

"Poorna Avatars are the Masters of the sixteen Kalas. The fifteen Kalas are : The five Karmendriyas or working organs which have to do with talking, taking, walking, rejecting (exertion) and eating. The five Gyanendriyas or sense organs: hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell, and Pancha Mahabhootas or the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, space. The 16th Kala: the all-knowing Paramatma (the Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent aspect)".

(‘Conversation With Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’ by J.S.Hislop).

There have been only two POORNA AVATARS, LORD KRISHNA, some 5000 years ago, and now BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA, endowed with all the 16 Kalas.

CONCEPT OF AVATHAAR - EVOLUTION AND ADVENT

*A talk given by Ghandikota V. Subba Rao to the
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Pranaams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavaan Baba and *Pranaams* also to each one of you here! Bhagavaan Baba addresses each one of us as "*Premasvarupulaara*" and "*Aathmaswarupulaara*" to make us realise that we are inherently Divine, filled with Love.

"*Sainam Jaanami, Katham Vadhaami.*" If you really know SAI, can you really say anything about the Inexpressible? No! "*Sainam Na Jaanami, Katham Vadhaami.*" If you really don't know Him, certainly the question of speaking about Him does not arise at all. "*Yatho Vaacho Nivarthanthe, Apraapya Manasaatsah.*", says the Upanishath. "All words are returned back; they are inadequate; we cannot really express the Glory, the Splendour, the Divinity of His story."

What does the advent of the Divine mean? Avathaar, how is this expression derived? "*Ava Thru Karane*" 'Ava' means Descent. 'Thru' is to make you cross the ocean of *Samsaara*. 'Karane' means to do, to help you cross the ocean of the delusion and the illusion of the world. Therefore, the basic concept of an Avathaar is really to set us on the path of liberation. That is the most important aspect of the Avathaar.

Now, why do we study the Avathaarik phenomenon? The answer is given by the great Krishna Bhagavaan Himself: "*Janma Karma Cha Me Dhivyam Yovetthi Tathvathah.*" The one who knows the essence of the glory of My births, the glory of My story, My activities, that is, Bhagavaan's activities, His principles, His messages, His powers, His miracles, His playful activities, His pursuits, His transformations are assured to be liberated. *Puanarjanma Na Ethi, Maam Ethi.* He says that they will not have a rebirth, they will actually merge themselves in Me.

We are triply fortunate. First and foremost, we are born as human beings. "*Janthuunaam Narajanma Dhurlabham.*" The rarest of all is the opportunity to be born as a human being, the crown of creation endowed with intelligence and discrimination, not merely with *Medhaashakthi* but also *Buddhishakthi*. Sheer brain power is nothing; it is the power of intellect, the power of discrimination between right and wrong and the determination to follow the right path, that is the human endowment. Second, we are fortunate to be born in the *Kaliyuga*, the age of *Kalaha*, the age of crisis of character, crisis in morality, the age of phenomenal violence, the type of which was not seen in centuries: How can birth in *Kaliyuga* be termed as good fortune? Now this is a paradox!

In the 20th century, there has been massive inhumanity to man, brutalisation of the human, the demonisation of the human. In this century, two great world wars have been fought. There have been 400 so called "minor wars," but which are equally brutal. 30 million Chinese, 20 million Russians and 6 million Jews perished in this period. This great country India had also experienced the horrors of partition: Three million persons died or were maimed; 10 million were uprooted from their ancient homes. Besides Vietnam and Cambodia, the killing fields have spread to the Balkans, to Africa, and to Afghanistan and many other parts of the world. The toll taken by this upsurge of violence in the last two centuries was unprecedented in world's history: 100 million combatants perished. The non-combatants killed or heinously attacked would be at least 3 times that. Colonialism, Imperialism, Fascism, Nazism, neo-colonialism along with dictatorships of the Right and the Left reigned supreme during the 19th and the 20th centuries.

