



# **SIGNIFICANCE OF BABAS MAHASAMADHI**

**BY H.H.NARASIMHASWAMIJI**

**ALL INDIA SAI SAMAJ**

**CHENNAI**

## **PREFACE**

It is the Grace of Sri Sai that has enabled us to collect and present to His devotees in the form of a book all the inspiring and soul-elevating messages given by His Apostle, Sri Narasimhaswamiji during the Mahasamadhi Celebrations in the past i.e. upto the year 1956.

What is known in common parlance as 'Death' is termed as 'Mahasamadhi' in the case of Saints and Sages and Seers, who, in the words of Sri Narasimhaswamiji, live as 'Jivanmuktas' while in the body and as 'Videhamuktas' after casting away the body. The terms 'birth' and 'death' apply only to the body. These terms do not apply to Great Ones like Sri Sai Baba who do not live in the body and are not body-conscious and transcend the limitations of the human body. They are able to act with and without the body. Sri Swamiji's messages explain in great detail the significance of Mahasamadhi of Saints in general and of Sri Sai Baba in particular.

Devout worship and heartfelt prayer to Sri Sai on the Mahasamadhi day, the day of His ascension, is bound to benefit the devotees in a great measure in this world and beyond.

We offer this small booklet at the feet of Guru Maharaj Sri Narasimhaswamiji who turned our eyes to Sri Sai, the Great Master, on the occasion of the Mahasamadhi Celebrations.

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## I

It is most appropriate that in the **Dusserah** month we should refer not only to the actual Mahasamadhi of Sri Sai Baba but to the general question of the meaning and importance of death. Death is a term which frightens many and few people care to be addressed on the subject of death. They consider it *Amangalam* and wish to avoid the very thought of it and heartily dislike any discussion about it; but if they can face the question, then death far from being a terror become a necessary part of their culture and their heritage. They discover that death and life are two sides of a lens. They are component parts of one machine, *i.e.* progress of all life consist of the preceding form and birth of the succeeding one. Change is the essence of all existence; and change is but another name for death; and once persons face this death as a form of change, they grow bolder and wiser and discover that every animal, every person, every creature and every particle of every living animal or vegetable is undergoing change. This change is a matter of joy to every creature and every vegetable. Once it is realised that change is ordained by nature to bring about the great denouncement, then change becomes a matter of great pride and braces up every one for the necessary effort to face life. This will become clearer if we examine how Sai Baba spoke about it not only as the universal Spirit inherent in all bodies but also as a personal ego connected with the individual body called by people Sai Baba. He sported with that ego and utilised it for carrying out his lilas which changed every one who came in contact with it immediately or after a long time. It is said that Sri Sankara kept up sufficient ego for the purpose of becoming a world teacher impressing the entire world with the lofty truths that he had absorbed in himself and was well fitted to deliver to the world. Similarly Sai Baba kept up an ego for the purpose of carrying out his obligations to the thousands that were connected with him by pre-natal obligations spoken of by him as 'Rinanubandha'. The very idea of Rinanubandha imports that he considered himself as a person dealing with a number of limited jivas receiving from them and returning to them various obligations etc. Now Sai Baba entered upon his worldly life for that very purpose and came at the age of

16 to Shirdi to draw to himself the thousands that were to benefit by his contact in this birth again, after their previous contacts in previous janmas. In 1886 *i.e.*, about 32 years before he passed away, Sai Baba said to Mahalasapathi his true and most worthy disciple that he was going to have Bheti of Allah and added that he might be away from the body for 3 days for that purpose and that in case he did not return to the body, he might be buried near the *ghod neem* (sweet margosa) and that in case he returned, he would look after his body himself. For 3 days Sai Baba's body was a corpse in the Shirdi Mosque. After that he did return and by re-entering his body carried on his lilas of activities through that body for 32 years. We are faced in this connection with two questions. First, what is this process of the soul leaving the body and returning to it after a considerable length of time like 3 days? In the case of Shankaracharya, it is said, that he returned to his dead body after 30 days. The question then arises as to the nature of this process whether it is actual death or not. That was the very matter discussed when Baba left his body in 1886, Officers opined that he was dead and wrote the inquest report making mention of that as an established fact.

But even then the official decision in that report was found to be incorrect, as Baba was temporarily dead and did come back to life. In what state the soul is after it parts from the body, is an interesting puzzle. Referring to Lazarus being revived by Jesus 4 days after his death, his sister asked "Where wert thou brother, those 4 days?" for which there was no recorded reply. But Sai Baba gives his reply that he was at the feet of Allah. In case of souls having wonderful powers like Sai Baba, they leave their bodies and enter into new bodies or simply merge in the above.

Bhishma had this power of death at will and he chose the time when he should quit his body, namely, after Maharasankranti. Rarely do we find a person that can regulate his death and fix the time at which he would give up his body. But there are such persons who are by no means true *Avatkars* or distinguished *amsas* of God. They are pious and well-developed at the time of death, and they can fix or discern the time at which they can depart, and they develop the power

of will, with which they hold on to life up to the moment fixed by them for departure.

In the case of such an exalted personage like Sai Baba, it goes without saying that he can regulate the time at which he can leave his body. He had the power, when his physical body was seen at Shirdi, to take up other bodies, and proceed to carry on his lilas in various places with those bodies. This is a wonderful phenomenon, which will naturally make us think and ponder over the meaning of the change from one body to another in the process called death. If during life, we can pass from one body to another, can that also not be called death? And if Sai Baba was doing thus a dozen times, he had, we may say, births and deaths in various places by appearing in and withdrawing from various forms. For example, when Mahalsapathi went to Jejuri with his *kavadi* procession, he was horrified to find the whole place under a deluge of cholera. Baba suddenly appeared before him at Jejuri, producing his persona form before the eyes of Mahlsapathi. Jejuri is about 150 miles from Shirdi. Mahlsapathi, recognised at once the form of Sai Baba and got emboldened. When the mother is near, the child has then no fear. He went on with his *kavadi* and came back safe without catching cholera infection. Scenes like this have come within the experiences of numerous Bhaktas.

For instance, at Harda, Sadhubhayya and three or four of his friends were walking on; and suddenly in front of them and coming against them was seen the figure of Sai Baba. They were greatly surprised. Baba came right upto them and thrust his hand into the hand of Sadubhayya, passed behind him and disappeared. One of the group was sceptic and asked the others 'What is it you have seen?' Sadhubhayya retorted 'Whether you consider it a delusion or a fact, there is one thing which nobody can deny. When I came along with you, I had nothing in my hand. After Baba put his hand into mine, you see here I have got a toothpick, which Baba thrust into my hand.' Then, said the sceptic 'This must be capable of verification,' and they wrote to Shirdi and asked whether Baba really came to Harda and gave a tooth-pick to Sadubhayya. The letter came and Shama put the query to Baba. Baba in reply directed Shama to reply and ask

Sadubhayya to come up in person. Sadubhayya then went in person and narrated the facts. As directed by Baba, he narrated the facts before Bade Baba and others. Every one was convinced that Baba did really appear at Harda, and Bade Baba was weeping tears and tears at the thought that Baba could produce forms by will and withdraw from those forms, *i.e.*, to use the ordinary language, Baba was born and dead within a few minutes.

