again you will meet Me in Andhra and be with Me". Years later the same lady hearing of a boy calling himself "Sai Baba" arrived at Puttaparthi. Convinced it was the same Guru, being accepted she stayed on with Sai Baba till the end of her days.

Prema Sai Baba

This Sai Avatar will take on three Forms spanning the periods of three centuries has stated Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The first Sai at Shirdi was the incarnation of Lord Shiva; the second incarnation at Parthi has in it the attributes of Shiva and Shakti; and the third Form as Prema Sai will be the incarnation of the powers of Shakti. When He leaves this body, the next

body to be taken by the One will be born in the Mandaya District of Karnataka State has declared Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He would be called by the Name Prema Sai Baba and His Birth will be heralded as the re-birth of Sathya Sai, has further assured Sai Baba to His devotees.

Who is Sai Baba and is Sai Baba an Avatar of Godhead?

These are questions asked by many who had heard, seen and come into contact with Sai Baba.

"If I had come amongst you as Narayana with four arms holding the conch, the wheel, the mace and lotus you would have kept me in a museum and charged a fee for those who seek Dharshan : If I had come as a mere Man, you would not have respected my teaching and followed it for your own good. So I have to be in this human form with super human wisdom and powers do not attempt to know me through external eyes. When you go to a temple and stand before the Image of God, you pray with closed eyes, don't you? Why? Because you feel that the inner eye of wisdom alone can reveal him to you. Therefore do not crave from me, but crave for me, and you will be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever object I give as a sign of Grace out of the fulness of Love" has stated Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

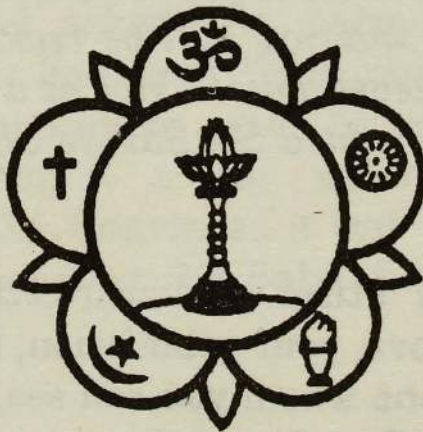
He further adds "I turn you towards the Divine, winning your confidence, your love, your submission, by being among you as one of yourselves, one whom you can see, listen to, speak to, touch and treat with devotion and reverence. My plan is to transmute you into seekers of Truth. I am present everywhere, at all times and My Will must prevail over every obstacle".

"I am aware of the past, present and future of your innermost thoughts and carefully guarded secrets. I am Sarvantharayami, Sarva Saktha and Sarvagnya. Nevertheless, I do not

manifest these powers in any capricious manner or for mere display, because I am an example and inspiration in whatever I do or omit to do”.

He continues time and again to stress on His Mission, not to publicise Himself, but to avail Himself for the needy, for the suffering, for the Sadhaks. He says “This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family the entire mankind, through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



*“nadi-madhyantan ananta-viryam
 ananta-bahum sasi-surya-netram
 pasyami tvam dipta-hutasa-vaktram
 sva-tejasa visvam idam tapantam.”*

- Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter XI)

“You are without origin, middle or end. Your Glory is unlimited. You have numberless arms, and the sun and the moon are Your eyes. I see You with blazing fire coming forth from your mouth, burning this entire Universe by Your own radiance”.

..... "Baba must have discovered that my subconscious had hooked up this particular lift, for the reason, that I myself had an unfulfilled hunger for this wish, deep within me! He decided to remove that pang at Sri Rangam on my 70th Birthday.

I was thrilled when I stood before the shrine and filled my eyes and my heart with the entrancing vision of the 20 foot idol, stretched on the coils of a seven-hooded serpent exuding captivating iconocharm. To my eyes, the Feet, the upraised soles were not of dark green stone as the rest of the Divine Body was. They were alabaster with a shade of blue. They were soft, tender, fair familiar, alive; they were Baba's I removed myself from the portals of the shrine with great reluctance.".....

- SRI N. KASTURI IN HIS BOOK "LOVING GOD."

DIVINITY REVEALED

"Why Fear When I am Here?"

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

It is not only the miraculous powers which revealed the Divinity of Bhagawan, but moreso the strength that He is to His devotees in times of calamities. The human life is governed by his acts of Karma in the past as well as the present life, says the Hindu Philosophy. Therefore to a certain extent troubles and tribulations would affect the life of man as much as the inevitable end to life, death. The law of karma rules the lives of all mankind say the Hindu scriptures. God works through laws in animate nature as well as inanimate nature. What we call as a moral law, or a natural law, or a karmic law according to Hindu conceptions be termed as an embodiment of God's Will. God is an indweller of all beings and as such our scriptures call Him *KARMADHYAKSA* - the supervisor of the law of karma. It is He that creates the world where each soul finds an environment suited to the tendencies it acquired in the previous lives and it is He who then helps the soul to overcome in this birth its ignorance and sin. However all conflicts and all differences between good and bad cease and all our sins melt away in the Grace of God. Great devotees of God though having to go through the same process of karmic laws never feel the hardships of their lot in life. In their overpowering love they forget all their difficulties.

To those who go to Him Bhagawan says, "Many of you come to Me with problems of health and mental worry of some sort or the other. They are mere baits by which you have been brought here, but the main purpose is that you may have the Grace and strengthen your faith in the Divine. Problems and worries are really to be welcomed as they teach you the lessons of humility and reverence. Running after external things produces all this discontent. That type of desire has no end. Once you become a



The crowds gather



Miracles of Sai

slave to the senses, they will not leave hold until your death, it is an unquenchable thirst. But I call you to Me and even grant worldly boons, so that you may turn Godwards. No Avatar has done like this before, going among the masses, counselling them, guiding them, consoling them, uplifting them, directing them along the path of Sathya (*Truth*), Dharma (*Righteousness*), Shanti (*Peace*) and Prema (*Love*).”

However first the devotee has to be impressed of the Divine Nature of the Avatar, to approach Him for the assistance to give which God comes down in human form. From a very young age, Sathya as Bhagawan was called in His young age, revealed mysterious and miraculous powers which were accepted surprisingly with very little excitement by His family and the villagers, who seemed almost to have taken it for granted that it should come naturally to Him. Soon it became a daily occurrence and it led from the simple manifestations of sweets, fruits and articles from thin air to the day at school, when a teacher who was always hard on the students, punished Sathya purposely without cause, got stuck to his chair while little Sathya was made to stand on the bench. It was only when he let off Sathya from the unfair punishment, as advised by a teacher who believed in the Divine nature of Sathya, was he able to extricate himself from the chair.

Many had been the times also when Sathya would race up the hill to the wish fulfilling tree (*Kalpatharu*), leaving His friends and devotees far behind to give a vision of radiance from up the hill. Manifestation of kumkum from His forehead and vibhuti from his hands in profusion during the Dasera festival became wonderous events which brought in many thousands to the remote village of Puttaparthi. The healing powers of the vibhuti curing many a disease when taken with faith not only physically but also spiritually brought in the sadhak on the pathway to selfrealisation. Sri N. Kasturi, the author of Bhagawan's life story in "Sathyam Shivam Sundaram" gives many such instances. In the book of his own experience with Bhagawan in his book "Living God" has recorded these events during Dasera thus:

“Those days, Dasera was celebrated at the Nilayam itself. Feminine participation was more evident and enthusiastic than masculine, for Dasera is dedicated to the worship of the mother, who fosters, blesses and educates Her children. Everyday, morning as well as evening, women sat in rows inside the Prayer Hall, each with a picture of Baba placed in front of her, and, reciting aloud the 1008 names of the Mother in her diverse incarnations. They offered Puja with red kumkum powder to Baba, the triune embodiment of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. While widows were not allowed to participate in such worship everywhere in the Motherland, Baba opened the doors to them also. His compassion refused to ostracise the unfortunates. Baba came into the Hall towards the close of the Puja and walked between the rows, giving everyone a moment to contact the Lotus Feet as they halted before each. The kumkum heaps charged with the sanctifying touch of the picture, and the vibrations of devotion were collected and preserved, until the tenth and final day of Dasera, when they were poured by Baba Himself on the Silver Idol of the Sai Baba of Shirdi, which officiated that day as the silent symbol of Swami Himself.

