



HEART TO hEART



RADIO SAI LISTENER'S JOURNAL



COVER STORY

Inauguration of Prashanthi Digital Studio



Pranams at the Lotus Feet

Journal

developed by

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HEART TO HEART

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Between YOU and US

Dear Reader,

Sai Ram. We hope you liked our inaugural issue. It was put together in great hurry because we wanted to be up on Vinayaka Chaturthi day. We managed it by the skin of our teeth as they say, thanks of course to Ganesha's Grace. The mag did not quite come out the way we wanted it to, but we were thankful that it did!

We were delighted to see that just one day later, a devotee in far away Paraguay wonder how many know that such a country exists, and if they do, where exactly it is!] wrote back to say how thrilled he was. We were even more thrilled, that's all we can say!

We certainly are not going to relax; on the contrary, our work begins now. There are so many things we want to do to make you all happy and fill you with *Ananda*, but unfortunately, there are practical limitations as of now. But we are sure Swami will make all the things we want to do, actually happen.

If you don't believe us, just read the cover story. It amplifies the point made in our inaugural editorial about how Swami has been adding new dimensions all the time. One thing we wish to make clear is that this journal is different from the rest in many ways. One can basically think of 3 types of journals or magazines. 1) The Publisher dishes it out, and the readers just read; may be the mag will accept letters to the editor. 2) At the other end are the scientific journals where all the contributions are from the community outside and the editorial office just does the screening [through a refereeing procedure] and then arranges for publication. 3) Finally there are mags that accept contributions from readers. In the old days, there were many such, for example the famous Saturday Evening Post. We sort of fit into the third category, except that our orientation is entirely spiritual. Wonder if there is any other mag in the world today that does a similar job.

What we are trying to say is that the success of this mag will depend on you and us working together. It is **OUR** mag and that is because you and we are ONE, to use Swami's words! As you read through this issue, we are sure you will get a good idea of what we are driving at. Besides this, we are dropping hints all over the place about how we can do this together.

By the way, we can work together only if we keep in touch with each other constantly. So, stay in touch. And that is easy to do, because we are only one mouse click away. Which raises a thought what would Vinayaka say about using the name of His vehicle for something totally different? Think about it!

God Bless. Jai Sai Ram.

SGH Team.



THE DIGITAL DIMENSION

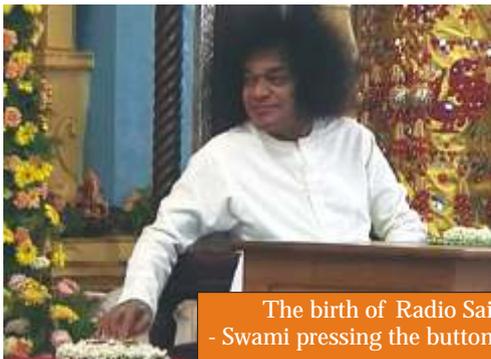
In the inaugural issue, we wrote that things are beginning to happen that we never dreamt of. This article will take you behind the scenes and tell you how the Lord makes things happen, and quietly too, all in His own way of course. And there is a message behind it, which is that things will happen only when *Samayam* and *Sandarpam* are right, meaning the time and the circumstances must be right.



Prashanthi Digital Studio

Many years ago, a devotee from America brought a team of about seven or eight people. The members of the team seemed to be important, judging from the attention given to them in veranda seating! They of course also got an Interview. At that time, we did not know anything else; it was only later we learnt that the group had come with a view to persuade Swami to give His blessings to put up a radio station here in Prashanthi Nilayam, as a part of a chain of radio stations the world over, spreading religious and spiritual teachings. We don't know if the general idea took off, but this we do know; no radio station came up in Prashanthi following this visit, which means that Swami ignored the idea of a radio station at that time.

Meanwhile, there were constant attempts to "talk Swami into" agreeing to have a web site and make that the vehicle for the dissemination of His Message. People said, "Swami, this web business is a great thing. All spiritual organisations have it. You must bless one for us also." Swami just smiled. But Internet addicts would not take the hint; they started their own



The birth of Radio Sai - Swami pressing the button

web sites, many of which often became gossip and rumour sites! So much so, in

one Discourse, Swami went to the extent of saying what we need is INNERNET and not Internet.