Are these births and deaths, if we may term them so, matters for exultation and weeping? If they are not, then there is no greater reason for one's taking seriously to heart the appearance of Baba on earth and disappearance there from. Baba himself gave his Bhaktas the strong faith that his actual death was really no death.

Mrs. M. W. Pradhan at the time of Baba's passing away had a dream in which she saw Baba passing away, and she said "Hallo, Baba is dead." Baba at once corrected her in the dream and said that saints are not dying. The term to use in their case is that they attain Samadhi. Saints never die. Several devotees were frightened at the idea of Baba leaving them to themselves by leaving his body. Baba told one of them, a Bombay lady, "Mother I do not die. Wherever you are, if you think of me, I am there at any time you please (whether I am in the body or out of it), and Damodar Rasane was given the same assurance. The latter informed B. V. N Swami that after Mahasamadhi of 1918, Sri Rasane saw physical, living and moving body of Sai Baba with his own (Rasane's) eyes any number of times and talked and moved with that body. If this is not proof of Baba's survival, it is difficult to conceive what can be termed proof. It is not only persons like Rasane who had physically met Baba before 1918 that have seen and moved with Baba's figure, but also persons born long afterwards.

Infants fit Madras have seen Baba and had udhi smeared on their foreheads to cure them of their fever. An elderly Vaishya lady at Madras who heard of him only recently sees him frequently. These are only a few out of many which prove that Baba is not dead. All this argument is necessary only in the case of those who are not perfectly convinced that life survives beyond the

process termed death, that life is ever life and never extinguished, *i.e.*, in other terms that souls do never die.

Long ages back in *Sanath Sujathiya*, Sanathkumar said that there is no such thing as death *i.e.*, extinction of the living jiva. This ancient truth as generally been disregarded by people, and that is why vast masses are dreading the approach of death for themselves or for those that they love. The life of ordinary human beings is so little understood that this has always been a very important question amongst the thinkers and philosophers. In the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, Yagnavalkya invited questions and undertook to answer all of them. One question put to him by Artbabhaga was "What becomes of the soul when death overtakes the body? Yagnavalkya instead of answering it openly took him aside for a secret talk and then told him that this was a matter very ill-understood and was therefore a matter for secrecy. He added that souls passed beyond the physical life and good souls were rewarded for their good deeds and wicked souls were punished for their wickedness in their after life.

Similarly at the time of Katopanishad, embodying the Nachiketas traditions, Nachiketas went to Yama and received from him the right to ask for 3 boons. The highest and most important boon that he asked for was that Yama (God of death) should reveal to him what was beyond death *i.e.*, in effect, the nature of the process called death or extinction—whether it extinguished life or whether life survived beyond the grave and if so, in what form? Yama requested Nachiketas not to press this question as even gods had no clear information on the subject and as it was a very intricate and mysterious one. Nachiketas insisted on reply being given by Yama. Yama declared then that he had only tested the earnestness of the pupil Nachiketas; Finding him sufficiently earnest and deserving of a reply, Yama informed him that the question was tantamount to the other great problem, namely, whether all phenomena which appear and reappear are permanent or whether they were transient and if so, whether they left any reality behind or beyond them. In the second place the question, he added, may be treated as a question relating to the phenomenon of bodily death and wanting information as to the state or phenomenon pertaining to the soul after

experiencing death. He answered both the aspects are parts of the question. In the first place he said that all phenomena are fleeting and that death (meaning change) inevitably overtakes everything that appears or comes to life, and that the only thing that does not die and is perpetual is Brahman which is present in the hearts of persons as in all the phenomena experienced outside the persons. He then answered the meaning of the phenomenon, death *i.e.*, what we ordinarily call death. He said souls after their experience of death pass on to other states where they receive good as their reward for good deeds and punishment for their evil deeds, the punishment necessitating their taking up lower forms as beasts and reptiles.

## II

Mahasamadhi is the casting off of the fleshy sheath. In the case of ordinary men, such a day is called the date of death or the anniversary of death. For recently departed souls, it is a day of mourning. But when time breaks off the edge of sorrow, pious and loving memories are recalled that day, and lead to acts that would please and benefit the departed souls. In the case of saints, the anniversary of their escape from the flesh is a day of rejoicing. From beyond the veil they are more clearly discerned as God or fragments of God that will continue to guard, guide and save their loving devotees and answer prayers. It is best to spend this day, the Dasara Ekadasi day, on which Sri Sai Baba attained his Mahasamadhi with thoughts and actions that he would commend.

Let us remember what Sai Baba is and what he wants us to become. As a man, he was bold, fearless, truthful, loving and self-sacrificing. As a saint he had realised his true nature, *i.e.*, identity or union with the Supreme. In both respects, he wanted his devotees to reach perfection by becoming what he was. We should attain, first, his grand qualities, and next, reach the Supreme in life and for ever, as he did. Take his fearlessness first. *Abhayam* is the foremost virtue in Sri Krishna's and Sai Krishna's list of virtues — "*Daha Sampath*". A life of constant fear, the life of a slave dreading now this, now that and again some other thing or event is a worm's life not befitting a *man*. Baba had no fears. We should have none. He feared neither man nor the devil—and fully relied on his own power and



the kind protection of his loving Guru-God. We should do the same. Death had no terrors for him, nor the vicissitudes of life. If we frequently recall his words and example, neither death nor vicissitudes will terrify us. What is death? It is a mere change. Neither the Death crisis nor the life thereafter has caused Baba any pain or harm. If we but live the life of his true devotee, neither of them will pain or harm us. Death, in his case, is a real blessing. He declared his divine nature, while he was in the flesh, the limitations of which however hid that nature oftentimes from almost every one. With the casting off of the fleshy cloak, his nature is now more easily discerned as Divine. What difference is there between Sai, that answers our prayers and receives our praise, and God? Absolutely none. God, in experience, is known only through his blessings such as answers to prayer. And persons derive correct ideas of God by their experiences of prayers to Sri Sai being answered. He was showering blessings and responses, when he was more visibly with us. When Scindhe prayed for a son at the Datta temple of Gangapur, Sai, supposed to live at Shirdi alone, granted the prayer (even despite the absence of any provision therefor, in Scindhe's Prarabdha Karma) and the devotee obtained a son within the time fixed in the prayer. Innumerable people even now pray to Sri Sai Baba and get their prayers answered. Surely this power that answers prayers is God. Well then, if that is God, can God have a Mahasamadhi day or Srarddha? Can God die? Yes. God always lives and always dies. He is present in all creatures and at all moments including the moment of "Death" and moments of subsequent life. As we have frequently been told "Death"—if it means extinction, is a lie. Nothing is destroyed. Death is only a change from the "seen" to what is "unseen" (by us now). Such change God undergoes in all creatures. What dies or he cast off is one vesture and not the inner life which alone deserves to be called God. The inner life is called The Jivatma. These *Jivas* go on casting off sheath after sheath in life after life, till they realise their inmost core of Reality—and that is God, Sat Chit Ananda. Truly, it is God that lives and changes as a Jiva till its real nature is realised. None need be frightened at these changes called *Death*.