“In the evenings, Baba moved in procession through the streets of Puttaparthi village, even after the entry into Prashanthi Nilayam. He sat on a jeep decorated by devout hands differently on different days, as Hamsa or Garuda, chariot or vimana or palanquin. The village roads were too narrow to allow the huge mass of devotees to manoeuvre quickly along and so, Baba later curtailed the event to one day, the tenth, the Bhajans the nadaswaram, bagpipes, kettledrums and firework displays rendered the event a fantastic folk festival. The greatest source of joy was, ofcourse, the emergence from the Divine Brow of Vibhuthi or Kumkum or flashes of solar light. “Kailas Vibhuthi” - the villagers named it, since in the ancient texts, God Siva who dwelt on the Kailas Peak wore on His Divine Brow, thick broad lines of Ash and had the Ash all over His Body.”

“One day, when I got the chance to tell Him the name which was current among us for the vibhuthi, He explained, “No! Siva has on His Body the ashes He collects from the cremation ground,

when the body of the good and holy person is burnt on the pyre. Shall I give you some? A very pious sadhak has died and his body is being consigned on the bank of the Ganga to flames." With these words, He waved His palm and a few ounces of white ash were there. When He poured it into my cupped palm, I feared my skin would be scalded. It was so hot: "This is the Ash that Siva Blesses" He said."

"The Dasera festival provided ten days of exquisite ecstasy for the devotees. We were only a few hundreds, enough to fill the Prayer Hall of the Nilayam. As at the old Mandiram here too, we were given breakfast, lunch and dinner on all days and so, the entire day could be spent in penitence and prayer. One day was set aside for the children of the devotees. They sang Bhajans and enacted plays based on the epics. Baba fondled the participants, encouraged the kids to recite and regale. Another day, the school children from the village, the Pandari Bhajan Groups, and boys from the Sathya Sai Baba High School, run by the Anatapur District Board at Bukkapatnam provided a programme of torchlight drill, lazeem exercise etc. A day was set aside for social service - cleaning roads and lanes, feeding the poor, distributing clothes to the indigent and speeches from those who had experiences in service activities."

"The children's Day celebrated since 1945 has blossomed into Bala Vikas classes all over the world and the "Education of Children in Human Values" that is now being increasingly adopted in most States of India. The Social Service Day has since expanded into the formation of the Seva Dal, about 30,000 men and an equal number of women, well-trained and lovingly led, to offer services of various types to fellow beings."

"The few Pandits who found their way to Puttaparthi were given a chance to expound passages from Scriptures, and blessed by Baba with traditional gifts. The ninth day of Dasera is marked by Saraswathi Puja, worship of the Goddess of learning. That day, in the evening, Telugu and Sanskrit scholars, including the elder brother of Baba, Vidwan Seshama Raju, read and explained the

poems they had composed on Baba and the blessings they had received from Him. I also ventured to read a verse or two each year in English, in the presence of the "Kaveenaam Kavi", the Poet of Poets. Musicians too arrived in order to be in the Holy Presence and they were allowed to offer their talents to the Lord."

It was Dasera of 1984 when my family had gone to Puttaparthi. Coming from a place that had a very pleasant weather my husband found it very difficult to bear the heat still being a doubter he told a friend why Baba being God can't He make the weather bearable for His devotees instead of making them suffer like this. He ended up his conversation saying that he would really start believing in Him if Baba would only bring some rain that day. The listeners were horrified to hear my husband challenging like this, however we retired for the afternoon rest. The sky was clear and the sun was scorching. But within the hour dark clouds seem to come from nowhere to crowd the skies, the wind started blowing cold and then started the showers with thunder and all. We all started to laugh at the frolic of Bhagawan. Infact the evening Dharshan was ruined for His devotees!

Many had been such incidents where Bhagawan had shown His omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. The miracles of Sai are innumerable. He has made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk. Many are the diseases that have been cured directly and through the manifested vibhuthi. However, with time, just how He introduced His miraculous powers one by one since Birth to the vibhuthi Abhishek and the Lingodbhava, they began to get less in importance in the Mission of Bhagawan in His later years. From happening at only one place now devotees started experiencing His Grace in their homes, in their shrines miles away, overseas all over the world. "These miracles, this show of power are only My visiting cards", He asserts.

"You elaborate in your lectures the unique powers of Sai, the incidents that are described as "miracles". Do not exaggerate their significance; the most significant and important power is, let

Me tell you, My Prema. I may turn the sky into earth, or earth into sky; but that is not the sign of Divine Might. It is the Prema; the sahana; effective universal, ever present; that is the unique sign." He sets His devotees on the road to progress towards God, towards self realisation, changing the manava (*man*) to Madhava (*God*). He shows it not as a separate exercise but which is incorporated into the normal life of man correcting him in his day to day life and leading the way.

To His devotees He says : "Of what avail is it, if you simply worship My Name and Form, without attempting to cultivate the samathwa (*equal love for all*) that I have, My Shanthi (*unruffled equanimity*), My Prema (*Love*), My Sahana (*Patience and Fortitude*), My Ananda (*Ever-blissful Nature*)? You can observe Me and My activities; note how I adhere to righteousness, moral order, truth and universal compassion. That is what I desire you to learn from Me."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



MIRACLES OF SAI

“My shakthi, my power, my mystery can never be understood, whoever may try, for however long a period, by whatever means. Baba is beyond the keenest intellect, the sharpest brain so do not try to delve into me; develop faith and veneration and derive joy through prema (love). That is the utmost you can do; do that and benefit how can the limited know the depth of the unlimited? How can the ant delve into the mountain? It is beyond you to know how or why I create things in my hand”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Sai Baba in His previous form as Shirdi Sai and in the present form as Sathya Sai possesses the miraculous characteristics, powers and glory of a full Avatar of God, the criteria for which have been laid down in the Vedhas and the Bhagavad Gita. Sai Baba's omnipresence and omnipotence have baffled many scientists physical as well as behavioural, not to talk of the common man, who is the main beneficiary throughout the world. It is a common experience felt and enjoyed by millions of Indians, Easterners and Westerners who have had His Dharshan in person or in dreams and derived great solace, cures, blessings or Grace from Him. They received assurance through the manifestations of Vibuti (Holy Ash) Kumkum (auspicious red powder) and even Amrit (honey) from the pictures of Bhagawan and even their own Gods proving to them that He exists in All and hears all prayers addressed to God in whatever Form.

Sai Baba had always had a very charismatic personality. Though in His previous body He had shown violent temper many

a time, He sets an example of a cultured person. He is very gentle in speech and behaviour though He is known to be harsh to devotees to bring them back to the right path as and when they stray.

“I never knew that I was ever angry with My devotees; that if mothers kicked their children and if the sea turned, back the rivers, that I will neglect the devotees welfare; I, the slave of My devotees, always stood by them and responded to them whenever they called upon ME and I always longed for their love”, has stated Sri Sai Baba in Shirdi.

In Shirdi living in a Masjid calling it Dwarakamayi, Sai Baba used to keep small earthen lamps burning around the Masjid and the Temple. He used to get the oil from the oil merchants of the village. However, they were influenced one day by a non believer not to give oil to Baba. “Can’t he burn the lamps without oil” he sneered; “with all the powers, with all Divine attributes that his devotees claimed he had?” and tried quite successfully to influence all oil merchants.

Baba was unperturbed. When the time came to burn the lamps He as usual got the lamps and the wicks ready. The oil mongers and the non believer with his supporters came to the Masjid at that time to watch what Baba would do were waiting curiously. Baba put a little water into the empty oil can shook it and drank the water then refilled the can again with water. With this water He went around filling in the lamps. Then He lit the wicks. To the amazement and dismay of the merchants.

Repented their folly at having dared Baba and continued to supply the Masjid with oil for the rest of the life of Sri Sai Baba in Shirdi.

....”But those who profess to have understood ME,

the Scholars, the Yogis, the Pundits, the Jnanis, all of them are aware only of the least important. The casual external manifestation of an infinitesimal part of that power, namely, the "Miracles". They have not desired to contact the source of all power and all wisdom. They are satisfied when they secure a chance to exhibit their book learning and parade their scholarship in Vedic lure, not realising the person from whom the Vedas emanated is in their midst for their Sake. This has been the case in all Ages, people may be very near (*physically*) to the Avatar but they live out their lives unaware of their fortune, but exaggerate the role of Miracles, which are as trivial when compared to My Glory and Majesty, as a mosquito is in size and strength to the elephant upon which it squats. Therefore, when you speak about these "Miracles" I laugh within myself out of pity, that you allow yourself so easily to lose the precious awareness of My Reality".

"I shall tell you why I give those rings, talismans rosaries etc. It is to mark the bond between Me and those to whom they are given. When calamity befalls them, the article comes to Me in a flash taking from Me the remedial Grace of protection. That Grace is available to all who call on me in any Name or Form, not merely to those who wear those gifts. Love is the bond that wins Grace. Consider the meaning of the word "Sai Baba" "SA" means "Divine" "AI" or "AYI" means Mother and "BABA" means Father, just as the name "Sambasiva" also means Divine Mother and Father. Your physical parents might cultivate love with selfishness, but the Sai Baba "Mother and Father" shower of affection or reprimands only for leading you towards victory in the struggle for self realisation" Sai Baba has explained further in Parthi.

