



GURUPURNIMA MESSAGE 1998

How do we see Baba? Some people go to the temples and see Him in the form that is carved-out in a statue. Some feel Him in the *aarti/shlokas* or devotional songs. Some try to find Him in the 'Sai Satcharita', as a character that affected the lives of millions. There are some who always seek His miracles, like un-expected favourable happenings, unusual connections of events in mundane life or even in dreams. There are only a few who find Baba in all their actions i.e. *Karma*. The luckiest are the ones who identify their own actions as the outcome of inner motivations generated by Baba. The best devotees are those who, in every motivation and action find His Divine play.

Baba had Himself said, "those who make Me their only refuge are the dearest to Me". To make Baba the only refuge is not an easy task. This simply means total surrender. People often say that they have totally surrendered to Baba. This is generally not true, because it is these persons who are seen to running to astrologers and *Pandits* to find out ways and means to improve their material situation. They worship one deity for one purpose and another for another purpose. They waste time in experimenting with *Rudraksha*, *Tulsimala* of various sizes, colours and shades, or trying with different types of *Mantras* prescribed by various people. Some of them are also attracted by people somewhat attiring like Baba, for example, wearing a *Kafni* or a head-gear, and feel that they have had the *darshan* of Baba. I have seen many people, moving around in Shirdi and at other places in such dress simply with the intention of gaining monetary benefits. At Delhi and other places I have heard of people attired in Baba's style and appearing at the houses of many people or in the street in a dramatic manner predicting something for future and vanishing after taking *Dakshina*. Worst is the case of those who assert that they possess powers conferred by Sai Baba on them. They form a small group of devotees, collect donation, buildup a small temple and make a livelihood out of it. There are also a few who feel that they have become close to Baba and start describing some of their imaginations interpreted as experiences to others in an exaggerated manner. They feel as if they are a special class and go on looking down upon others and are seen directly or indirectly communicate to others, about their spiritual superiority at the

earliest opportunity. I have heard people saying that honey or holy ash '*udi*' is coming out of Baba's photographs and statue in their houses. This never happened anywhere even when Baba was in His physical embodiment.

All these are limitations in the path of spiritual progress. These are games of illusion '*Maya*' that actually distance people from Baba rather than bringing them closer. They try all their life with such activities and do not get the best out of Baba that is peace and self-realization. People in the path of devotion develop certain qualities that manifest in their daily life. They become humble, sacrificing, more universal and sensitive to the pain of others. They love Baba and flow in that stream unknowingly carrying along with them all, that come in their contact. They don't try to pray to Baba for the fulfillment of any material requirements. They feel that Baba has a role to play to lead them ultimately to the correct path and the correct goal. They have nothing to prove and, therefore, do not allow '*ego*' to assert itself. This is the correct path towards Baba.