Death is the kind provision of God to mark the link or boundary line between one life and another. It has a very great use, viz. to ennoble life. He who faces death is a hero and is better fitted to understand that he is not the body but something beyond, which is using the body. Sometimes, it happens, that the best use we can make of a body is to throw it off consciously, voluntarily and gladly and at the proper moment. Benefits temporal and spiritual flow from this clear and bold outlook and consequent conduct. He who faces Death gains gold (*i.e.*, wealth) is an old and true adage. He gains glory and joy also. For a warrior, says Sri Krishna, nothing more beneficial can be offered than a brave fight and if need be a brave death.

*Hato vaa prapsyasi swargam jitva ta*

*bhokshyase Mahim !*

*Tasmaadutishta kaunteya udyapa krita*

*nishchayah*

*i.e.*, If you die in battle, you reach Heaven. If you are the victor, you will enjoy the world (by conquest of a kingdom). Hence resolve to fight *c.f.* the well known aphorism.

*Dwaavimow purushav lokesuryamandala medina!*

*Aatmasakshat krito yogi yah cha veero rane hatah*

*i.e.*, There are in this world two persons who reach Heaven"(by passing through the core of the Sun). One is the perfect Yogi that has realised his identity with the Supreme and the other is the hero dying in battle.

Arjuna responds boldly to the call of Sri Krishna [roused also by Sri Krishna's taunts *Klavam maasma gamahpaartha i.e.*, Do not behave like a eunuch. *Bhayat ranaaduparantam mamsyunte tvaam maharatah: i.e.*, the great warriors will think you a coward flying in fear from the battle] and says *Gato mohahkarishijate bachanamtavai.i.e.*, "My delusion is gone. I will do as you bid" and later on *So aham krishna ranotsavah: i.e.*, "O Krishna, Battle is my delight."

Few devotees know that Sai Krishna also was a warrior. He himself declared that he was in the army when the Queen of Jhansi was playing her noble part as Commander. Sai, by his example, shows that Sri Krishna's advice

to a warrior to do his duty of fighting and facing death without the least fear, is the correct advice and the gist of the whole Bhagavad Gita, while the advice of Ahimsa also is given there, as an independent advice to be followed in other cases, where the warrior is not called upon to perform his duty. The warrior's facing death is a thorough renunciation of the highest kind. A nation that has such warriors in abundance will be safe, free and happy. A nation without such warriors will be always unsafe, a nation of serfs and slaves and always unhappy.

Let us close the chapter with a brief reference to Baba's Love and its relation to his Mahasamadhi. It is easier, at one moment, to cast off one's life in the field of battle than to go through long years of life, enduring sufferings and attending lovingly to the need of thousands that seek one's aid. Baba's aid was daily sought by so many hundreds during his life. He said to Sri G. S. Khaparde that constant attention to the thousands that sought his aid ruined his system and would continue to ruin it till the fleshy tabernacle should break, and that he did not mind the trouble and loss, as he cared more for his children, the devotees, than for his own life or comfort. This is the cross he bore for decades—the cross he was nailed to. From that cross, his soul has ascended and regained its spiritual perfection and is blessing all devotees. Let us remember on this day of his Ascension, this central truth of his life, viz, that A LIFE SPENT IN SACRIFICE AND LOVING SERVICE IS LIFE; AND THAT A LIFE SPENT IN INDULGENCE AND OTHER WAYS IS DEATH, *i.e.*

*"Paropakaraartham idam shareeram paropakaaraya sataam vibhootayah. Yate satpurushaah paraartha yhatakaah, swaarthaan parityajya yeheh."* If all **of us do** but **strive to reach** this ideal, **our individual and national goals are sure to be achieved. "DESERVE AND YOU WILL GET IT," So Said SAI.**

### III

The 1945 Mahasamadhi day comes at a very crucial period in the history of this country and of the world. The second World War has practically ended and terms of "Peace" and plans for readjustment and reconstruction are discussed

everywhere. But are there any hopes of securing real World Peace *i.e.* abiding peace and will there be stable reconstruction of the social and political factors in this country and in the world?

Brushing aside the extreme pessimistic view that Nature being red in tooth and claw and progress being always preceded by fierce struggles extinguishing the weak and establishing the survival of the fittest, as a view really without solid foundation and contradicted by a complete view of the physical, mental, and spiritual evolution of creatures, there still remain disquieting factors to face. Impartial spectators have noted the utter lack of long vision, self-control and true wisdom in the conduct and utterances of the victors and are predicting the recrudescence of War— a third World War, for more horrible in its results than the two preceding ones. What then is the duty of Sai devotees and the general public at this hour? What are the ways and means by which on this memorable punyatithi day the devotees and others can show their grateful appreciation of Baba's guardianship of his devotees and of his mission for the benefit of mankind — at least in this country?

Sai the kind mother of all persons that sought and seek refuge with him was and is ever carefully watching over their destinies and their conduct, He saves them from temporal and spiritual perils and leads them to the great goal of *life viz.* to reach God—after long and selfless service to Humanity. His whole life was devoted to this cause and wise devotees could read this message in his utterances alone. He was thoroughly selfless and could serve myriads or millions. Every true devotee ought to have the same aim—to the extent allowed by his or her own circumstances. Let none declare this too great a demand on poor human nature. Selfishness, Deception, Exploitation of the weak by the strong, untruth and unfairness or Injustice in innumerable forms are seen in most of the transactions of individual and of groups, This unchecked current has landed us alike in this country and in the world in most pitiable and horrid conflicts, which threaten to disrupt nations and destroy mankind. Radical measures are needed to treat this fell disease. Mere political devices and process homilies from moralists will achieve nothing—practically

nothing. The rotting organ must be mercilessly cauterised or cut off in order to save the body politic as a whole. Everyone must try and do his little bit in averting the terrible catastrophe looming before us. How are we to do this?

Let every Sai devotee resolve—at least from this moment (if he has not already resolved to do so) to examine every act and word and thought of his at every moment so as to maintain Love, Charity, Tolerance, Kindness, Truth and Brotherliness towards every other person or group he has to deal with regardless of country, caste, colour, race, religion, status, etc. Let us rebuke any departure from this standard, alike in ourselves and in others, and let us try our best to prevent it, so far as that may be in our power. Hatred must be banished. Lying, hypocrisy, and exploitation must be banished. Let us do everyday some positive acts helping on the harmonious blending of all individuals and groups into a grand united whole characterised by Love, Truth, Justice and Service to all.