It is a very interesting incident of how Baba had resurrected a westerner called Walter Cowan from death in Bangalore. The story goes as follows:

Elsie and Walter Cowan arrived in Madras on 23rd December 1971 and came to the building where Baba was

holding a conference with some 3000 Presidents of His Seva Samithis. Baba offered a warm and affectionate greeting and as Walter Cowan was not feeling well, the ushers had provided chairs as soon as they arrived.

On the morning of 25th December, news quickly spread that an elderly American had a fatal heart attack and had passed away. Elsie Cowan prayed to Sathya Sai Baba for help and with great self control and recollection of human mortality, ended the prayer with "let God's will be done". With the help of Mr & Mrs. Ratan Lal who were staying next door, Elsie Cowan summoned the room boy and Walter Cowan was lifted from the floor to the bed. They felt he was life less, however the ambulance was called and Cowan was taken to the hospital. By 7 a.m. Elsie went to Baba's residence to tell Him of the news and ask for His advice and help. Baba said He would visit the Hospital by 10 a.m.

At 10 a.m. when Elsie and Mrs. Ratan Lal went to the hospital they found that Baba had already come and left and that now Walter Cowan was alive.

On the arrival of the body at the hospital, the doctor had declared that there was no sign of life on the patient and he had pronounced Cowan as dead. Cowan's ears and nose were covered with cotton wool and the body was covered with a sheet. It was then taken to an empty room and was left to lie there as was the hospital procedure. The doctor had then left the hospital on some professional duty and on his return he found while checking again on the dead patient, that he was now alive, with the heart beating and the cotton wool removed from the nostrils and the ears. The Doctor was told by the staff of the visit by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (*a man in orange robe*) to the patient in his absence and that the recovery was soon after that. The doctor was unable to explain the situation.

Though Walter Cowan had regained life, still the death certificate was investigated and was found to be correct. This was done for the interest of the people who had never seen Baba and who might have a very limited knowledge of Him. But medical testimony is not a factor of any importance for the devotees of Bhagawan Baba. Dr. Gnaneswaran of Bangalore was the doctor who has attended on Mr. Walter Cowan. He went through Walter Cowan's medical history with specific laboratory tests, showing severe diabetes of long standing and various other disease conditions. Now he re-checked the same tests with his own laboratory test on the revival of Mr. Cowan. He could scarcely believe the results of the Lab tests. Not only were there no symptoms of any of the diseases but he seemed to be normal and healthy.

The extra ordinary fact seemed to be that, of the total organisms that were of Walter Cowan when he died, the only entity that returned to life was Walter himself. Walter's various diseases died with him, but the diseases were not re-born.

Walter was a champion warrer but after the above event Walter was calm, free of worry and appeared as though the experience had brought about a changed mind. When he was lying as dead in the hospital, in his consciousness he could see Baba sitting there beside him he said in a strange experience Walter left his body as in death Baba was there beside him. Together they went to a place, and there appeared to be a court of law there. There was a panel of individuals and a presiding chairman. This chairman was very kind in appearance and voice. He called for the Register relating to Walter Cowan, and the records were produced and they were read in the various languages appropriate to the time and place of their recording.

The various languages were unintelligible to Walter, he was not aware that recitation referred to him. At some

point, in the recitation they started to translate. Walter then realised that it was himself who was the subject of the recitation. He was amazed to hear that he had played roles through the ages as an Emperor as a spiritual leader, dedicated always to the good of the people. At the end of the recital, Baba addressed the panel and the chairman, saying that He had a role for Walter, and that Walter should be released from death into the care of Baba. When he recovered he asked Baba about his experience. He was told that it was not an illusion but an experience. In one of his discourses in 1971 at Prashanthi Nilayam Baba said that the mind plays many tricks with you, the chief of which is to foster the ego and hide the Prompter and the Power within. One has to fight these instincts and win over the mind to subdue the ego and act as per the God's will.

Miracles are part and parcel of most of the Religions of the world. Curing of the diseases, manifestation of the form at the call of Bhakta (*devotee*), manifestation of worldly objects created from the five elements in an instant and even bringing back to life the dead are some of the miracles commonly found in all religions and accepted by the followers as God's grace. But the biggest miracle of all is that what takes place within the self of the recipient of the benefits of the miracles. The atheist begins his journey towards belief and Faith, the bad turns to good and mostly the life style changes for the better. Miracles, are what God has made available for man to have Faith or begin to have Faith and confidence in God. It is the anchor of the ship that when it reaches its destination drops to secure itself there and remain at the journey's end.

“If I delayed an instant, then this man would have indeed perished. The mad man has seized with his hands his very throat. But I extricated him. What is to be done? If I do not save My own children, who else will?”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

*“manyase yadi tac chakyam
maya drastum iti prabho
yogesvara tato me tvam
darsayatmanam avyayam.”*

Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter XI)

“If you think I am able to behold your cosmic Form, O my Lord, O master of all mystic power, then kindly show me that unlimited Universal Self.”

*“Sri - bhagawan uvaca
pasya me partha rupani
sataso tha sahasrasa
nana-vidhani divyani
nana-varnakrtini ca.”*

Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter XI)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said : My dear Arjuna, O son of Prtha, see now My opulences, hundreds of thousands of varied Divine and multicoloured forms.”

THE DIVINE MIGHT

*"Sai is the Journey's End, whichever path You tread.
He is The Guide, The Goal, The God."*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

Having chosen the remote hamlet of Puttaparthi in the depths of Andhra Pradesh for His Birth Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai declared to His devotees then, that one day the whole world will come to this little hamlet which will become a centre for all Religions studies and inquiries.

Unlike Shirdi Sai, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from a very early age started his travels outside Puttaparthi with the Pandari Bhajan Group, to bring to mind the Name and Glory of God and later to give his personal blessings and teachings to His devotees.

Sri N. Kasturi, who took up the great task of bringing to book the Leelas, Mahimas and Upadesh of our Bhagawan says thus in "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" (part 2) the recording of Bhagawan's life as the sub stratum, the substance; the separate and the sum, the Sath; the *SATHYAM*; as the awareness, the activity, the consciousness, feeling, the willing and the doing, the chith; the *SIVAM*; as the light, the splendour, the harmony, the melody, the Ananda, the *SUNDARAM* says as follows :

Many a Sadhaka and seeker has announced the deep desire that he should remain an ant, tasting the sugar, that is God, grain by grain; he does not like to become the sugar, which does not know how to taste itself. When someone prayed to Baba that He reduce the number of days when He is away from the Prashanthi Nilayam on tour, He replied, 'Yes; you think it is more appropriate that the ants come to the sugar but, consider this; how can the poor, the

sick, the aged, the infirm, for whom I have come, travel to Prashanthi Nilayam? I must go near them and speak to them, so that they may make their own homes and hearts the Nilayams of Prasanthi!". This then is the reason why Baba moves, wherever Mercy takes Him and Agony draws Him.

Not only does Bhagawan visits houses and towns, Schools and Temples. He also visits the damned, the guilt the sick in hospitals and in prisons. He is found in places of far distances giving solace to his devotees whenever he hears the call. N. Kasturi gives many an illustrations in his narration of Bhagawan's life story, here are some narrated incidents.

"Charles Penn of Los Angeles is Captain in the Civil Air Patrol, attached to the U.S. Air Force. This is a voluntary organisation formed for the express purpose of rescuing pilots who have had 'forced landings'. During the air search for lost flyers, Penn saw Baba sitting beside him, and knew that he was directed by Baba. "Penn! You need not look out! I shall look for you" were the words he heard, words which convinced him that he is but an instrument in His Hands. "This gave me a feeling of fearlessness in the hailstorm across the mountain peaks", he says. "Petrol splashed across the wind screen but I saw Him beside me and so calm and collected I brought my plane down and, after hurried repair, went up again."

Hasn't Baba always told us that distance is no bar in His way. If any one could have faith and love, He is always with them to take care of them. "Here, 10,000 miles away" writes Hilda Charlton from New York, "a person who has never met Baba in the physical form is healed and is feeling Baba's Presence always with her!". Baba has no stranger; He is in every one, Many Simpson was unsuccessfully operated twice for blood clots in the lungs and for congested, enlarged breathing tubes. The Doctor told her daughter when she was taken home, "I am sorry your mother is leaving the Hospital worse than when she entered." But she had the luck to know of Baba and to get a picture of Baba as well as

some Vibhuthi. When she prayed, Baba appeared before her and filled her with a vibrant thrill of well being. Within a few days, the Doctor said, "I cannot believe this; this improvement is a miracle".