Many grumbled: "Swami does not understand how useful the Internet is. Why is He so much against computers?" Is Swami against computers as such? If so, how come there are so many computers in His hospitals? How come the Central Trust uses computers extensively for its administrative and accounting work? Would these computers have got in without His permission? How come there is even a Master of Technology [M.Tech] Course on Computer Science in Swami's University, the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning? The answer is loud and clear. Swami is NOT against computers as such but their irrational and irrelevant use.

Cut now to September, 2001. One afternoon that month, a group of four people came from Bangalore for *Darshan*. Two were from overseas and two were from India. They seemed like important people because they were seated right in the front. Swami came out for *Darshan*, and these people were duly granted an Interview. Nothing very special in that since this sort of thing happens from time to time. But this time, there was something different. That became known a few days later when Bhagavan Baba announced that one of those who came earlier was Dr. Samara, the Chairman of the WORLDSPACE Corporation, and that he had offered free a radio channel on his satellite the ASIASTAR, for digital broadcast of Swami's Message, 24 hours a day. It happened just like that no one here asked

for it or even dreamt about it, and yet it happened because the time had come!

It was decided that the radio service would be up on Birthday, 2001, and that Swami would inaugurate the service that morning. All this was fine but no one here knew anything about broadcasting, and much less digital radio broadcasting via satellite! But now, we had to know all that and there was so little time left! That is how He always tests us; as He says,

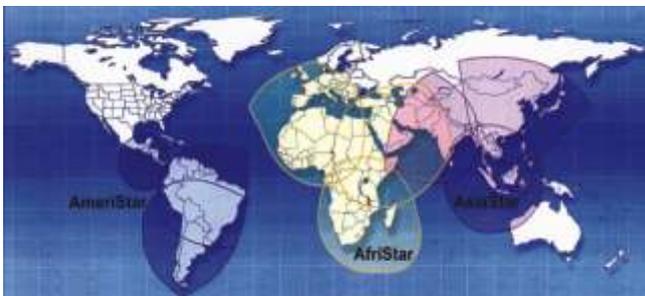
"Test is taste for God!" We here sure know what that means!

So hurriedly a radio team was formed with just two people to start with, and hardly any equipment dedicated for this purpose. But living in Prashanthi, we know



Sharing the joy-Crowds on 23 November 2001

how to improvise and come up with something or the other in the last minute. And thus it was on 23.11.2001, RADIO SAI came on the air when Bhagavan pressed a button in Sai Kulwant Hall, as a part of the Birthday celebrations. When Swami pressed the button, a message was flashed from the Mandir to Melbourne in Australia by cell phone we had two cell phones just in case one of them failed! and the person in the Melbourne uplink station of WORLDSPACE switched on the computer which then started sending a pre-recorded program to the satellite. That program was received by a receiver we had set up in the Mandir, and this signal was fed to the Public Address system. Thanks to all this, the people assembled in the Sai Kulwant Hall heard the inaugural program, which lasted seven minutes we had arrived! By the way, when Swami pressed the switch, a big board that was kept in the Hall lit up and that was the symbolic inauguration. ▶



Embracing the World-The footprints of Radio Sai

In spite of all the announcements made, few really understood that the program that they heard that morning ACTUALLY came via satellite from

Melbourne and that it was a part of the Radio Sai activity. In fact, even after a year or so, many still did not have the foggiest idea about Radio Sai, though they had witnessed the inaugural function.

Going on the air seemed difficult, but once we were up, that looked like child's play; it was staying on the air 24 hours a day that proved difficult. In those days, we did not have a studio for recording or even proper microphones, and many would not believe that we got by using just a tie clip mike! But we went past this seemingly impossible difficulty of staying continuously on the air, and believe it or not, to celebrate our 100th day, we had a marathon 20 hour program covering the entire life of Swami. This program was entitled SATHYAM, SIVAM, SUNDARAM, and Swami heard a part of it on the radio installed in His chamber, the African trip part, to be precise!