This is a general instruction. It has to be explained and illustrated by reference to what Sai Baba did and said. He had vast powers which he could use for any constructive or destructive work. He however used his power always to help people—especially the weak and unfortunate. He did this selflessly and in utter disregard of their country, race, caste, creed, status, etc. He loved all—even the erring sinners and criminals'. He told people that if they quarreled with and hurt each other, his heart was burning within him and that, if they endured each other's faults and attacks with patience, his heart was rejoicing. He added that, 'divided they would be ruined, while sympathy and union would take them to prosperity and the goal of life.' In his own mosque, Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Parses have stood side by side in their adoration to Him, the great Guru of all. Far from destroying each other, they are building each other's temples, mosques and sacred structures, and helping each other to have unmolested celebrations in the same building. The Hindus rebuilt his mosque and a Brahmin devotee of his, Sri Upasani Baba, built a mosque for Muslims next to his own temple. The Muslims perform their Id ceremony etc., in the same mosque without noise and when the turn for the Hindu worship

in the same place comes up, the Muslim beats the drum in the mosque to Help Hindu worship.

That muslims have joined in building Hindu temples and have carved out Hindu images for the Hindus to worship. While the Muslim calls his building his mosque and turns to the Niche or Western Wall Niche to worship, the Hindu calls it his Dwaraka Mayi and offers his regular ceremonial pooja to Baba and his portrait, to the fire and Tulasi Brindavan there with the usual din of drum, cymbals etc. and the loud recitals of vedic and other mantra. It is a delightful spectacle that we encounter when we proceed to the other parts of the country and note how similar work is carried on by other Hindu, Muslim saints. There have been and there are now other saints even today. In Ananthapur, Nagur Baba Budan caves, etc., we see muslims or muslim looking saints instructing (like Sai Baba) Hindus in Hindu spiritual methods, giving them Upadesa of Hindu mantra and advising them to get on with their customary poojas and sampradaya and not to forsake the faith of their Forefathers—and at the same time imparting spiritual instruction and giving guidance to muslims and other religionists in accordance with their own scriptures and codes.

It is needless to go in to further detail. Let us one and all sincerely abolish and discourage Fanaticism and intolerance, Hatred and Self-seeking, Untruth and Deception. Let us resolve to leave all and help all. If there is real sincerity and earnestness in this resolve, the application of these principles to our conduct will be quite plain; and every day numerous opportunities will present themselves for translating our ideas into action. Let our deeds speak out. Their eloquence cannot be withstood or gainsaid by all the utterances and deeds of those who follow the call of their lower nature to the great peril of themselves and of mankind.

#### **IV**

"Sunset and Evening Star,  
And one clear call for me  
And may there be no moaning of the bar

When I put to sea."

The English poet who wrote the above lines was a true mystic, that is. a realiser of the innermost essence of reality, thoroughly and perpetually immersed in the Real. Death that terrifies the ignorant mass had no terrors for him. Every one of us who constantly dives below surface appearances and seeks to contact the blissful reality underneath will be equally bold and cheerful when the body undergoes the process called Death. The material constituents of the body are returned to their respective sources. Earth goes back to earth, water to water, air to air, light and heat to light and heat. The soul that realises the Self as above and beyond these is always in its real condition unaffected by their return. If an English Mystic Poet and ordinary Sadhaka can achieve this equanimity and retain perfect Shanti when the mortal coil is shuffled off, it is patent that such a supreme Siddha, such a perfect Jnani as Buddha, Sri Sai Baba should have faced his so-called death, in 1918, with perfect equanimity and cheerfulness. He was always realising the true nature of the Jivas and constantly imparting instruction and encouragement to person perturbed by the approach or occurrence of death. When, for instance, Appa Kulkarni's wife, a fairly aged lady, ran up to Baba crying that her husband was in the jaws of death and begged for some UDHI to save her husband's life, Baba quieted her and asked her calmly to face the coming separation. He pointed out that death and life are equally manifestations of God's activity and are inseparable. Bodies when worn out are cast away like worn-out clothes. "Appa wants to change his dress (Kupni) before I do. Let Appa go. Do not stop him, Do not ask for Udhi. When death arrives, do not be grieved. The wise ones grieve not for death; the fools do. The five pranas were lent for use during life. Now the lender claims back His own and they are returned Air goes back to Air, Fire to Fire, Every one of the five elements thus goes back to its place. The body is made of earth. Its return to earth is not a thing to bemoan." So said the Sage Sai. The truth that fell from Baba's lips in these words is unquestionable and the position taken cannot be controverted. There are however pandits who can preach such truths most eloquently, and most of them

fail in any attempt to realise and practise such truths in their own lives. PAROPADESE PANDITYAM SWASYA-CHARENA DRISYATHE" is the remark that will apply to them. That is, they are good at preaching to others what they themselves cannot and do not practise.

Baba was not of this class. He never preached what he did not practice. He fully realised the nature of death especially when critical cases like Appa Kulkarni's came up for his notice—and they came up for his notice pretty frequently. Baba encouraged alike the dying person and the survivors. With his wonderful love and power he stood besides the dying person even though he might die thousands of miles away from Shirdi, and helped him on to move into a new sphere. Baba being a guide in this world and beyond. To the survivors who mainly thought of the worldly disadvantages entailed by their bereavement, he gave assurance that he would look after them and their interests. He was always as good as his word. To Balakram Mankar's relations, he had given the assurance that he (Baba) would look after Mankar's sons. Balakram Mankar died shortly after the assurance was given and his four sons appeared to be in a terribly bad plight without funds and without powerful supporters, but the unseen hand of Baba has really supported them all and they are now and have been for some time enjoying affluence and prosperity-filling high posts in business and Society.

Baba's Mahasamadhi is not a matter for regret from his own standpoint or from his bhakta's. His (Baba's) own point of view always was that he was Narayana, that he was Kabir, etc.—always spending out His energy for promoting the best interests of others, "ParopakarayaSatham Vibuthayah". It is for blessing others that Saints live or take birth after birth especially as a guru—Sadguru. He declared himself bound to look after the spiritual interests of his devotees in their birth after birth until he could take them on to their goal, i.e., to the feet of the Almighty "Thadvishnoh Paramam Padam Sada Pasyanthi Suryayah."

Alike from Baba's standpoint and that of the devotee, his altruistic activities constitute the real essence of his personality and these still continue.



Before casting off his fleshy cloak, he assured the devotees that he was deathless and that after his so-called death, he would be as vigorous and helpful as ever. Thousands of devotees since 19J8 have experienced the truth of his statement. Apart from the worldly help he has rendered, he has still been rendering spiritual help, not the least of which is his standing at the deathbed, and guiding the devotee's soul in the after life.