So isn't this the appropriate time for an Avathaar to come for pacification, to establish Peace, LOVE and Universal Fellowship. Man in this century has also conquered and fought the five elements of nature and manipulated them. A great European philosopher at the end of the 19th century declared that God is dead. Now at the end of the 20th century, scientists have started saying they can play God! But what is it that we have achieved? We produced violence on an unprecedented scale and experienced massive inhumanity to man, in terms of the oppressed, the suppressed, the repressed, the compressed of the world. What about global consciousness in physical terms? The extraordinary technological, industrial, agricultural, communicational, information explosion that has taken place has made the whole world into a Global Village. The Good Earth, to use Pearl Buck's expression, although soaked in violence, survived the onslaught. We are producing even today armaments on a large scale; Fortunately the end of the cold war has put an end to immediate dangers. There are still 20,000 nuclear war heads. Still, a trillion dollars per year is being spent directly and indirectly on the War Machine when more than a billion people are going hungry. This is the contrast: the age of affluence and at the same time the age of degradation too! Man has plundered the planet's natural resources and despoiled his own environment.

In *Kaliyuga*, in this age of disbelief, unbelief, atheism, even the very mention, even the very slight remembrance of the Name of God will be liberating. The great Vyaasa, the cosmic sage historian and scientist stated that there is no better age than *Kaliyuga*, because the threshold of liberation has been lowered. You can cross it so easily by *Naama Smarana!* The Sai Avathaars have traversed the 19th, 20th

and the forthcoming Prema Sai, the 21st century. This is an unprecedented opportunity.

In this age of easy conveniences such as instant foods, instant communication, instant money, instant everything, even spirituality has been made simple! Bhagavaan Baba has planned His entry in order to make it even simpler for us. He says faith in God, morality in Society and fear of Sin ensure us liberation. We are therefore triply fortunate to be in the proximity of the Avathaar of the age, the *Vibhuuthi* Avathaar.

Bhaarath, the land of Avathaars

There are seven types of Avathaars and broadly speaking these Avathaars arise in Bhaarath. Bhagavaan said that the name of Bhaarath is derived from *Bhaarathi*. "*Bha Svaprakaashaayaam*" - that which has effulgence on its own. "*Rathi*" means delight in God, love of God. Wherever there is love of God, that is called Bhaarath. Bhaarath has a long unbroken tradition of *Yagna*, of *Yoga*, of *Vedha*, of *Yaaga*, of *Puuja*, of austerities, penances. Just as mineralisation is a localised phenomenon, Avathaars are also localised in areas of long unbroken Spiritual traditions. But, their appeal spreads far beyond their place of birth. The spiritual background for Avathaars is this holy land of Bhaarat, the land of sages, the *Rishi bhumi*, the *Thapo bhumi*, the *Vedha bhumi*, the *Krishna bhumi*, the *Raama bhumi*, the *yoga bhumi*. However, as Bhagavaan Baba says, the *Vedha bhumi* has now become *Vedhana bhumi* - the land of sorrow, *Thapo bhumi* has become *Thapana bhumi* - the land of misery, the *Raama bhumi* has become *Kaama bhumi* - the land of lust, the *Krishna bhumi* has become the *Thrishna bhumi* - the land of greed. Each Avathaar chooses the period of His birth, His parents, the principles by which He stands, the preachings He imparts, the powers He wields, appropriate to the circumstances.

Seven types of Avathaars

First there is the *Amsha Avathaar*, the plenary incarnation, like Vaamana, the young boy who humbles the pride of emperor Bali. Second comes the *Kalaa Avathaars*. These may be called the plenipotentiaries, with certain functional powers. The *Kalaa Avathaars* are like Dhanvanthari, for instance, who propagated the life saving specialised Science of Aayurvedha. Third, there is the *Aavesha Avathaars* who are the revolutionary Avathaars; They appear at one time, one place with one purpose, like Parashuraama and Narasimha (half man, half lion). Narasimha avathaar came for a particular purpose to relieve the sufferings of a child devotee, and destroy the demonic Hiranyakashipu. As Bhagavaan Baba has said, Hiranyakashipu probed the frontiers of the Universe just as we have probed the space, probed the depths of the ocean, and heights of Mount Everest. We have gone to the moon. But, as Baba said, modern man has not even penetrated a millimeter into his inner Being. We are not focused on our inner self while we keep bragging of our scientific and technological achievements to which we have become slaves!