Looking back it all seems amazing and unbelievable, even to us. It just goes to show, that somehow things fall into place and start happening, though we do not know how. We now move to the summer of 2002, and Swami in His own way, was



PDS Inauguration-Lighting the Lamp (of our hearts!!)

bringing some other instruments of His into the picture; and the instrument that helped us to take a giant leap forward was Mr. Gopal Srinivasan, Director, TVS Electronics, a leading hardware manufacturing company in India. Brother Gopal was not only an ardent devotee of Bhagavan, but also an audio-video buff, and blessed with a keen desire to make his knowledge and resources available for the benefit of Swami's Mission. God has a way of recognising selfless desire calculated to bring Ananda to all, and pretty soon, with Swami's blessing, the building previously known as the EHV Building [where Mr. Hejmadi had his office and morning talks used to be given], was taken over for conversion into a modern digital studio.

Gopal and his dynamic team now swung into action. During the whole of summer while Bhagavan was away in Brindavan, carpenters, electricians, air-condition mechanics, sound engineers and what have you, transformed the old EHV Building into not a modern but a dream studio! And we who had worked earlier with just one computer and two tie clip mikes, were knocked out flat.

You wouldn't believe it; once a listener asked us, "Why don't you give a postal address? Some of us do not have computers, e mail and all that. How do we communicate with you?" And do you know what reply we gave? We said, "Sir, even people here do not know we exist! We have no room of our own. If we give a postal address, the Postman would not be able to find us!" We don't know if the listener was satisfied with the answer, but that was the truth!

On 29th August, all that changed. At last, thanks to Brother Gopal, Radio Sai at last had a home! In the morning, after Darshan, Swami accompanied by Gopal, drove to the new studio. There He was lovingly and ceremoniously received, and walking up the



On his way to the Studio

entrance, Swami set His Divine Feet in the Studio premises. We felt truly blessed, and it was a wonderful, moment for all of us. We can't exactly you how exactly we all felt, but you can get an idea of how happy we must have been by looking at the pictures that accompany this story. Swami was so relaxed and happy! He took His time to tour the facilities, asking questions here and there, and patiently saw all the things we were eager to show Him. It was funny, when you come to think of it He it was who had made it all happen; and yet here we were trying to show Him what "we had done"! The Lord in His Infinite Love puts up with up all this and allows us to imagine we were the doers!

After walking round, Swami went to the main recording hall where He sat down on a chair that had been specially placed for Him. He then conversed in a most leisurely manner with one and all, in the process drawing attention to how Mr.



Inside the Recording Room with Gopal & others

Gopal had worked tirelessly to create these wonderful facilities. All this was being done in order to spread Ananda; spreading Love and Ananda must be the aim of one and all, and Gopal had shown how everyone can use his skills and endowments in his or her own way to be part of the Lord's Mission. As a sign of Divine Blessing, Bhagavan then materialised a Rolex watch for Brother Gopal! Some more remarks and advice, ▶



Audio recording Control Room



Digital Video Editing in Progress

and it was time for Aarathi and departure. Swami had spent full forty minutes but it seemed like just forty seconds!

So finally, we had a wonderful studio. With Swami's blessings, it was named the Prashanti Digital Studio. Nice place, wonderful air-conditioning and all that. But we could not relax! More work and more challenges ahead! Birthday was fast approaching, and it was decided that on 23.11.2002, the first anniversary of Radio Sai, we would broadcast live for the first time! When we decided to go live on Birthday, we had little idea of the problems involved. Gopal and his team worked closely with us, as did Mr. Venugopal and his team from WORLDSPACE and Mr. Madhav Murthy and his team from S.N.Informatics [with whose help we are running the Radio Sai web site and our audio download cum streaming service]. Many things did not quite go the way we wanted, and our BP was going up all the time. We prayed furiously of course, but glitches kept popping up. On the morning of 22nd November, things seemed to work out well, and we did a successful trial "live" broadcast. But that afternoon, when we went live with the Convocation function, the broadcast had hiccups; it was not 100 % OK. A sleepless night followed, even as phone calls flew all over the place, from here to Bangalore, from Bangalore to Melbourne and all that.