Rao Sahib Papiah Chettiars wife is one of the latest instances of such help. She was not very old at the time of her passing away and her demise broke her husband's heart. Yet she had smiling face when the breath was parting from her body. To assuage her husband's sorrow, she subsequently gave her message to him, informing him chiefly of the facts that at her death Baba was by her side and that he took her and placed her in a heavenly sphere, where she is still continuing happily under his guidance.

## V

Great is Baba's Grace towards this humble servant of His, inasmuch as he has given him one more chance of addressing fellow-devotees on the occasion of His Mahasamadhi. The Mahasamadhi is an event of unique importance. While it took away the physical body so well known and dear to the thousands that had flocked to *His Feet*, it was the means of refining and sublimating their love to Him, and at the same time starting a new era in Sai Bhakthi and providing a special ethereal entity or Body that the entire people of India is not all in the world would be drawn to. When He was in the flesh, some were repelled by the limitations and peculiarities of His physical body and surroundings. But now happily, there is no physical body. Its place being taken by an ethereal body or better still, a perfect spiritual phenomenon that may be treated as a body or not a body according to the ideology, convenience and pleasure of the devotee, it has furnished a basis for a highly refined religious or spiritual group to gather and work under His Name.

The body, however much the impersonal or Nirguna Sadhakas may ignore or depreciate it, has a very high value for the vast majority, to whom Saguna

Aradhana is the only possibility. Sai Baba is, and is not, Sai Baba's body. When we refer to Sri Sai Baba, we refer only to his body and new comers to His fold must necessarily think of His body, before they can think of Him at all. As was said of Sri Krishna, it may also be said of Sri Sai Baba, that after living a considerable time in the physical body, and performing Leelas through it, He found that the time had come for the physical body to be shaken off and that the memory of His work and teaching should suffice to continue and develop to perfection the spiritual movement that He had started for the benefit of the world thereby proving that He (Baba or Krishna) was not the perishable body but that imperishable life—principle of thought and action, that is, the set of forces that brought about the Leelas and Teachings and would continue to do so up to the end of time, Krishna, though he left the body 125 years after his birth is not dead; and he cannot die—He lives, hears our calls and moves with us and in us in a mysterious way. Sai also after he cast off his body (age may be 75 or 125 years) yet lives and works His wonders, and helps all and will help all that care to approach Him. This need hardly be stated, much less proved to you, children of Sai, who have ample experience of His living, moving and having His being in and through you, as through so many vehicles and channels.

To you what I should say on this special occasion is that, having started the life of Sai devotion, it is for you to develop it more and more. You know that devotion to Him is a force for good—for your good, good in every direction and for every purpose. What is there that Sai cannot achieve for his beloved children? As He is identified by us with God, we fully believe that nothing is impossible for Him and that any shortage of gifts from him to us must be due to the working out of law which divine providence has established and the working of which is for our real and enduring benefit. We place our fullest trust in His Love, foresight and providence for us and for all and will gladly accept even apparent evils that befall us as first steps for ultimate benefit; in fact we are applying the religious doctrine about the possibility of evil in a world made by an Almighty God of goodness that evil is but apparent, and that evil ultimately loses itself in good. Faith in Baba and his teachings increases and should increase

with the evils we endure; As Kunti put it "The mere abundance of good makes us forget God—and it is the occurrence of troubles that makes us think of Him at least mentally." At each suffering, let us therefore, pray not merely for relief but also for increased power of recognizing His real kindness that draws us more and more to Him and thus improves us step after step in His own indescribable way. Let us ask for increased power to endure evil and good and increased approach to that highest faculty praised so often in the Gita and practiced by Sri Sai - "SAMATVA" leading to "ASANGA". For those who cannot think in such high terms of life, we have got another piece of advice. You go on praying for whatever you need and working therefore with the fullest faith; and His maternal kindness will shower increased fruition on your endeavors. As the circle of Sai Bhaktas is growing larger and larger, we may find more and more sympathetic souls that will help us not merely with their spiritual sympathy, but oftentimes also with temporal help, rendered lovingly and fraternally as between brothers and sisters. Indeed it is high time that their fellowship at the feet of Sai Baba should get a concrete embodiment in the formation of a Sai Baba Brotherhood working at and for Sai Baba mutts and mission all over the country through Sai Brahmacharis and Sai Swamis. The entire set of Sai devotees with these central springs or engines would constitute Our Visible Church.

The question is often raised whether it is proper or advisable to pray at all for anything, as God Sai whom we pray to is all-knowing (that is, knowing everything including our needs) and all powerful, (that is able to give everything including what we need. It is a sufficient answer at this stage to such a question to say that so long as the impulse is given to us at the time of our dire need, to pray to our powerful friend and protector to help us out of our helplessness, it is but right to obey the impulse which is presumably an impulse sent by Him as a veritable aid to our approaching Him and at least an apparent means of securing good. This poor frail being called the undeveloped man need not be and should not be overwhelmed by consideration of Logic, Theology and Metaphysics, There is much in our inner working which we do not understand, at any rate at the beginning, and in respect of which, the impulses of trust and prayer are

imbedded in us. Let us start with even crutches and totter on picking ourselves up every time we tumble down and proceed strenuously to reach His feet—achieving all worldly object *en route*. There is abundance of time and no period of limitation fixed for the achievement of our goal. I say goals purposely because our goals change with our march and the ultimate goal that sacred works and great souls preach to us cannot be sighted at the outset of our journeys. As we climb up taking "*Excelsior*" for our motto, "Alps on Alps (will) arise, and the highest peak will be reached at the distant future.

"I trust that good will fall At last, far off at last to all And every winter change to Spring"

For those who eagle like ("Sampaty-like") glance across great distances of time and space, a word of cheer is due from me. The higher regions you are to traverse are not charted cut in any map or book. They can be hardly described in advance with full reference to the peculiar aspects of each individual case. But the absence of any such written map or guide book is never felt by the fervent devotee because he has the all-seeing eye with the powerful hand of the loving and beloved "Ishta" with Him at every place and at every time and that will light up the path, reveal the dangers that are to be avoided and pointing the way to the goal, infuse the needed strength and enthusiasm, the discernment and illumination that take one to the goal.

For those who are not privileged to soar go high to their spiritual journey, the kind mother Sai provides numerous ways, means and outlets of energy that will all conduce to ensure their progress here and hereafter. As these are innumerable, I shall content myself with specifying one and close this message. Let us all strive to taste the superior joy of assisting others selflessly while securing a fair minimum of necessaries and comforts for ourselves and families. Sai has done this for thousands, and is still doing this for more. What he has done to so many He will do for you—for each one of you. Make it a point, therefore to think of Him morning, noon and night, to read about Him and bring Him into your life, whatever you are doing—eating, earning, attending to your health or praying. A regular study of Baba's Devotees' Experiences and Baba's

Charters and Sayings or other books on Baba is the surest means to keep you steady in this course and secure for you success in your various aims and generally in life.