The fourth category is the *Jnaana Avathaar*. They carry the secret of liberation - the *Jnaana*, the wisdom of Supreme Reality. *Jnaana Avathaars* are like the great Buddha, the great sage Kapila and the great Shankara.

The fifth category is the Leela Avathaar. Krishna was the Leela Avathaar. *Leela* is the play and the pastime of Krishna from His young age till He left this earth nearly 5300 years ago; an extraordinary saga of great power, of majesty, of beauty, of wisdom and of knowledge; He was the uncrowned emperor of India. He was the Suuthradhaari, the great puppeteer. He was a Jagath-guru, the Universal Preceptor. The sixth is a Maayaavathar like Raama, who concealed His divinity. He behaved, for all practical purposes, as a human personality with all the attendant problems. He is called Maryaadha Purusha - ideal man, ideal son, ideal friend, ideal ruler etc. Seventh, comes the unique Vibhuuthi Avathaar of Bhagavaan Sathya Sai Baba. The glory of His *mahimas*, miracles from birth till now, day in and day out, 365 days in a year, 73 years of extraordinary expression of divine powers. The world 'miracle' has become a hackneyed expression, in respect of Baba.

Once I used the word 'miracle' in Baba's presence. He said, "No! It is *Abhivyakta* - projections of wondrous, splendrous, natural manifestations of Divine Creative powers. When I said "Svaami, you are a *Sankalpa Siddha!*" He immediately said that he is a *Siddha Sankalpi*, not a *Sankalpa Siddha*. For a *Siddha Sankalpi*, one must become a *Siddha* first, through austerities, through *Thapas*, through Yoga. A *Siddha* accumulates his powers. As he draws on these limited powers, they get depleted. But it is not like that with Baba. His powers are not the result of any *Yoga* or *Yaaga*; any *Manthra*, or *Yanthra* or *Thanthra*. They are natural and undepletable! He is a *Sankalpa Siddha*, *Sankalpameva Siddhih*, meaning, mere wishing is immediate fulfillment.

We think of an Avathaar through three criteria. One, is through scriptural authority. Second, there should be credible personality who authenticates that the Avathaar fulfills *Vedhik* criteria. The third and the most important criterion, is the "gut feeling" we get when we experience or witness directly His powers. Bhagavaan fulfills all these three criteria.

What of His powers? Bhagavaan Baba told me once in Kodaikanal, that Number Nine stands for Prabrahman, the Supreme. Absolute Reality. Number 8 stands for Maayaa-shabalitha Brahma, the One who operates the machine called Maaya; the worldly illusion. As a Creator, He has already come, not coming down; He manifests through His creation. Number 7 stands for an Avathaar. Based on our experience, we can specify at least seven types of powers that Bhagavaan Baba wields. In fact, these are only illustrative of His infinite powers.

What are the seven powers of Bhagavaan Baba?

First and foremost is the Majestic Miracle of Universal LOVE attraction, irrespective of caste, creed, culture, nationality, country. Hundreds of thousands from all over the world gather here without any invitation. This is obvious evidence that there is a magnetic miracle of universal loving attraction here in Puttaparthi a semi-arid area in a remote part of Andhra Pradesh! I used to think when I first came here from the UN that Prashaanthi Nilayam is like a mini-UN. Later I felt it is like the maxi UN. But now I feel that it is not merely international, but universal.

Second, the magnificent materialisation miracles. The endless, undepletable materialisation of articles of tremendous spiritual importance to the receivers are the result of the overflow of His love. They are not for demonstration, they are not for Pradarshan of triumph of spirituality over matter. These are simply a result of overflowing love and grace of Bhagavaan Baba. Baba does not practice any special *Yogik* techniques. "No *Yanthra*, no *Thanthra*, no *Manthra*, no *Puuja* or no *Punaskaara*." Here is a phenomenon which is unprecedented in the world's history. It is a natural phenomenon, *Sahaja sankalpa*: Mere wishing is fulfilling. The five elements are in His hands. The other day when I remarked "Svaami, all the five elements are in your hands!" He said, "Subba Rao, I have only five fingers like you!"