Birthday morning. We assembled in the Mandir, where the Bhajan Hall had become our studio. 6.15 A.M., the hiccups were still there. Swami was due shortly and how we could we have this problem when He was giving His Discourse? We simply did not know what caused the problem, much less the way of fixing it. We just prayed. Swami came, gave Darshan and went to the dais. He started speaking. Believe it or not, the broadcast went through perfectly, not one single hiccup! Truly, it was miracle! The world simply did not know how thrilled

we all were!!

The miracles seem to go on, for now we have four new developments. First, we now have a service to Africa and Europe, on the Afristar, as most of you are already aware. And this again we owe to Dr. Samara. Next, we have not only a web site of our own but also a download service that greatly benefits people living in Australia, New Zealand, and the America Continent, which are outside the foot prints of the WORLDSPACE satellites. Third, a TV channel [Sanskar TV] is now carrying our video programmes three times a week, and this time we are able to broadcast Bhajans sung in Swami's presence. This is something absolutely wonderful; earlier, video cameras were simply not allowed inside the sanctum but now, Bhagavan has graciously permitted us to video tape Bhajan programmes, so that viewers all over India can experience the Prashanti atmosphere intimately that is His Compassion.

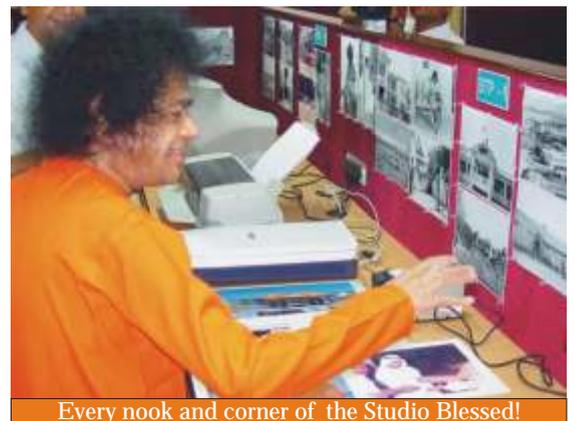
Meanwhile, the ever-active Gopal, has created more new dream facilities involving high-bandwidth connectivity and all that. Some of these are related to the new Information Technology Centre inaugurated by Swami recently we carried a report on that in our last issue. Thanks to these facilities, we expect to soon telecast events over the web, web Darshan as Gopal refers to it. So wonders are happening all the time. Who knows, we might even have live telecast on Sivarathri night! Just imagine what an impact that would have!

Blessed are all of us here on the SGH Team, who have been given a chance to be associated with all these momentous events. We offer our reverential and most grateful salutations to our Beloved Swami for blessing all of us in this manner and to give us all a chance to serve the world in many different ways, using the tools of modern technology. Jai Sai Ram. ■

SGH TEAM.



Swami creates a Wrist Watch for Gopal



Every nook and corner of the Studio Blessed!



SGH Team monitoring the Live Broad cast, 23 Nov 2002



Radio Sai Logo

There is no religion which does not have Prayer. Normally, we think of prayer in terms of requests made to God, requests for favours that is. Many of the standard prayers do have built into them requests for something or the other. In fact, there are even special prayers for special requests, like recovering lost articles, for example.

For many years, I used to think that making requests is what prayers are all about. That is to say, one- we praise God, and two- we slip in our special request success in exams, success in recruitment interview, and what have you. I remember once watching the telecast of a closely-contested cricket match between India and Pakistan, being played in Sharjah. There was a big crowd watching the match since there are a lot of expatriate Indians and Pakistanis in the Gulf. The camera showed lots of Pakistanis fervently praying to Allah, presumably for the victory of their team! I asked myself: "Does Allah have no better business than getting mixed up with a silly cricket match?"

What exactly is Prayer? How exactly ought we to pray? And why should we pray? These are things I learnt only after coming to Swami. First and foremost, Prayer is a conversation with God. It is just like talking to one's mother, for example. And just as one is used to asking mom for this and that, one also asks God without inhibition for various things.