Once again, in the name of Sri Sai, I send you blessings for joy and success in all your endeavors.

## VI

Success in life comes only to the bold, the intrepid, the thorough-going, those who are indeed earnest about success and prepared to sacrifice all, even pet notions, pet aversions, and pet loves. It is not commonly recognised that one of the hardest things to give up is one's weakness, the weakness that prevents man from facing the real truths of existence. Often one finds something like a huge obstacles that stands in the way of one's success and is frightened, but let him pluck up courage and stare the difficulties in the face with fierce determination, to examine it, to dive to its bottom and find out if it has real power to check his advance. Lo! such examination reveals often the hollowness of the towering giants standing in his way and the ease with which it can be knocked out. Often enough, when one thinks himself helpless and inclined to despair, Jet him just shake himself up and get himself into a prayerful mood, and cast about for ways and means to achieve the end and carefully examine the possibilities of helpers coming to his rescue. Ten to one, he is sure to get more hopeful and practical and discover some at least with whose aid he will achieve at least partial success. Let us all dare to think fearlessly as to the real strength, meaning, and justification of so many assertions, assumptions, faiths, creeds and slogans that are some times found to be exerting their influence in keeping us down. Let us get to the bottom of ourselves. Let us revalue our aims, goals and standards. Let us daringly put the question to ourselves, "What is it we are really aiming at, and is the same worth our trouble, and if it is, what steps are needed to achieve success?" and let us resolve to take every stop necessary even if it involves the highest sacrifice, because the cause must be worth the sacrifice. If it is worth the sacrifice, it is cowardice to withdraw from such sacrifice. If mere living is not our goal, if there are aims much loftier and nobler than bare living

then, we must be ready to sacrifice life itself for achieving such goals; and every comfort or amenity that we are hugging to our hearts now should be sacrificed with readiness.

Let us take for example our entire outlook on life today, first individual, and then social, political or in other directions. Why not spend 15 or 30 minutes of earnest thought everyday to this most important matter? Let us not fear that our search will lead us to Philosophy that will make us mad. It is not quest of wisdom that will bereave us of reason. What does it is the present drifting in cowardly fashion along the various currents of thought that strike against us by the so-called public opinion which in reality means the indigested and unanalysed views of numerous thoughtless or poor thinking individuals, each receiving and passing on what are called current ideas. Let us dare to stand against the current to grapple with it, to demand of it reason to justify its assumed power and soundness. Not infrequently shall we find that the assumptions, which easy going people fall in to about their capabilities, their duties, and their possibilities, are really unjustifiable. First let us take the question what we are living for and striving for. It is really for the loaves and fishes that the vast majority are running after? Is it wealth that I am wanting or seeking? Is it position, power or fame? Am I seeking to be in the limelight in the eyes of vast multitude? Let me decide as an impartial judge would decide as to which of these or any thing else, I am the slave. After boldly divine within and examining the course of conduct I am pursuing, let me decide which motive or power is the dominating motive or power in my case at present. After that, let me conscientiously ask "Is this the only thing that life has to offer or are there other possible goals and, if so, is this the best of all the alternatives? Is it really worthwhile living, that is, spending my lifetime and all my life energies for this object? What pleasure, happiness or satisfaction do I derive—first aiming at this, next by striving and taking various steps to reach this, and last the actual attainment of this object?"

One need not shy at this questions either with the fear that people coming to know of such self-enquiry may laugh at it or the fear that one would set himself in opposition to numerous others by pursuing one's lonely course in total

defiance of popular conventions, or even the fear that the strenuous mental efforts involved might shatter one's entire physical and mental frame and lead one to the sick bed or the mental hospital. Come what may, we must dare and struggle to reach the highest, and if we fall there is nothing to bar fresh and repeated endeavors in the same direction with real faith in God and the Guru. If such spirited efforts are made, they will undoubtedly lead us to the highest that life has to offer.

It is in the above strenuous spirit that Sri Sai Baba worked upto 70 years of his life; and it is that which accounted for the perfect integration of his character. That character being essentially of the elements is known as Daivaprakriti. His integrated character may be termed Divine. He dared to take up the great truths of the Mahavakyas e.g., "Ayam Atma Brahma" "Tatvamasi", "Aham Brahmasmi"— expressing them in the Arabic and Urdu forms "Analhuq" and "Maim Allahum". While many are staggered at the practical impossibility of their overcoming their ideas of being individual self by dissolving in the cosmic self from which it emanated (in the manner in which a pratibimba emanates from the bimba), Baba dared to give up the self and merge himself in the universal being, Allah. While most of us cannot escape identifying ourselves with the physical sheaths called the "body", he dared and succeeded in crossing those sheaths and transcended the body. In his own words, "This body is *my house*, My Guru took me away far from it long ago". That is by the Guru's grace, he overcame the Dehatma-buddhi not only intellectually but also in actual realisation. "Place this body upon a funeral pyre and burn it", he said referring to his own body, "and I shall be witness of it unaffectedly." That is, while he was in the flesh, he fully realised himself as out of it, that is, he realised his divine nature as a jeevan-mukta does and was a jeevanmukta; and in Oct. 1918, when his physical sheath was cast off, he would be a Videhamukta with however a determination—the determination to continue to do unattached beneficial work to help the devotees, that is, to work as Iswara. That is the meaning of his Mahasamadhi. In this Mahasamadhi of his, we the devotees find the full benefit. We glory in it. We make the fullest use of it by holding before our minds' eye the

picture of Sai, his deeds, all glittering as divine traits. And this picture growing vivid every day not only blesses us in various efforts but transforms our whole life into His or Him.

May He now bless one and all!

## VII

I am addressing you once more on the occasion of Sri Sai's Mahasamadhi day. I begin naturally with gratitude to Sri Sai for prolonging the life of this body and endowing it with sufficient health and energy for continuing his service and attending to the movement. My next duty is to thank you all for the interest you have all shown in Baba's Bhakti and service. Faith, intense faith in Sri Sai with oftentimes manifestations of the power of that faith, forms one of the easiest means of our performing the duty we owe to Baba and to humanity. Our self-interest in the lower and the higher sense alike prods us to develop that same faith. The manifestations referred to above may occur only in very few and rare cases, i.e., in those whose psychic powers have been developed to the extent of helping them to put forward correct predictions, to heal ailments, physical and mental, and to do other notable work in the name of Baba. These form striking evidence of Sai's favours and are highly prized. We shall all be grateful for such powers, alike when manifested in ourselves or in others, yet at the same time as there are confused and conflicting notions as to their causation and significance, their value and utility, a few words may be added here immediately for the guidance of the vast masses of Sai devotees. Great respect is undoubtedly to be shown to a Devotees in whom such manifestations have appeared, especially for the selfless service for which they are utilised. In fact, this ought to lead to emulation, to lead many a devotee to develop the intensity of faith in himself to the extent necessary for such yogic manifestations to appear, provided that health, age and other circumstances facilitate or render possible such manifestations. In persons debilitated by age, disease or other similar circumstances, intensity of devotion may be accompanied by serious results affecting health, sanity and even life. It is therefore advisable for such emulating devotees to seek the aid and counsel of Gurus and other competent persons



before and after undertaking such a task. But let no one mistake such manifestations or the intensity which is their cause to be the be-all or end-all of our spiritual endeavour. These yogi manifestations are sometimes very puzzling and sometimes appear where marked or any spirituality is absent. But when all is said and done, it is certainly better to have faith, especially faith marked by such manifestations. It is a noble ambition to reach even this height. It has its dangers in case it is misunderstood, especially by the person who has these manifestations.