Omnipresence

Whenever Baba wills or our wills contact His Will, the laws of nature are transcended; the unpredictable alone can then be predicted. A three year old boy was thrown to a distance of 20 feet by a Staff car, in Kharagpur (*West Bengal*); there was bleeding all over the body. He was conveyed to the K G Hospital. When he regained consciousness, he told the Doctor, "Do not fear, Doctor! Sai Baba lifted me up. He held me by the hand!". There was no fracture, no wound. He was discharged on the third day.

An officer of the Hindustan Aeronautics at Bangalore was admitted into Hospital with severe Thrombo-phlebitis with pulmonary embolism and probable pulmonary tuberculosis. His condition became so serious, that the oxygen tubes were taken away. The kith and kin were waiting outside the window, standing in the corridor. He saw Baba standing by the side of the bed; He heard Baba say, "Do not be afraid; you will be cured and you will be a new man". From that moment, improvement started. The doctors of the Victoria Hospital wondered! Later, when he was called in by Baba at Prashanthi Nilayam, Baba said, "So, you have come re-born!".

The rustling of Baba's silken gown, the touch of His smooth soft hair, the faint foot fall of His light lovely feet, the silver voice, the flash of lightening from those eyes, the sacred fragrance of His presence - these have served to indicate to many that Baba has come to heal and hearten.

Many has he blessed with His Grace, His Vision that glories of Bhagawan began to spread even as He was small which reached

its peak at the beginning of His momentous declaration in Bombay at the First World Conference held on 17th May 1968. He declared - "This is a human form, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say all the Names and Forms ascribed by man to God are manifest"..... He also has said to those who try to analyse without success - "My Shakthi, My Power, My Mystery can never be understood, whoever may try for whatever long a period, by whatever means. Baba is beyond the keenest intellect, the sharpest brain So do not try to delve into ME; develop Faith and veneration and derive Joy through Prema. That is the utmost you can do; do that and benefit".

Though He never asked for publicity or praise inevitably His fame began to spread. It is mainly the needs of the devotee that made Baba to go to Him or call for him so that he may get the peace or happiness he is striving and praying for. Though His physical body is at Prashanthi Nilayam creating for man what he craves for (*"I shall give you what you want, so that you may want what I have come to give"* - at Shirdi in His previous body) Bhagawan's Ashram extends its limits to the end of Universe having Him as the focal point, the Supreme Consciousness.

"I do not want the impression to gain ground that I desire this Name and this Form to be publicised. I have not come to get afoot a new cult. I do not want people to be misled on this point. I affirm that this Sai Form is the Form of all the various Names that man uses for the adoration of the Divine. So I am teaching that no distinction should be made between the Name - Rama, Krishna, Ishwara, Sai - for they are all My Names

Whom the muslims adore as Allah, whom the christians adore as Jehova, whom the saivaites adore as Sambhu, who grants in answer to their, several prayers, health, long life, prosperity and happiness to all, wherever they may be, He, the One God, is the God of all mankind. God is One and only One. Have this thought in your minds".

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

SAI'S NAME IS SPREAD

*"If a man sings earnestly my life and my deeds, him
I shall beset in front and back and on all sides"*

- BHAGAWAN SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

A few years before Mahasamadhi, Sai Baba of Shirdi had predicted that He will speak through His Samadhi even after his passing away. This has come true as devotees experienced this Grace then and continue to do so even now (*in physical, moral, spiritual and hygienic conditions*). Within 15 years after His Samadhi, His fame has spread far and wide throughout the country. Now it has become rare to meet a man who has not heard of Him.

Sai Baba never left the limits of the village of Shirdi in His 60 years of habitation there at, other than to visit Rahata in the South and Neemgaon in the North both villages about 3 miles from Shirdi. Therefore he was hardly known to anyone beyond these limits personally. The people who revered Him then were people from these near areas. Around 1892 a devotee called Nana Saheb Chandorkar came into contact and experienced the Grace of Sai Baba and brought in Das Ganu Maharaj for His Dharshan. The former by his talks and the latter by his songs began to spread the fame of Sai Baba in the Konkan and Bombay Presidency. Shirdi became a place of pilgrimage and devotees started flocking in to see Sai Baba and receive His Grace. Many started writing on the life and Leelas of Shirdi Sai thus making the knowledge of Sai available to all to receive His Grace.

In 1910, Shri Anna Saheb Dabholkar came to Shirdi from Bandra where he was posted as a Residence Magistrate to have the Dharshan of Sai Baba for the first time. On retiring from service in 1916, he got a temporary government job of a short duration and thereafter came to Shirdi to serve Baba till His Mahasamadhi in 1918. After that he managed Sai Baba's Shirdi Samastan till his death in 1929. He was the author of "Sai Satcharita" (*in Marathi*) which gives the teachings and Leelas of Shirdi Sai Baba and this is how he relates his first experience of Baba in that book".

"After alighting from the Tonga (*in 1910*) I was anxious to have Darshan, when the great devotee, Tatyasaheb Noolkar, returning from the Masjid said, "Sai Baba is at the corner of the Wada, first get the preliminary Darshan and then, after bath, see Him at leisure". Hearing this I ran and prostrated before Baba and then my joy knew no bounds. I found more than what Nana Chandorkar had told me. All my senses were satisfied and I forgot thirst and hunger. The moment I touched Sai Baba's feet, I began a new lease of life. I felt myself much obliged to those who spurred and helped me to get the Dharshan and I considered them as my real relatives. I cannot repay their debt. I only remember them and prostrate (*mentally*) before them. The peculiarity of Sai Baba's Dharshan, as I found it, is that by His Dharshan our thoughts are changed, the force of previous actions is abated and gradually non attachment or dispassion towards worldly objects grows up. It is by the merit of actions in many births that such Dharshan is got and if only you see Sai Baba, really all the world becomes or assumes the form of Sai Baba".

Soon, inspired by what he saw and felt, Anna Saheb Dabholkar wanted to write the life of Sai. However, he knew he had to get Baba's permission to take notes and records the daily happenings in Shirdi and abouts with a view to writing Baba's life story. Hemadpant (*the name given to him by Sai Baba*) in his book "Sai Satcharita" (*translated into English by Mr. N.V. Gunaji in 1944*) records Sai's blessings thus:

“When Sai Baba heard this request, He was moved and blessed me by giving His Udi (*sacred ashes*) and placing His boon bestowing hand on my head. He said:

“Let him make a collection of stories and experiences, keep notes and memos; I will help him. He is only an outward instrument. I myself should write my life and satisfy the wishes of my devotees. He should get rid of his ego, place (*or surrender*) it at my feet. He who acts like this in life, his I help most. What of my life stories? I serve him in his house in all possible ways. When his ego is completely annihilated and there is left no trace of it, I myself shall enter into him and myself shall write my life. Hearing my stories and teachings will create faith in devotees’ hearts and they will easily get self realisation and bliss; let there be no insistence on esta-blishing one’s own view, no attempt to refuse other’s opinion no discussion of pros and cons of any object”.

However, even he was not made aware of the birth and childhood of Sri Sai Baba, who was very illusive of giving these details. Other than the brick that was always with him till his Mahasamadhi, He had no possessions or remembrances of his past before His appearance at Shirdi when he would have been in his early twenties.

One day in October 1918, during Baba’s absence in the Masjid the devotee who was sweeping the floor picked up this brick to sweep under. Inadvertently it slipped from his fingers fell on the floor and broke in to two. On his return finding the brick broken into two, He said “It is not the brick but My fate that is broken into pieces. It was My life long companion who has left Me today. With it I always meditated on the self and it was as dear to Me as My Life”. On 15th October on Vijayadasami Day, at about 12.30 p.m. Baba left his body. Next morning He had appeared before Daas Ganu (*a very close devotee*) at Pandharpur and said, “Oil mongers and grocers teased Me a lot, So I am leaving Shirdi. The Masjid has collapsed; I am going; I have come here to ask you to go there quickly and cover Me with Bhakkal flowers”. Daas Ganu immediately came to Shirdi and did as He was told.

Twenty two years later on the 20th of October 1940, Sathyanarayana Raju who had a few months ago left his home stating "Maya has gone. I have got My work. My devotees are waiting for Me," declared Himself as SAI BABA. When asked for proof that he was Sai Baba, He asked for some Jasmine flowers and threw a handful on the floor. The flowers arranged themselves in Telugu, so that all could read, the words "SAI BABA". He was born on the 23rd of November 1926, exactly 8 years after the Mahasamadhi of Shirdi Sai Baba, who had stated to Kaka Saheb Dixit that He will be re born eight years after His Samadhi.

