

THE
INDIA
TODAY
GROUP

DIVINE GRACE

SATHYA SAI BABA

An INTRA TODAY **IMPACT** Presentation



A Lighthouse for Mankind

BY Prof. ALBERT FERRER

Associated with the Dept. of Philosophy in the University of Paris-Sorbonne, Dr. Albert Ferrer is a former member of Cambridge University and Lecturer at the University of Barcelona.



The mission of this unique Master of masters, highly revered in India and all around the world as a Divine incarnation, has always promoted the unity of mankind and the transformation of the human being towards higher states of consciousness, recalling the message of great spiritual masters of the past from all the traditions. Nonetheless, the teachings of this unique Master from the modern age have specially stressed the importance of education and that the foundation of education should lie in human values. While recognizing the value of worldly knowledge, the intellect, science and academic training, Sai Baba stressed on the human and spiritual grounds of education from the inner depths – the Atman, (soul) that is Brahman in the language of Vedantic philosophy. The teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba on education, remind us of the Socratic pedagogy or the writings of modern Idealism and Romanticism. Even more directly, they can bring back to our memory the dialogues of the Upanishads with their profound relationship between teacher and pupil. However, what is really unique in the educational philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the intimate link between the academic and the spiritual domains, merging intellectual/ scientific training and spiritual inquiry.

What Sri Sathya Sai Baba puts forward for the 21st century is not a monastic path, but rather, a lay spirituality incarnated here and now, rooted in this world in order to serve from love and compassion. It is amazing to realize that this great Master of our time has been training for decades, entire generations of managers, administrators, computer engineers, scientists, educators and scholars, trying to bring the spiritual dimension, an ethical vision and human values into all the spheres of modern life at the very heart of the industrial, urban and technological

world.

We should still add that intercultural and inter-religious dialogue lies at the core of his illuminating teachings; while he has promoted the unity of mankind and the brotherhood of all traditions, races and cultures, he has also proposed that the East learns from the West and the West from the East. In this horizon, he has suggested the fruitful interaction between the best academic training from Europe and the West and the most profound spiritual inquiry into the deepest reality and the self from India and the East, remembering at the same time the mystical traditions from the West and the academic/ scientific schools from the East. In Taoist terms, the yin would be in the yang and the yang in the yin.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has not trained Sanyasins or monks, but ordinary men and women capable of addressing their own transformation in order to transform the world around them from a real change within. As we said, the Master has fostered a lay spirituality incarnated here and now at the core of the modern world, to contribute to build a better world silently and authentically.

In this fundamental task, His message can be summarized in only two words: love and service. Only genuine love can produce a real change in us and around us, not a volatile feeling or emotion, but that profound state of being that anybody will recognise as unconditional love. When our whole being is imbued with this love, our whole life is selfless service to our fellow beings, in cosmic solidarity with all and everything, in the unity underlying diversity. This service, like this love - is our true nature, our birthright. To actualise what we are potentially, constitutes the core of the process of transformation or spiritual path. This has been the most fundamental teaching of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, his infinite gift to Humanity.

Many people talk about social service today. But in Sathya Sai Baba's vision, Seva (service to others) is regarded as a service to the Divine, and more precisely, to the Divine in those whom we help. Service is inseparable from love and compassion. It is putting into practice the Divine love lying in us and in everyone. By helping our fellow beings at the material level, we should also help them to realize their own divinity. The human dignity of those whom we help is as important as the help itself.

Moreover, the Master has warned us not to speak too much and publicize the service we provide, but rather to watch how it works in our own process of transformation. Service should be done without thought of self or ego. In Sri Sathya Sai Baba's words, selfless service removes the impurity of the ego, and hence, constitutes a royal path to God. If we do not grasp it, we just overlook the purpose of life. The spirit in which we help is as important as the service we give. Service to others from love and

compassion brings us to God, which means the Divine within ourselves and within everyone.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has set the example himself. In many images or films recorded through so many years, we can see a younger Master walking among the most humble or destitute, and giving them food, covers, etc. Not only Sri Sathya Sai Baba has put forward a clear teaching, but he has also inspired a huge organization to put the message into practice, and even more, he has served himself the most needed at the physical level, becoming a living example of coherence between thought, word and deed. On behalf of millions of overseas devotees, we want to say

to India and the world that through his vast organization, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has performed the greatest social service ever provided in modern history by private agents. At the same time, we know so many human beings all around the globe who have transformed themselves towards better human beings through his illuminating teachings and infinite love. This is the true Guru: the one who helps others to transform themselves while serving humanity. Sri Sathya Sai Baba will remain for centuries to come as a dazzling lighthouse guiding mankind towards higher states of consciousness and a new world. ■