It is hoped that one and all of you would bestir yourselves to develop greater and greater faith in Baba and put forward greater efforts to serve humanity especially in the form of Sai Devotees in ways open to all —ways that benefit our fellow creatures in numerous directions and numerous walks of life. To give only some instances of such ways, here it may be pointed out that those who compose brilliant songs on Baba or record them through Gramophone records or produce excellent, faithful and inspiring Sai Dramas or Sai Biographies are no wit inferior to other Sai Bhaktas. But it is not everyone that has such gifts. Another instance or way may be pointed out. Help in such public causes as the Building<sup>1</sup> of an All India Sai Mandir is another way. It has indeed been commenced at Mylapore, But owing to lack of workers, the construction has practically stopped many months back; and the walls are still standing only 9' high; and over ten or twenty thousand rupees would be needed before the building can be completed even on a humble scale. Those who are really anxious to serve the Sai Movement and care to help it on, can either give suitable gifts themselves, or induce public-spirited and liberal gentlemen and ladies to do the same. This article and appeal may well be closed with the prayer that Sri Sai Baba may guide and help all his children with his wisdom and grace to lead happy and useful lives and be become lights unto others illustrating the marvelous benefits of Sai faith.

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<sup>1</sup> Building completed in 1953.

## VIII

What is termed Death in the case of ordinary people is termed 'MAHASAMADHI' in the case of Parama Jnanis and Parama Bhaktas like Sri Sai Nath Maharaj. The change in terminology is essential to prevent people to attach association of death of an ordinary individual to the parting of Saints from their body. In the case of ordinary people death is a thing to fear and undesirable termination of the known enjoyments of life and transition to an Unknow State (that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns). To the Parama Jnani and a Great Samartha like Sri Sai Nath Maharaj, the State beyond the border is just as clear as the present State and has nothing to cause fear and can also be so regulated as to carry out the further stages of One's Mission in Life. To many a Jnani or Bhakta that state is sought as one continuous, uniform, homogeneous state in contact with Divinity and is often referred to as Vaikuntam, Kaivalyam, Mukti, etc.

Vaikunte in Pare Loke

Scriya Sardham Jagat Patih

Aste Vishnuh Ameyatma

Bhaktir Bhagawatir Sah

(i.e.) In that Supreme Heaven, Vaikunta, the World's Lord, Vishnu, The Immeasurable, The Infinite remains with His Consort along with his Bhaktas and Bhagawatas.

The Bhaktas are those who rejoice in the company of the Lord. The Bhagavatas are those who proclaim and broadcast the glories of the Lord unto all. The Mukta Stage is a Nirguna one quite in contrast with the Saguna Stage. To the Mukta or the Liberated, individual personality attains Laya in Supreme Personality, Paramatma, and there can be no unhappiness or change there. Thus the Mahasamadhi of the Pararaa Jnani or the Parama Bhakta is a Blissful State, the reaching of God -'Allah Milnar', and thus the term 'Mahasamadhi' with its happy association is used to denote what happens to such Parama Jnani or Parama Bhakta like Sri Sai Nath and not the term 'death'<sup>1</sup>. In fact there is really no change in them at all. Sri G. G. Narke giving his statement in 1936 said,—

"Baba is now in the State in which  
he was when in the flesh, and when  
he was in the flesh he was in the  
State in which he is now"

Thus the first great truth that Baba's devotees should think of on the occasion of Baba's Samadhi Anniversary is the above stated fact that there is no change in Baba. HE WAS, HE IS, AND WILL EVER BE AN APANTARATMA. This has been stated by Krishna about all souls and is realized by a Parama Bhakta and Parama Jnani like Sai Baba; viz.,

Natve Vaham Jatu Nasam  
Natvam Name Janadipah  
Na chaiva Na Bhavishyamah  
Sarve Vayam Atah Param.

i.e. there was never a time when I was not, when you were not, when others (these rulers) were not nor shall we cease to be hence forward in the future.

Dehinosmin Yata Dehe  
Kaumaram Yauvanam Jara  
Tata Dehantara Praptih  
Dheeras Tatra Na Muhyati

i.e. for the embodied Jeeva, as there are stages of infancy, adult age and old age, so also beyond that is the attainment of a new body, the wise and courageous man is not confounded and falters not at that.

How Baba spent the closing portion of His life is known to all his devotees. He went on with His usual devotees, protecting them everywhere and giving not money as usual or as special gifts and passed away from the fleshy life to the life beyond the border, calm and collected and thereby set an example to all wise people to follow. HE CONTINUES TO EXIST but in an unseen state. That does not mean that His activities for the benefit of devotees, that is either the devotees already existent before Duserah. 1918, or those becoming devotees thereafter, ceased or cease, Unfortunately several misunderstood His passing away as a

total loss of His Presence and Sai Nath had to correct that impression. Babu Saheb Jog, who was daily performing His pooja, thought that Baba was dead and that no Arti was necessary. So Baba appeared to Laxman and told him the wrong impression of Jog and directed him to go to Dwarakama where Baba's body was lying and to do Arati. Accordingly Laxman did the Arati before the body of Baba before it was interred. Baba had given several hints about His passing away which were recalled only after His Samadhi. Chota Khan says, 'Baba said "Turbaie Hun Dande Hanin" (which means "From my tomb I shall be active")'. Baba also assured Mrs. Tarkhad Damodar Rasne, Uddav Bua and others that after Mahasamadhi no one was to fear. Each one of them feared that after the passing away of Baba they would be left without help. Baba assured them that wherever they might be they had only to think of Baba, and He would be there with them to help them. Innumerable devotees have found this to be a fact from their own experience. In fact from Gita declaration of Sri Krishna and Baba's own declaration,; it could not be otherwise.

As Sri S. B. Dhumal states and other devout bhaktas say.

"Where is Baba gone? He is still existing and helping (even after Mahasamadhi)".