"The secret of immortality is to be found in purification of the heart, in meditation, in realization of the identity of the Self within and Brahman without. For immortality is union with God".

- *KATHA UPANISHAD*



*Ye yatha mam prapadyante
 tanus tathaiva bhajamy aham
 Mama vartmanuvartante
 Manusyah Partha Sarvasah*

- Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter IV)

"As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. All men follow My path in all respects, son of Partha".

When the *DHARMA* of the *YUGA* is laid aside, To establish it a new through loving means; When the world is polluted by conflict and confusion. To restore the path of virtue and peace; When good men caught in cruel coils war To save them from pain and shame; When sacred texts are not grasped a right to proclaim the message they teach mankind To relieve the earth of the burden of vice, To fulfill the promise made in the *TRETA YUGA* Achyutha has incarnated on this earth, Vasudeva, Srihari, has come into the world.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE SAI MANDIR

"Believe me, though I pass away, my bones in my tomb will give you hope and confidence. Not only myself, but my tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who surrender themselves completely to Me and you will hear my bones speaking and discussing Your welfare"

- SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

The Mandir or The Temple is the place where Hindus go to see their God and pray to the personified form of God consecrated in the sacred sanctum sanctorum of the Temple. Many rituals have accompanied this worship in the Temple and even the buildings are made from simple to complex per vedic instructions and from small to large constructions. But now the word Mandir to mean Temple in the context as explained above, is used universally for all places of worship, practising any religion.

The Temple worship is also important in that it is a process through which, the mind which is like an unbridled horse is brought to alt and trained through the practice of prayers to get to a condition where the mind gets itself set to get into Union with God. For this the Faith that God resides in that Temple, in that manifestation is very essential for the Sadhak. It is a Faith that brings God who prevails throughout creation to that particular place to answer his prayers.

"The universe is the field where God sports. Be aware of this fact, every moment of consciousness, and there is nothing more you need for a happy existence. For, you will then contact God in every



The Muralidhar



The Saiva Dharma of Sai

thing, through every thought, at every place and at every moment. His Leela is evident in the smallest flower and the most distant star. The joy that you can derive from the contemplation of these proofs of providence is indescribable. Krishna has said in the Gita that He is ever by the side of the joyous being. Be joyful yourself and make others too share in that joy."

There are four stages in securing the Grace of the Lord, has continued to say Sri Sathya Sai Baba: attaching the mind to God, loving the form of God to which the mind has been attached, installing that Form in the heart and dedicating all that one has and does to the Form so installed. He who masters the mind can direct his life straight and steadily on the path of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Universal He can become an *AMRTHAPUTRA*, a child of Immortality.

The day after the Mahasamadhi of Baba, preparations for the usual morning Arati was not done. Sai Baba appeared in the dream of Shri Lakshman of Shirdi that morning, and drawing him by his hand had said "Get up soon, Bapusaheb (*who used to do usual Arati when Baba was embodied*) thinks that I am dead and so he won't come, you do the worship and Kakad (*morning*) Arati".

In 1914, the idea of Shri Gopal Rao Buty of Nagpur living in Shirdi, to build a Temple at Shirdi was blessed by Baba. But He also instructed Shri Gopal Rao to build a Wada with the Temple. A central room was also designed to instal a Muralidhar (*Lord Krishna with flute*) and the order was placed for the idol to be made. The Temple was completed under Baba's directions, in 1918, but before the Muralidhar statue was ready Baba attained Mahasamadi in that same year. Hence this Temple was made Shri Sai Baba's Samadhi Mandir by His devotees and He was enshrined in the central room. On the day of Dasar 1954 the present life size statue in Italian marble was prepared by late Balaji Vasant Talim in a fit manner. Baba appearing in his dream one day had said "Finish the

work of the statue, and you won't do any other statue in future" and soon after, Talim passed away. Years later his son Shri Harisha Balaji Talim prepared the statue of Baba to be placed in the Gurusthan at Shirdi.

The Alleviatory Mission of this Birth will be conducted in the place where this Body was born, has declared, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is remarkable that at first it was the statue of Muralidhar that was installed at the Paata Mandir in Puttaparthi, which subsequently got replaced by the statue of Shri Shirdi Sai in the Prashanti Mandir central enclave.

"Do you know our Dwarakamayi? This is our Dwarakamayi where you are sitting. She wards off all dangers and anxieties of the children who sit in her lap. This Masjid Mayee (*It's presiding deity*) is very merciful. She is the mother of the simple devotees who she will save in calamities" has said Baba of the Masjid where He lived in Shirdi.

Devotees came to see Sai Baba and received from Him the Blessings and Guidance they needed in their lives. They were all made welcome in His Mandir. The Dwarakamayi. Shirdi and it's surrounding villages had amongst them, Hindus and Muslims of almost equal proportions. Therefore the devotees who came to Baba looked to Him for Guidance as a Muslim Fakir with miraculous powers equalling that of God and as an Avatar of Godhead come amongst them for their salvation.

Thus the Masjid where Baba lived became a place revered by the Muslims and the Hindus alike. He would never reveal to them which religion He belonged to (*man made*) or to which He had any preference. He used to say "Rama (*the God of the Hindus*) and Rahim (*The God of the Mahomedans*) were one and the same; there was not the slightest difference between them; Then why should their devotees quarrel

among themselves? You ignorant folk, children, join hands and bring both the communities together, act savely and thus you will gain your object of National Unity. It is not good to dispute and argue. So don't argue, don't emmulate others. Always consider your interest and welfare".

After Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba built His Prashanthi Mandir for the devotees in the village of Puttaparthi, the only other construction of a Temple of another religion that he first built was that of a Mosque. It is very amazing tale how the muslims of the village were drawn to Baba.

For a long time a certain section of the village was avoided by the Muslims as the passers by were very seriously afflicted time and again for no known reason when they came to hear of Baba and His miraculous powers, though of a different religion, they were drawn to him to inquire and find out the reason for their suffering.

It had been the practice of the Muslims of the area to worship the "Pirs" At some point of the time or the other (*the historic reasons claim a war in that region to be the cause*) this practice had been stopped and the "Pirs" had been buried away for safety. So when approached by the troubled muslims Baba explained to them the reason and pointed out that they all had forgotten only too easily the worship of the revered "Pirs". He advised them to recover these which had been buried in that forbidden area and revive the worship of the "Pirs" again. He also told them the exact spot where the "Pirs" had been buried.

The indicated spot was dug and to their amazement they found the "Pirs" buried there just as predicted by Baba. However, everytime someone reached out to get them the "Pirs" seemed to evade their hands. Confused they went back to Baba and requested Him to accompany them to the hole.

He put His hand in and immediately the "Pirs" were in His Hands. They were then taken back to the Prashanthi Mandir as per Baba's instructions and were kept there under Baba's protection.

The worship of the "Pirs" was revived and once a year the "Pirs" were taken out around the Prashanthi Mandir in a procession to the chanting of the Quran till Baba deeming the time right, built a Hall next to the Mosque to keep these "Pirs" and transferred them and the worship to the Mosque.

Once a woman of Kayastha Prabhu community came to see Baba at Shirdi thinking that Baba was a Muslim. Baba told her that His was a pure Brahmin's Masjid and He would not allow any black Mohamedan to cast his shadow there; and for those who thought He was a Hindu Brahmin, He told that He belonged to a Muslim caste.

Thus He tried His utmost to make the Muslim and Hindu communities to revere God (*as seen by them in Him*) as only ONE. He succeeded in His endeavour to a great extent. Even after His demise when a quarrel broke out how the last rites should be done, His Teachings finally made them to come to an amicable agreement.

There is one festival in Shirdi that is celebrated together by the Hindus and the Muslims. It is the festival of Ram Navami and the celebration of a "Urus" (*a fair by the muslims*). The "Urus" was first originated in the year 1897 by a devotee Mr. Gopal Rao Gund as the celebration of the birth of a son through the blessings of Sai Baba. It went on year after year on Ram Navami Day as instructed by Baba till 1912 when Ram Navami too was decided to be celebrated along with the "Urus" by all devotees to Baba's great delight. This practice of both festivities being celebrated together went on every year from then onwards and it is still the practice at Shirdi.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that "God cannot be won by tricks or through short cuts. He can be won only by the hard way of struggle, detachment and tough discipline. Yearn desperately for Him, cling steadfastly to Him, fill your mind with His Form, His Majesty, His Glory and His Grace. Man is Divine; the Divine comes automatically into his consciousness. But the curtain of Maya prevents that thrilling contact, the illumining revelation. This Maya is also a Divine Artifice, it is a vehicle or Upadhi of the Lord. There is a story that, once the Lord got angry at Maya and wanted 'her' to disappear, for people are being led astray by her wiles. Maya said, it seems, "I am the veil that you wear; I am the fog that has arisen out of your own will; I am as wide spread as You are; I am wherever You are; give me a place where You are not; I shall take refuge there".