Sai, My Saviour

BY BOLIN BARDOLOI



Bolin Bordoloi worked with TATA Tea Ltd. at Guwahati, Assam, retiring as General Manager. He has initiated many social work activities for unemployed youth in Bodo-dominated lower Assam.

Many people of many countries have heard of Sri Sathya Sai Baba - 'The Man of Miracles'. Many of them have come to see Baba and ascertain whether the facts related in Mr. Howard Murphet's book, 'Sai Baba: A Man of Miracles' are correct. Many have come to test, even with electronic devices, but their attempts proved futile, and they returned becoming devotees instead, convinced about the miraculous powers of Baba. Many foreigners have come to Puttaparthi after reading the above mentioned book. Over the years the devotees had swelled to such an extent that during Christmas, there were more foreigners than Indians in Prasanthi Nilayam.

"Who is Sai Baba?" He claimed to be the re-incarnation of Shirdi Sai Baba, who died in 1918 at Shirdi, and had forecast the birth of this Sai Baba, who was born on the 23rd of November, 1926. His original name was Sathya Narayana Raju. Born of poor parents, he had to sew his own clothes with the help of a thorn. He had to wade across the Chitravati river to go to school at Bukkapatnam, as there were no schools then at Puttaparthi. Baba had narrated experiences of his hard childhood days to his students who were overcome with emotion and listened with rapt attention as he spoke for hours together.

Baba's claim as an Avatar could not be accepted and digested by many people, except his close devotees. One such person asked Baba: "Are you God?", and prompt came the reply, "Yes, I am God." Then he added, "You are also God, but you do not know you are God. I know I am God". Baba referred to our Divine origin, that is, we are all sparks of the same Divinity, but we have forgotten our 'Divine Origin'. Therefore he came down to earth to remind us.

How could this poor boy having studied only up to Class VII, attract people from all over the world? Could it be that people were attracted only by the miracles he performed? What about the scientists? Late R. R. Diwakar, the Former Governor of Bihar once wrote, "Baba himself is a miracle. A school drop-out from class VIII, he could quote off-hand from the Vedas".

Late Dr. Bhagavantam, Former Chief Scientific Advisor to the Defense Ministry, Govt. of India, used to translate Baba's discourses for many years. Baba quoted passages from the Vedas, and being a scientist, Dr. Bhagavantam was not very proficient in Sanskrit. When he fumbled for the appropriate words, Baba used to whisper the appropriate words in his ear. But Dr. Bhagavantam had doubts whether Baba quoted the lines or passages of the Vedas correctly, and whether these were appropriate for the subject on which Baba was speaking. So one day he approached Shri Kamavadhani, who was conferred the title of 'Veda Samrat' by Sanskrit scholars, because of his proficiency in the study of the Vedas, to ask if Baba had quoted correctly, and if it was appropriate for the occasion. Shri Kamavadhani got annoyed and told Dr. Bhagavantam, "Don't you feel ashamed to ask me this, after being with Baba for so many years? I myself go to him often to understand certain passages of the Vedas". Dr. Bhagavantam confessed this to a gathering of students, teachers and devotees in the Poornachandra Hall. He admitted how foolish he had been to doubt the 'scholarship' of Baba, who not just discussed with experts, but even advised and guided them.

Once, a group of overseas devotees, were in an interview with Baba. After his usual query "Emi Samacharam?" (What news?) and talking for some time, Baba produced a baby monkey which started to grow and became a full-grown one while in Baba's hands! He jumped from shoulder to shoulder, much to the consternation of the devotees and ultimately landed on the window sill of the room. Baba asked one of the ladies to give him the two bananas she had kept in her handbag. The lady protested that she was not carrying any bananas. But to her horror she found two bananas instead of her sandals in her handbag! Baba asked her to give the