One that goes through Baba's Charters and Sayings, and the Devotees' Experiences published in Sai Leela, Masik, Sai Sudha, Sai Satcharita and other books Sri Sai will be thoroughly impressed with the perfect truth of the above. Sri M. B. Rege in his preface to The Gospel of Sri Sai Baba, expresses this most tersely; 'BABA IS GOD; to me HE IS NOT GONE,' and innumerable people who make up their minds to trust these statements and adopt Sai Pooja, Sai Bajan and Sai Dyana etc., will have the perfect peace and perfect protection that Sri Sai gives now as he has always given. It is not necessary to dwell upon the matter any further especially to readers who might have read the three years' Mahasamadhi messages. It is appropriate to close this message with Baba's own message given on the morning of 23-8-54, in person, after he appeared (Sakshatkara) to an Ahmedabad Lawyer, Sri Champak-lal Chimanlal Mankewala in the following words:—

*"Write to Sri Narasimhaswami that I (Baba) am always present before my Bhaktas. I will be the guiding and all - pervading power that shapes the ends of the devotees and even of the Universe."*

This is the great and most precious truth that any devotee can care to have. Let every devotee ever remember this and get on. He will prosper by constant remembrance and protection of Baba.

## **IX**

So many Mahasamadhi Messages have been written from year to year in this journal and else where. This time, let us make the message extremely practical and extremely brief. What is the good of a person saying that he is a Sai bhakta if he will not dwell in his heart over and over again on Sai and absorb the salient features of his life and make them part of his own? Take death for instance which comes to all human bodies, to Sai's as well as other bodies. What did Baba say about death and how did he act about that death? He has stressed in his Charters, what be, as Krishna, said in the Gita. that death is merely passing from one form to another—from the seen to the unseen. If a person does not lead a life of vice and crime entailing punishment at death, he has no reason to fear the end of that life in the form of death. Nobody fears changing his clothes or passing from one room to another, and through prayer and austere life of self-sacrifice you can come closer to Salvation. Prayer lightens the heart and fills the mind with peace, strength and purity. Prayers are powerful spiritual currents. There is nothing so purifying as prayer. Prayer is the key of morning and bolt of evening.

Sincere prayer draws the Grace of the Lord. Prayer sharpens the brain and the intellect. Prayer elevates the mind; it can reach a realm where reason dares not enter the Kingdom of God. Prayer is a mighty spiritual force. Prayer generates good spiritual currents and produces tranquility of the mind. If you pray regularly, your life will be gradually changed and moulded. Prayer purifies the mind and the intellect of man and fills them with Sattwa.

When the mind becomes pure and Sattwic, through the power of prayer, the intellect becomes sharp and keen. It was the prayer of Prahlad that rendered

cool the burning oil, when it was poured on his head. Prayer without attachment will ultimately lead to Moksha. The Lord is formless. But He assumes many forms, out of His free will, through the fervent prayers of the devotees. Empty prayer is as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. These can be no idleness where there is prayer. Heartfelt prayer clearly shows one the next step. Prayer is the trusty companion along the weary path to Moksha.

The best form of prayer is the Gayatri Mantra. A Life destitute of love and prayer is like a sapless tree in the desert. Prayer of a cunning, crooked, wicked man is never heard. Pray at least for five minutes daily, when you get up and when you go to bed. Pray first for the peace and prosperity of entire world; then for yourself. Commune with Him daily in the depth of your sincere prayer. Prayer should spring from the heart. It should not be lip homage; Prayer that comes from a sincere, true heart is at once heard by the Lord.

Pray sincerely, fervently wholeheartedly from the bottom of your heart. Then alone will God listen to your prayer. Pray not for relief from suffering, but for strength and endurance to bear it. Pray to the Lord for strength to overcome your defects. Send the arrows of prayer in all directions. Perhaps one will surely enter the Lord's heart. Your duty is to pray and only that. Worry not whether He hears or not. Hold on to prayer, no matter how numerous the temptations that assail thee may be. Thou shalt build an impregnable fortress by prayer. Prayer is thy refuge and sheet-anchor.

## X

The Mahasamadhi Day of Sri Sai Baba comes off this year on the 15th of October and, as the Sai Sudha of October'56 containing the Mahasamadhi Message would not reach our readers before the 15th of October, we have to issue that message in the September issue AS explained on numerous previous occasions,

Sal Baba Mahasamadhi is not a matter for regret. The parting of the soul from the body in the case of the ordinary house-holder is generally considered very painful, and poetry largely feeds upon the sentiment of sorrow on such occasions. In the case of Sri Sai Baba the parting of the breath from the physical

body was not a matter to be regarded as painful either for Baba or for those connected with him.

Baba was a perfect realiser of the soul and a thorough master of Atmajnana. It was not mere book learning as to what the nature of the Atman is. It was one of perfect realisation. He lived the life of one who noted that he was not the body, nor the artificial personality meant by people's ideas about him and his own ideas mostly based upon the body and its activities. As he said on some occasions, his Guru Mourshad took him away from his body, that is, long ago he cast away the idea that he was the body-self that practically every one of us takes ourselves to be. He was dwelling almost constantly on the Lord. Allah and Had were ever on his lips and in his heart. Consequently they were so even at the time of the parting of his breath from his body, and according to Bhagawad Gita, the effect of that would be to make him the perfect God or Brahman after his leaving of the body. Every real bhakta who is ardent in his attachment to Baba has ample proof that Baba is still active and vigorous as God is in his dealings with his bhaktas.

Samoham Sarvabhuteshu  
Name dveshyo Asti na Priyah  
Ye bhajanti tumam bhaktya  
Mayi te teshu cha api aham.

This means, the Lord says, "I am perfectly even and equal towards all creatures. I have neither friend nor foe. But those who attach themselves to me by their devotion, are in Me and I am in them\*. 'Ma me bhaktah pranascyati' (that is the Lord says, 'No devotee of mine ever perishes" for the best of reasons that there is the Lord to look after the yogakshemam of such a devotee). So many devotees of Sai are now experiencing His constant and perpetual guardianship, protection and help, in almost every matter, that there is no necessity for pressing this truth further to show that Sai is still there after His Mahasamadhi and is not gone. How can God go and where is He to go? But it is not every one that gets the benefit of His continued existence and protection. The devotee has to attach himself at first with some degree of effort

to Sai Baba and then he can get the full benefit. Even if he is a sinner, and a low creature by previous karma still he can start a new life by contacting Sai.

Apichet Asi papebhyo

Sarvebhyo papagrit tamah.

This means that even if one is the worst of sinners, the Lord promises that he might change his life soon to become a perfect bhakta or jnana. So every one who cares now to think of Baba, to study about him to contact his bhaktas and to attend proceedings such as puja, bhajan, kathas, etc., impressing people, with the nature of Sai, gets undoubted benefit, and our Mahasamadhi Message this year may close with pointedly drawing the attention of all our readers to this fact that every reader should make his contact with Sai Baba as full and perfect as it can be and then rich will be his reward. As will be seen from the Foreword (to Volume II of the Life of Sai Baba,) furnished by Sri B. N. Data;, Home Minister with the Government of India, every portion of his life is covered by Sai Baba and happiness with success is the result, May similar contact, similar success, and blessings be the lot of every reader!