Some object to making requests to God. Concerning this, Baba says that it is better to ask God directly, than begging humans for all kinds of favours. Indeed this is true. But then does one have to remember God only when there is a request to make? This is the question one must ask oneself. In almost all traditions, children are taught [if at all they are] prayers that involve requests of one kind or the other. But is this what we must do? Is this what prayers are all about?

Prayer ought to be an expression of Love for God, an expression of gratitude for God and above all, an expression of our willingness for God. We must remember God not when we are in distress but when we are happy. That is the first step in developing unselfish love for God. In the *Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna that He has four types of devotees: Those who want wealth and prosperity, those who are in distress, those who are thirsting for God, and those who have attained Wisdom. God loves all no doubt but He has preferences too. This also has been spelt out clearly by Krishna and reiterated times without number by our Beloved Baba. I call particular attention to His Divine Discourse delivered on 24th May, 2000, during the Summer Course [see, Summer Showers in Brindavan, 2000, p. 201].

I have brought up the matter of prayer because prayer is the simplest and easiest form of meditation. People think that meditation involves the whole drill of sitting down calmly in the prescribed pose, closing the eyes, and slowly going through an entire procedure. Yes, that is FORMAL meditation. Formal

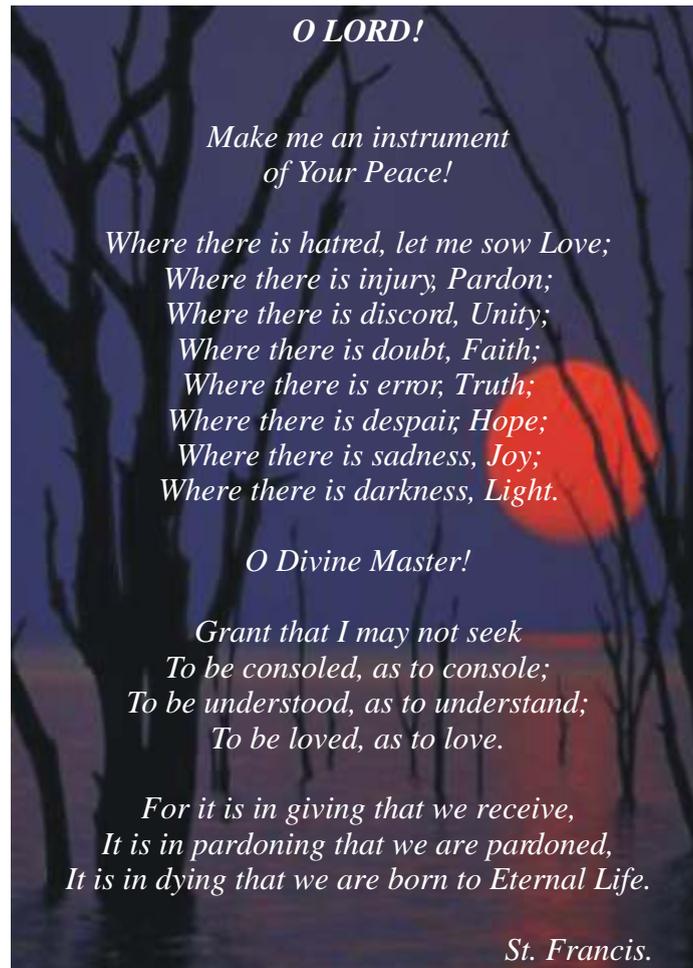
meditation is very difficult, and requires not only years of patient and intense practice, but conditioning one's entire life-style to suit doing meditation. The *Rishis* of old did precisely this, and a famous one named Patanjali has spelt out the prescription in detail. As Swami has told students several times, meditation is not easy in this day and age. Nor is it required really, contrary to the belief of many. He asks: "What does meditation really mean? It simply means thinking about the Lord." Vivekananda put it crisply. He declared: "Meditation is the constant remembrance of the Lord."