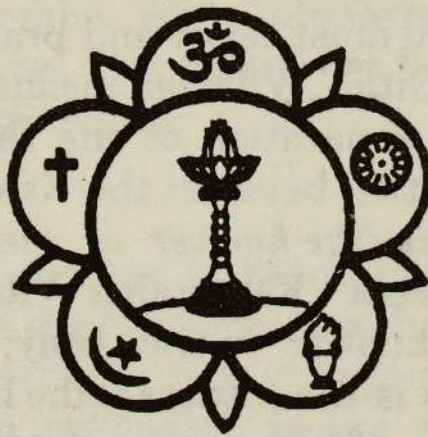
Each one of you can tear the veil by attaining the knowledge, of the Reality of God; or you prayer, the Lord Himself to lift it a little so that you may have a vision of His Reality. Move about in the world like an actor, but be conscious all the time that you are on the way home, to be with the Lord from whom you have come. Whenever the feeling that the drama is real enters the mind, deny it firmly. Do not identify yourself with the role that you play. Such identification will retard your progress. You must learn and practice what is called Vibhaga Yoga in the GitaVibhaga means division, differentiation, discrimination, separation of one thing from another. Understand the distinction between the Kshetra (*the body, the field*) and the Kshetrajna (*the knower of the body or the field*) that is what the Kshetra - Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga means. The Kshetrajna or the knower in this body, He who is aware of all that happens, who is the witness of the Dehi (*the embodied*) is above all the dualities of pleasure and pain, good and bad. The base metal of modern civilisation has got mixed up with the gold of Sanatana Dharma, and so, the Vibhaga has to be done in order to get the pure gold".

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has categorically stated that "When someone asks you in great earnestness where the Lord is to be

found, Do not dodge; Give them the answer that rises on to your tongue from your heart, direct him to Puttaparthi and invite him to share your joy”.

To everyone, specially the ones who want to experience God in human form, He extends an open invitation “Follow the Disciplines and test yourselves. Come and stay at Prashanthi Nilayam. Move with Me and experience My Company and conversation. Listen to Me and watch Me and then form your own conclusions. Dive in and know the depth, eat and know the taste. Patient and sincere discipline and spiritual practice are necessary to know God. If the spark of Faith grows into raging fire, then tend it carefully”.

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



THE SARVA DHARMA OF SAI

"All names are mine, all forms are mine."

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.

"The followers of each religion call upon the One God, who is Omnipresent and listens to their prayers, be they from whichever clime or clothed in whatever language. But it is the same God who confers upon all mankind, health, prosperity, peace and happiness. No religion has separate God showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from 'humanness' to Divinity, as he has already journeyed from 'animalness'. In this pilgrimage, he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to smoothen his path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, Divine personalities and Incarnations of God appear among men, and illumine the path. They move among the afflicted, the seekers who have lost their way or stayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *KARANA JANMAS*, for they assume the *JANMA* or birth for a *KARANA*, a cause or purpose. Such guides, exemplars and leaders, appear among all peoples and in all lands. They appear faith in higher ideals, and teach, as if their voice is the Voice of God, counselling from the heart", has explained Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the oneness of all Faiths and Religions.

Many have asked me why am I a Sai devotee, Many more had wondered what is wrong with the Religions that people now in millions are chosing Bhagawan's teachings to follow, Not only the powerful and the rich but also the simple and the poor. Bhagawan explains on the void that has been created by Religions in the life of man thus;

“Religions attempt to implant holy ideals in the heart of man, but man does not allow them to sprout and grow. His egoistic craving for power and Competitive success has, in most cases, persuaded him to use religion as an instrument of torture and persecution. Instead of uniting mankind in a common endeavour, it has become a system of walled enclosures guarded by hate and fanaticism. So each religion is an armed camp, sunk in self aggrandizement, trying to wean others into itself and preventing defections from itself. Religion, therefore, is being condemned as the root of chaos and conflict . In spite of great progress in many other areas of life, religious animosity is a flame even today, in many parts of the world. It has to be emphasised that religion is not the root cause of this state of affairs. The factional fights and fanatic hatred are due to the unruly ego that is given free play. Religion strives to destroy just this vicious tendency, so it has to be supported, not condemned.”

Bhagawan emphasis therefore the essentiality of the development of the human values inherent in man, Truth (*Sathya*) Righteousness (*Dharma*) Peace (*Shanthi*), Love (*Prema*) and non violence (*Ahimsa*) to develop the love towards all beings having the Divine spark as propounded by Hinduism; Compassion of Buddhism; conquering of the senses of Jainism; Righteous living of Islam; Wisdom of Zoroastrianism; and Love of Christianity.

The Sai Religion

“The Sai Religion, if the name of Religion in its literal sense of binding man to God is accepted, is the essence of all Faiths and Religions, including those like Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The motive behind the formation and propagation of all these different Faiths is the same. None had the design to divide, disturb or destroy. They attempted to do good, see good and be good. They sought to train the passions and the emotions, to educate the impulses and instincts and direct the faculty of reason to paths beneficial to the individual and society. They knew that the mind which is the breeding ground of desire and attachment, ambition and aspiration, has to be cleansed and properly

oriented. When a religion wants to extend its influence, it has to resort to vilification of other religions and exaggeration of its own excellence. Pomp and publicity become more important than practice and faith. But Sai wants the votaries of each religion must cultivate faith in its own excellence, and realise their validity by their own intense practice. That is the Sai Religion, the religion that feeds and fosters all religions and emphasises their common greatness. Take up *THIS* religion, boldly and joyfully”.

The important part of any religion is the following of rituals and festivals. It is through the rites and ceremonies which witnessed in childhood that a child gets his first impression of religion, but very few go beyond following these rituals automatically. However, ritual is the embodiments of faith and it binds together large groups of believers. We can see the proof of this every day in the large congregations of worshippers taking part in a common ritual in a Hindu Temple or a Catholic Church or a Buddhist Vihara or a Mohammedan Mosque. The rituals, home or temple, have social, historical and symbolic values and it can be called as Religious emotion craving for expression and finds it in the act of praying ritualistically. The worshipper also gets the satisfaction after going through the long ceremony that he has done something sacred. However it must be remembered that God answers only heartfelt, pure prayers with or without the pomp and pageantry of elaborate rituals. Kindness, compassion and Love can also be converted to ritualistic prayers by the worship of offering naivedya (*food offering to God*) to the poor, respect to elders and love to all fellow beings.

The Scriptures and Prayers

The shrine at home and the Temple are where God is remembered as residing to help devotees, therefore becomes sacred to the devotee and God, even in the serious search for self realisation.

*“With our ears may we hear what is good
With our eyes may we behold thy righteousness
Tranquil in body, may we who worship thee find*

OM peace peace peace.

OM Hail to the Supreme Self!"

“Man is composed of such elements as vital breath, deeds, thought, and the senses all of them deriving their being from the self. They have come out of the self, and in the self they ultimately disappear even as the waters of a river disappear in the sea” says the Prasna Upanishad.

Upanishads (*mystical utterances revealing profound spiritual truths*) form the foundations of Hinduism and are supremely authoritative; coming at the end of Vedas they are referred to as Vedanta. The study of these scriptures cannot give realisation however it gives knowledge and an insight into the religion, which is the most ancient. It teaches to pray to the Supreme consciousness for realisation. The power of prayer has been explained by Bhagawan in an interesting anecdote.

“Once upon a time, Namadeva (*noted for his mastery of the bhakthi marga through constant recital of the name*) and Jnanadeva (*noted for his mastery of the path of Wisdom*), were together crossing a thick jungle. They were both afflicted with severe thirst, but could not find water anywhere in spite of a tiresome search. At last they came upon a ruined well with a little water far down its depths, but they had no means of going down the steep sides. But Jnanadeva used his power and transformed himself into a bird. The bird flew down and drank its fill, only to change itself into Jnanadeva again! Namadeva relied upon the power of the Name. He sat on the edge of the well and called, ‘Narayana’, in great anguish. God responded to his prayer. The water rose up to where he sat and he could gather it in his palms and quench his thirst. He had no need to embody himself a new and disembody himself again for the satisfaction of a physical thirst.