The third: His mind boggling medical miracles. My own family has been a beneficiary of His tremendous grace and compassion. For ten months in 1977, my third son was suffering from a very complex medical condition. The best hospitals in New York treated him but of no avail. Stacks of X-rays were taken, but of no use. We came here, carried baby-food including water, thinking that this country had a lot of infection, as doctors had warned me. We landed in Bangalore, Brindhaavan. We were waiting for His *Darshan* there; He came to us straight away, put *Vibhuuthi* on my son's tongue and touched him and the medical condition disappeared. But one more important miracle of Baba I would like to mention. He actually rescued my father from the claws of death. The doctor asked us to prepare for father's last rites. We were in tremendous misery. Then a telegram comes with a message from Baba saying "Your father will be alright, you bring him here for my 60th Birthday. I am giving you a place here to stay." Then my father opened his eyes. He said, "Baba was sitting here. He invited me for His Birthday celebrations." Now this is the great Subrahmanya Shaasthry who is called a sage by Baba; he is the seer of *Sathya Sai Gaayathree*.

The fourth: mighty metaphysical miracles. The most profound philosophical metaphysical matters, the deepest secrets of *Vedhantik* and *Vedhik* knowledge are explained by Baba in the simplest possible language, appealing to both the *Pandiths* and the laymen. He has done this in the contemporary history. Thrice He took me inside into His apartment. On one occasion He taught me *Brahmasuthras*. Second time He taught me *Taittereeyopanishath* and the third time the Bhagavath Geetha. When I started taking notes, He told me that it was not necessary. "Whatever I tell you now, I guarantee that you will remember it when you need it." He then put His hand on the top of my head! I stopped taking notes but listened intensely to Baba's nectarine words.

Fifth: His multiple manifestations, appearing at different places at the same time. He and His powers transcend both time and place. I saw myself a virtual *Vibhuuthi* storm in the home of a devotee in Connecticut USA. For two days I observed this extraordinary event, from morning to evening. *Vibhuuthi* was showering over Svaami's pictures; sweet ambrosia was flowing down the pictures while we all gaped in wonder and amazement.

Sixth: His extraordinary micro/macro management skills. The simplest and the smallest task and the biggest and the mightiest task are handled with ease and

super-executive skill. He inspires, guides and leads: this is Invisible Management! He leads by his own example, doing things Himself thus providing miraculous inspiration to millions! He has immense capacity to undertake and complete mega public service projects. "*Apaara loka sevaa paraayana shakthi*". These projects cover free education, free medical help, free potable water supply to millions, etc. When services are over-commercialised, Baba sets an example by calling a halt to greed!

Seventh, Baba's greatest miracle can be called His Man Making Miracles, the transformation of our inner psyche towards LOVE filled spirituality.

Baba's seven-fold mission:

Akarshanaya Sarva Jananaam : To draw all peoples of the world, irrespective of caste, colour and creed.

Vikarshanayacha Dhushkruthyaam. To remove, to weed out the evil propensities in bad persons, but not to destroy such people.

Samskaranaaya Thaamasikanaam. The inactive, the dull, the slothful, are made more active, more interested in doing their duty. Duty is God, and work is worship, as Bhagavaan Baba says.

Samkarshanaaya Raajasikaanaam. He rechannels their energies of the Passionately active people but working for their own personal benefit or aggrandisement, towards selfless public service activities.

Uthkarshanaya Saadhuunaam. To uplift the *Saadhus* or the noble and the good people by enriching their spiritual experiences.

Saakshaathkaaraaya cha Bhakthaanaam. For those who are devoted to Him, who have surrendered their ego, He gives the direct vision of the Divine, the vision of the Lord.

Prema sevaa Prakarshanaaya Sambhavaami Padhe Padhe. "I repeatedly incarnate myself in order to promote or manifest selfless Loving Service to all without any distinction." His Love is universal and Baba is Love incarnate.