Now let me tie up prayer and 'meditation' into a format that even a child would find easy to follow. Let us just talk to Swami, as though He is directly before us. We can certainly do this, say when we are alone, when we are travelling in a plane, and so on. This way, Swami becomes a real Friend. Time and again, Swami says, "You must regard God as your friend; this is better than being His servant." Operationally, it is my experience that it is safer to be play the role of a servant when in the direct, physical presence of Swami! But when having a heart to heart conversation along the lines indicated above, we can take the liberty of being His Friend. In fact, many great devotees have done precisely this.

Besides this we must also pray in the usual manner to Swami. Our prayer must express gratitude for the numerous things we receive, known and unknown. If we enjoy good health it is not because we are controlling our diet or jogging regularly etc. It is because of Swami's Grace. If we are successful in business, it is because of Swami's Grace; so on it goes, and we must not omit to express our gratitude for it. The list of things for which we must be grateful is endless. Besides expressing gratitude for the blessings and favours we have personally received, we can and must pray for others. Swami likes very much when we pray for OTHERS and do not ask anything for ourselves. That is selflessness, and God loves to see that quality in us.

In short, prayer can become a very pleasant experience, and one that we can eagerly look forward to. Prayer makes us think of God and this is something many office bearers in the Sai Organisation tend to slip up on, pleading work load and the like. Abstaining from prayer has no excuse; one can always find time to talk to God. More than anything else, it leads to internal cleansing. The longer we put off prayer, the more is the 'dirt' that accumulates within. In the semiconductor industry, the foundry where they make silicon chips [like the Pentium chip, for example] is kept unbelievably clean. They go to enormous effort to constantly purify the air; otherwise, the yield of good chips would go down drastically. In the same way, we too must find time to commune with Swami as frequently as possible.

If we give this a serious try, we would find life becoming very different for us. I say this on the basis of personal experience. What a sea change it brings! Let me conclude by recalling a beautiful and absolutely wonderful prayer due to St. Francis. It goes like this: ■



A 'sunny' day at the studio!

Attention radiosai listeners and cricket lovers!

Coming soon on radio sai global harmony, is little master, sunil gavaskar, in an exclusive interview with dr.g.vekataraman. Watch out for the announcement regarding the exact date and time of broadcast. Catch him!



The more one loves one's fellow beings, the greater would be the Bliss that one enjoys. The more you love others, the happier you would be. Therefore, if you wish to be constantly happy, you must always love all. Love is the Royal Path to God. The best way to God is to love all and serve all.

Everyone wants to be happy. Such a desire is natural and it springs from the fact that man's true nature is Bliss. Bliss is the Form of God but man does not understand that. He does not understand that he has originated from God, that life's undercurrent is God, and that his final destination also is God. Bliss should be the goal, and one must seek it in all earnestness. The human body is temporary; hence, the pleasure that it can give is also fleeting. One must therefore seek that which is permanent, that is God, or, what is the same thing, Bliss.



It is meaningless to seek Bliss by way of instruments such as the sense organs that are impermanent. The body can give only bodily pleasure, and the Mind can at best give mental satisfaction. But these do not represent Bliss; Divine Love alone is Bliss. This Love Principle is present not only in man but also in all beings, birds and beasts included. Therefore, one has to place the same value on the lives of all beings. Share the love latent within you with not only fellow human beings but also with all the creatures in Nature. That is the True Universal Love Principle. Such Principle alone should

be the basis of one's life.

The Path of True Love alone can take you unflinchingly to God and confer Permanent Bliss. Bodies may be different but the God within all bodies is the same. There is a man who is addressed as father by his son. The daughter-in-law calls him father-in-law, while the grandchildren call him grandfather. The individual is the same but the manner in which different people address him varies. Similarly the same God is given different names by the followers of different religions; they hail Him as Allah, Jesus, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and so on. Though the names vary, God is one and the same. Therefore, there is really no room for dispute between people belonging to different religions. You may address God by the name of your choice but all calls go to the same destination. Goal is one and God also is one.

Scholarship will not protect or redeem you; only Pure Love can. Pure Love is like a well-paved, one-way road with no speed breakers. You can rush along it to God at whatever speed you want. Overcoming all obstacles, you must keep rushing towards God. That must be the characteristic of your spiritual journey. ■

EXCERPTS FROM A DISCOURSE BY
SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI

QUESTION: Swami, what is the difference between *Bhakti* [devotion] and Surrender?