When God is invoked by prayer that emanates from the heart, let it be but once, He responds immediately. But now the call emanates only from the lips, it has not the ring of sincerity and faith. From the lips, it must roll back on the tongue; from the

tongue, it must go deep into the throat; from the throat it must reach down into the heart. Continuous sadhana alone can grant success in this endeavour.”

Temple or the Mandir is where God installs himself. The scriptures describe Temple as the body and the Sanctum. Sanctorum where the Deity is installed as the heart. Thousands flock daily to Prashanthi Nilayam which has become a Kshetra - the holy place for the Dharshan of Baba. The first prayer hall which was built to accommodate these devotees had to be changed as the throng of devotees began to increase. “A site was chosen outside the village and a much spacious Prayer-Hall-cum-Residence was constructed. Baba named it “Prashanthi Nilayam”, the Abode of the Highest Peace, for, He the Source, the sustainer and the sustenance of that Peace, had that as His visible Abode From this Nilayam, the Message that every man’s heart must be transmuted into a Prashanthi Nilayam is radiating in all directions and the discipline necessary for this alchemy is being taught, with sympathy and understanding, to all mankind”.

(re : Sathyam Sivam Sundaram)

*“upadrastanumanta ca
 barta bhokta mahesvarah
 paramatmeti capy ukto
 dehe smin purusah parah”*

- Bhagavad Gita
 (Chapter XIII)

“Yet in this body there is another, a transcendental enjoyer - a witness, who is the Lord, the Supreme owner, who exists as the sustainer and the maintainer, and who is known as the super soul.”

“You are but the shadow of supreme consciousness and you are essentially not the personality, but the Supreme Consciousness itself I can by My Sankalpa, change the earth into sky and the sky into the earth, but that is not the Divine might. It is the Love, the compassion, the supreme patience to deal with all this frailty and fanaticism and resolve core them all, that is the Unique Sign.”

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.





PRESENCE OF GOD

"You have not heard me fully, I say I am God, I say also that you are God. The only difference is that I know that you and I are God and you do not know it... Faith in God within the heart, faith in His constant presence and constant guidance, this will confer courage, virtue and illumination"

- BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

In his quest for God man tries to see God outside himself. That is the beginning of the worship of God in His many Forms and in His formless attributes. However soon man tries to visualize God as a resident of his heart and mind by closing the external eyes and bringing God within reach of his inner vision. Then comes the realisation that God is within himself and also in all living beings; other animate and inanimate things in this creation. He realises then also, that man's nature is Divine.

"Without God, life is like a school without a teacher; it is a wire with no current passing through it; it is a body with no soul. God is in us; around us and beyond us. As the air is imperceptible in the absence of breezes or of things that moves; so God too can be known only by His manifestation in man and beast, plant and bird, in things and beings all around us. No one yet knows the mystery of the electric current, why it behaves so, what is the exact nature of its origin and flow; but yet, it is manipulated into a thousand uses and it is manifesting through a thousand appliances and instruments. We cannot describe God in the vocabulary learnt upon earth. We have to experience the Bliss of realising Him as the core of our being. Man is endowed with a sense of

wonder and awe, the sense which makes him either a participant (*Karma Yoga*), an inquirer into the mystery (*Jnana Yoga*) or a devout adorer (*Bhakthi Yoga*)".

The Guidance

But if not for God's Grace who will take him along the path of God realisation? There is an oft-quoted verse in the Upanishads which says:

"Not by study, not by intelligence and not by much learning is this Atman to be obtained. It can be obtained only by him whom it chooses. To such a one the Atman reveals its true nature."

At Prashanthi Nilayam, thousands gather each day for the Dharshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba the "new" as well as the "old" devotees. "There is no distinction between you for Me" has said Bhagawan; "All are known to Me" He has emphasized many times over; "The difference is created only on how long you have known Me in this Form". He knows what is best for each person, however to please the devotee, He gives into them till they realise what they want may not always be what is good for them. With that realisation comes Saranagathi, surrendering of one's self at the Lord's feet to be guided, allowing His will to prevail.

Here is a quote from the book "Shri Sai Satcharita" by Hemadpant wherein Sri Sai Baba in Shirdi had given an Upadesh to a very determined devotee, Mrs Radhabhai Deshmukh on the worship of God for the benefit and guidance of not only her but all His devotees.

"There was an old woman by name Radhabai. She was the mother of one Khashaba Deshmukh. Hearing Baba's fame, she came to Shirdi with the people of Sangamner. She took Baba's

darshan and was much satisfied. She loved Baba intimately and resolved in her mind, that she should accept Baba as her Guru, and take some Upadesh from Him. She knew nothing else. She determined to fast herself unto death so long as Baba did not accept her and give her any Upadesh or Mantra. She stayed in her lodging and left off taking any food or water for three days. I was frightened by this ordeal of the old woman and interceded with Baba on her behalf. I said, "Deva, what is this you have started? You drag so many persons here. You know that old lady. She is very obstinate and depends on you entirely. She has resolved to fast unto death, if you don't accept and instruct her. If any thing worse happens, people will blame you and say that Baba did not instruct her and consequently she met with her death. So take some mercy on her, bless her and instruct her". Seeing her determination, Baba sent for her, changed the turn of her mind by addressing her as follows :

"Oh mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and hastening your death? You are really my mother and I am your child. Take pity on me and hear me through. I tell you my own story, which if you listen carefully, will do you good. I had a Guru. He was a great saint and most merciful. I served him long, very long; still he would not blow any mantra into my ears. I had a keen desire, never to leave him, but to stay with and serve him and at all costs receive some instructions from him. But he had his own way. He first got my head shaved and asked me two pice as Dakshina. I gave the same at once. If you say, that as my Guru was perfect, why should he ask for money and how should he be called desireless? I replied plainly that he never cared for coins. What had he to do with them? His two pice were (1) Firm Faith and (2) Patience or Perseverance. I gave these two pice or things to him and he was pleased."

"I resorted to my Guru for 12 years. He brought me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love nay, he was love incarnate. How can I describe it? He loved me the most. Rare is a Guru like him. When I looked at him he seemed as

if he was in deep meditation and then we both were filled with bliss. Night and day I gazed at him with no thought of hunger and thirst. Without him I felt restless. I had no other object to meditate, nor any other thing than my Guru to attend. He was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. This is one pice Dakshina. Saburi (*Patience or Perseverance*) is the other pice. I waited patiently and very long on my Guru and served him. This Saburi will ferry you across the sea of this mundane existence. Saburi is manliness; it removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways and casts aside all fear, and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is the mine of virtues, consort of good thought. Nishtha (*Faith*) and Saburi (*Patience*) are like twin sisters loving each other very intimately".

"My Guru never expected any other thing from me. He never neglected me but protected me at all times. I lived with him and was sometimes away from him; still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected me by his glance, just as the tortoise feeds her young ones whether they are near her or away from her on the other side of the river bank, by her loving looks. Oh mother, my Guru never taught me any mantra, then how shall I blow any mantra in your ears? Just remember that Guru's tortoise like loving glance gives us happiness. Do not try to get mantra or Upadesh from anybody. Make me the sole object of your thoughts and actions and you will, no doubt, attain Parmartha (*the spiritual goal of life*). Look at me whole heartedly and I in turn look at you similarly. Sitting in this Masjid, I speak the truth, nothing but the truth. No sadhanas, nor proficiency in the six Shastras, are necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara and Brahma (*Trimurti*) incarnate".

Instructed in this wise, the old lady was convinced, she bowed to Baba and gave up her fast.

Dhyata, Dhyana, Dheyaya

Hemadpant who was there was highly moved by this story and told Baba that this incident had made a lasting impression on his mind.

Hearing this Baba was much pleased and He asked him, "Did the story strike you and did you catch its significance?" He replied. "Yes, Baba. The restlessness of my mind has vanished and I have got true peace and rest, and come to know the true path".

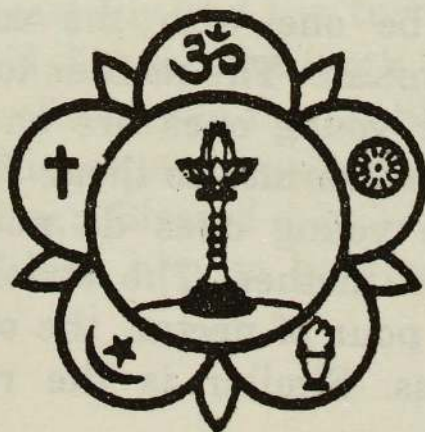
Then Baba spoke as follows : "My method is quite unique. Remember well this one story and it will be very useful. To get the knowledge (*realization*) of the Self, Dhyana (*meditation*) is necessary. If you practise it continuously the Vrittis (*thoughts*) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Meditate always on my formless nature which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on my form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your Vrittis will concentrate at one point and the distinction between the Dhyata (*meditator*), Dhyana (*act of meditation*), Dheyaya (*thing meditated upon*) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the consciousness and be merged in the Brahman. The mother tortoise is on one bank of the river and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk, nor warmth to them. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing but remember (*meditate upon*) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a down pour of nectar, the only source of substance and happiness. Similar is the relation between the Guru and disciples".

