

BADARINATH

Bhagavan has often proclaimed that one of the important purposes of his incarnation is the revitalisation of the divine potency of deities in ancient temples. As a part of the programme, on 11 June 1961 Baba set out on a journey to the famous Badarinath temple situated in the Himalayas in Uttar Pradesh. He was accompanied by His parents as well as several devotees. Sri Boorgula Ramakrishna Rao, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, joined the pilgrims at Hardwar. Baba quipped with them, "Normally devotees go to Badari to see Lord Narayana there. You are going there in the company of Lord Narayana to see the idols installed in the temple." Baba described the spiritual

As nearly 200 devotees watched in fascination at the Badarinath temple, Baba waved His open hand and materialised a plate of gold that held a thousand golden lotus. He placed the golden lotus in a vessel made of silver. By another movement of His hand He produced a Lingam. He explained that it was the "Néthra Lingam" installed underneath the idol of Lord Badari by Adi Sankara himself 1200 years ago. While the Lingam is visible to visitors and worshipped by them every day, the Néthra Lingam lay concealed ever since its installation. Only once was it brought to view by Baba for worship. *Néthra* in Sanskrit means eye. True to its name, the Néthra Lingam clearly showed a wide open eye. Baba placed it in the golden lotus. With another wave of His hand He produced a vessel of silver filled with the sacred waters of Gangóthri, the place of origin of the holy river Ganga (the Ganges). Baba touched the bottom of the vessel with His finger and when He withdrew it water began to fall on the Néthra Lingam (*abhishekam*). The touch of His finger apparently made a hole in the bottom of the vessel. When the *abhishekam* was over, Sri Sai Baba shook His hand and gold and silver flowers flowed out and covered the Néthra Lingam as *abhishekam* of flowers. Lord Siva is reputed to be particularly fond of *thummi* flowers (these are white in colour and very, very tiny, roughly five millimeters long). When the temple priest mentioned this to Baba, He materialised a heap of fresh *thummi* flowers. The Néthra Lingam was now worshipped with those blossoms. Bhagavan revitalised the Néthra Lingam through this