Bhakti is a state of dualism. In this state, there are two entities—God and the devotee. The two are so close that they cannot ever be torn apart or separated. *Bhakti* binds the devotee to God. Surrender, on the other hand, is a state of monism or *Advaitam*. Once the devotee says there is only God and nothing else, he ceases to have an independent existence—he does not exist as a separate entity. The devotee never ever considers anything as “his”. He moves completely away from the “I” feeling.

An example: Water and sugar differ both in form and properties. This is dualism, or the path of *Bhakti*. Suppose sugar is added to water and the water is stirred. The sugar will dissolve and spread throughout the water. In this condition, there is neither pure water nor sugar; instead, there is syrup. This is surrender or *Advaitam*—the devotee offers everything to God and keeps nothing for himself, including his mind.

QUESTION: Swami, does Love come after faith or does faith come after Love?

There can be no question that faith must come first. It is faith that takes one to Love. One loves one's mother or friend because of the faith one has in those persons. If there is no faith, can there be love for those people? Therefore, if the question is “which comes first”, then the answer is that faith comes first.

QUESTION: Swami, some say that experience is the basis for faith while others say that faith comes before experience. Which is correct?

It is only when there is faith that one can have experience. Faith is the basis of everything. An example: If someone who wants to learn swimming says, 'I will first learn swimming and then enter water', it would be absolutely ridiculous! Can you learn swimming on sand or on a road? You necessarily have to learn it in water. Swimming is like experience and faith is like water. Know for sure that faith always comes first. ►



SPIRITUAL BLOSSOMS

QUESTION: Swami, detachment seems so difficult! It is not at all easy to give up one's attachment to one's family, relatives, etc.

Actually, detachment is quite easy. In Swami's view, holding on is more difficult. See here. I am holding on tightly to this handkerchief. Now I let go. The kerchief falls. Which is more difficult? To hold on tightly, or to let go? To hold tight, I must exert pressure with all the five fingers. This calls for effort. But to release the hold, it is so much easier! Hence, attachment is more difficult than detachment!

QUESTION: Swami, why is it that we do not immediately get the rewards of Sadhana [spiritual practice]?

Your approach to spiritual practice is not correct, and you must understand some essentials. Let Me give an example. Children

commence their studies in the Kindergarten, then go through school, pass the 10th Standard, then the 12th Standard, then enter College, and study for the B.A., B.Com., degrees etc. How many years all this takes! And how much effort is required to earn a University degree! If one must struggle so hard for a mere worldly degree, then is it correct to expect instant results and rewards when one is going in quest of the Infinite and the Eternal? It is wrong to expect immediate rewards. ■



GETTING SPIRITUALLY BETTER

ENQUIRY: HOW IT ALL STARTED

We will begin by discussing what is meant enquiry, when it started, and why it is important. Today we live in comfortable homes. Some of us live in homes that are 'sealed' curtains everywhere, and air-conditioner also! We see very little of the world around [except through newspapers, magazines, and of course the TV]. We are hardly aware of Creation, and take little notice of its wonders. For ancient man, it was very different.

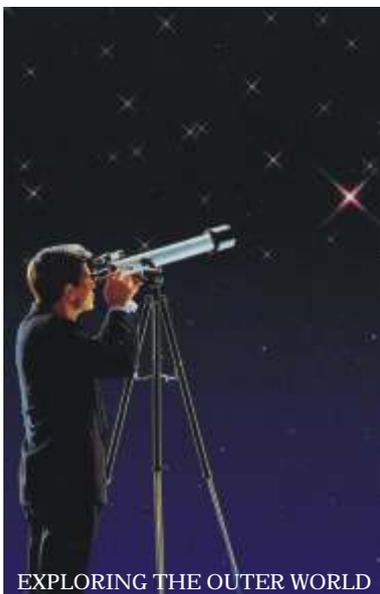
He was out there in the open, exposed to the elements. When he looked up he saw the sky. He saw the Sun, the Moon, the stars, the clouds, and the birds. Around him there were the plants, the trees, the insects and the animals. He was both puzzled and wonder struck. He was astounded because everything around him was so beautiful and remarkable. But he was also puzzled why all this? And what was his special role in all this, if any?