When Baba uttered these last words, the chorus of the Arati

songs stopped and all cried out loudly in one voice; "Victory be to our Sad Guru Sai Maharaj, who is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss."

"Your worldly intelligence cannot fathom the ways of God. He cannot be recognised by mere cleverness or intelligence. You may benefit from God, but you cannot explain Him. Your explanations are merely guesses, attempts to cloak your ignorance in pompous expressions. Bring something into your daily practice as evidence of your having known that secret of higher life from Me. Show that you have greater brotherliness : Speak with more sweetness and self control, bear defeat as well as victory with calm resignation. I am always aware of the future, the past as well as the present of every one of you. So I am not so moved by mercy. Since I know the past, the background, the reaction is different. It is your consequence of evil deliberately done in the previous birth and so I allow your suffering to continue, often modified by some little compensation. I do not cause either joy or grief. You are the designer of both these chains that bind you. I am Anandaswarupa. Come take Ananda from Me, dwell on that Ananda and be full of Shanthi".

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



*“mam upetya punar jauma
dukhalayam asasvatam
napnuvanti mahatmanah
samsiddhim paramam gatah”.*

- Bhagavad Gita
(Chapter VIII)

*“After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogis in devotion,
never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries,
because they have attained the highest perfection”.*

When man is bogged in wrong and hate Lost in error, afar from
era's mores, To lead him right, in love.....
When world does writhe in agony At thirst of blood and loot,
To cleanse the heart, of hate.....
When trampled under heavy hoof The good, as orphans, grieve,
To fondle, foster, free.....
When the word of God is twisted By petty putrid tongues,
To reveal, unfold, proclaim.....
To lighten burden of the Earth, To keep the truth He plighted God
has come, as man midst men!
Can call be clarioned, clearer?
Drawn in and tossed on the waves of Birth and Death you sigh and
groan in pain, O Man!
Be steady a moment; catch; within reach The life - boat floats :
Sathya Sai!

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to put into one book the greatness of the Avatar, its magnificence or even its Mission. What we see with our naked vision cannot even be counted as one thousandth of what is there to be seen on the greatness of Godhead as Krishna has said in His Bhagavad Gita. However, attempts are made from time immemorial, from the seers of yesteryears to the man of today to delve into the greatness, the mystery and the wonder that is our origin - the Supreme Consciousness or what we love to call as God. This is an opportunity that the Sai devotees feel that they have got, to get close physically and spiritually and draw from the source itself (*Sai*) the inspiration and the education.

The path is never easy as many would have heard the devotees sigh and say Bhagawan is putting them through so much difficulties and trials when the acts of doing or not doing had been left entirely to them by Bhagawan, though promising Guidance. However, it is the surrender and the realisation that it is best to do one's duty and leave the rest to the Divine to lead us through the Karmic Law which rules us and from which we get the shade of the umbrella that is Bhagawan from the scorching sun-the Karma.

“Spirituality, Bhagawan has said, “Does not mean living without any connection with anybody. To love mankind by understanding that it is an expression of supreme soul, is “spirituality”. It also means sowing the seeds of love in the midst of human beings to get the flower of tolerance and obtain the fruits of peace to the society, which incidentally is the human aspiration, the Religion of Bharat, the determination of the sages. Not to hate anyone, not to cause suffering to the living beings, not to ignore the poor but to show mercy, kindness and support to them is the first step in the path of devotion. Being cruel to living beings while showing devotion to God will never make anyone a devotee.

How can one be a follower of Spiritual Path if He abuses

others while remembering God? It is a sign of true spiritual attainment to regard such nature as Divine Nature which notices only goodness in others without finding faults with them". And He ends up by saying, the purpose of following the spiritual path as "Living in God, Living for God and living with God, and, finally, living in communion with God, so that we shine in God's Glory, as Divyatma Swarupalaara, Anandaswarupalaara".

- SRI SATHYA SAI BABA.



GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS USED

A		K	
ADHARMA,	unrighteousness.	KALIYUGA,	iron age.
ADVAITA,	monism.	KARMA,	action.
AGAMA,	scripture (<i>sectarian</i>).	KARMADHYAKSA,	supervisor of the Law of Karma.
AHAMKARA,	ego-consciousness.	KARMA-YOGA,	union through active service.
AHIMSA,	non-violence.	KUNDALINI,	mysterious nerve power in man.
ANANDA,	bliss.		
ATMAN,	soul, self, spirit.		
AVATARA,	incarnation.		
AVIDYA,	nescience.		
B		M	
MANTRA,	sacred formula.		
BHAGAWAN,	Lord.	MAYA,	illusion, mystery.
BHAKTA,	devotee.		
BHAKTI,	devotion.	P	
BHAKTI-YOGA,	union through devotion.	PARA-BHAKTI,	higher kind of devotion.
BRAHMAN,	the Absolute.	PARAMATMAN,	supreme spirit, the absolute self.
BUDDHI,	understanding.	PRARABDHA KARMA,	results of actions experienced in this life.
PRALAYA,	destruction of the world.		worship.
C			
CAITANYA,	consciousness.	PUJA,	worship.
CAKRA,	nerve centre.		
D		S	
DHARMA,	righteousness, law, justice.	SADHAKA,	learner.
DHYANA,	meditation.	SADHANA,	discipline.
DVAITA,	dualism.	SAMADHI,	the last stage in meditation, perfect absorption of thought in God.
G			
GURU,	preceptor.	SAMSARA,	cycle of births and deaths.
J		SAMSKARA,	purificatory rite.
JIVA,	individual soul.	SATYAM,	truth.
JNANA,	divine knowledge.	SIDDHI,	power. supernormal
JNANA YOGA,	union through divine knowledge.		

TANTRA, T
 sectarian scripture
 of the Sakta school, ritual

U

UPADESA, initiation.
 UPANISAD, mystic teaching of seers

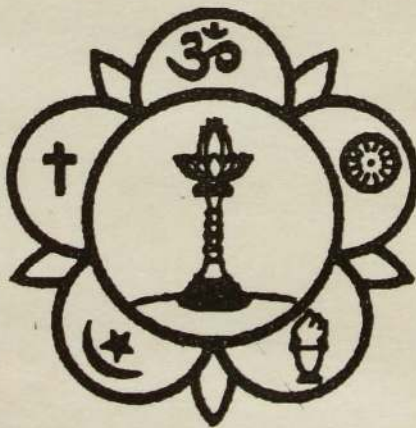
V

VEDA, scripture, sacred book
 of divine knowledge.
 VEDANTA, the school of philosophy
 based on the concluding
 sections of the Veda.

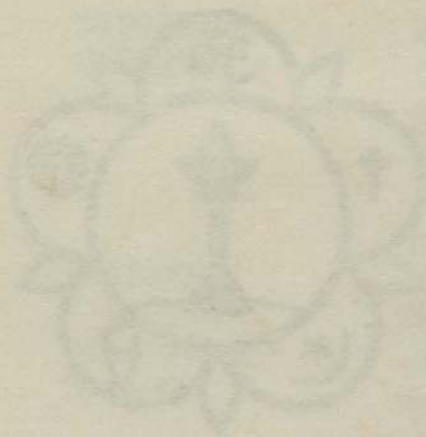
Y

YAJNA, sacrifice.
 YANTRA, diagram.
 YOGA, union, thought-control.
 YOGA SASTRA, science dealing with yoga.
 YUGA, age.

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An Impression

“I have been a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba since 1978. The author’s mother, my close friend Mrs. Pathma Balasingham, was the first one to speak to me of Him. Since then, - that is 12 long years, I could never make up my mind to see the Lord. I have, and still do discuss problems with Him in my mind and I have found solutions and solace given by Him.

It was only when going through the manuscript of Vanathy Ravindran’s book “Sai Baba-Avatars” that I felt a tremendous urge to see Him. “Come to Puttaparthi and see Me” He says in the book. The many well chosen and apt quotations and the book itself made me renew a passport fifteen years old - 1975 and get ready within four days to see the Lord.

I cannot think of a better recommendation or compliment for Mrs. Ravindran’s book than this. Do read it and be inspired as I have been to see and follow Him, closely”.

ROSHAN PEIRIS - a very humble devotee.

***(A journalist of repute
for over 35 years in Sri Lanka)***