Such enquiry was pursued by people in many lands Greece, North America, South America, and Asia. These seekers asked the basic questions: "What is Creation? Is there a purpose to it? Where exactly do I [man] fit into all this? Does life have a purpose?" What is called

knowledge is the collection of answers obtained from such enquiry. This process of enquiry is going on non-stop, although the methodology and the consolidation of the answers have changed considerably over time.

In the beginning, there was no serious attempt to categorise the questions as spiritual and non-spiritual. Intuitively, early man recognised that there must be a Divinity that is the source of everything and also shapes everything. It was philosophy all the way though some part of it addressed purely spiritual questions while other parts dealt with temporal issues. Till about the time of the Renaissance, this was the case no compartmentalisation.

Things began to change from the time Galileo and Newton entered the picture. Both were religious-



GETTING SPIRITUALLY BETTER!

Dear Reader,

We take great pleasure in offering you notes on Spiritual Enquiry. The first instalment is presented below. You will notice that there is a basic text, followed by supplementary notes. In the next issue, we will give a quiz against which you can test yourself! If you wish, you might like to use this material in Study Circles in your area.

Do let us know what you think of this new feature etc. You can write to us at: h2h@radiosai.org Jai Sai Ram.

Yours in Sai Seva,
The Publishers.

minded, but given to enquiring about the laws and the forces of Nature. Progressively, such investigations became more and more focussed and also limited in scope, and it was no longer operationally necessary to link one's findings to a Creator and His Grand Design. Not only God, even man did not figure in the investigations for example, if one wants to discuss the ocean tides within the framework of science, it is sufficient to consider just the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon neither God nor man enter the picture.

While science and spiritual philosophy began to drift apart almost from the time of the Renaissance, the scientists of that era were neither atheists nor even agnostics. However, as time passed, the divorce between spirituality and science became complete. Scientists slowly began to ignore God, then forget God, and finally began to question His very ▶

existence. What has made the problem very serious is the fact that modern life has become intimately linked to Science and Technology. Thus, in the name of being scientific, even ordinary people have begun to give up belief in God, and, with it, also basic values. In the name of freedom, people today often tend to be extremely selfish.



Investigating the inner world

Modern man has lost his moorings and has got cut off from his roots. He thinks he has made progress, that he has advanced, and has become more 'civilised'. Is this really true? There is a wide-spread feeling today that religion contradicts science; is this true? Spirituality is dismissed as empty philosophy; is this true? Not at all.

First and foremost, let us clearly understand how religion is related to spiritual philosophy. Religion is nothing but 'applied spirituality'. Spiritual philosophy provides the basic foundation. The dictionary defines philosophy as: "The pursuit of Knowledge and Wisdom; the Knowledge of Causes and Laws of all things; the Science of being as being; the principle underlying Knowledge; the Science of reasoning." Seen in this light, it is not just enough to know how the earth moves around the Sun or even how the stars are born etc. WHY do such things happen? Why is there a Universe in the first place? What is man's special role in it, if any? These questions assume greater importance than even before, even as Science and Technology are 'running away'.

Many profound thinkers and eminent scientists who work at the frontier of scientific knowledge have come to the conclusion that spirituality cannot be dismissed lightly as many brash scientists

of today tend to. Nobel Prize winner Charles Townes says, "Science explains the 'how' of the Universe while religion explains the 'why'."

Religions may differ but they agree on the basics; not surprising at all there is only one answer to the 'grand mystery'! In Swami's terminology, "Nations are many but the Earth is one!"

Bhagavan Baba directs attention to BASIC SPIRITUALITY, not merely because it transcends religion but more so because it is THE FOUNDATION.

Study Circles must focus on the foundation. Thus, the enquiry must revolve around our roots, our intrinsic Divine nature, the purpose of the Universe, the purpose of life, etc. Some scientists [e.g., Nobelist Weinberg] feel that the Universe has no purpose! This is absolutely untrue! A careful reading of Swami's teachings would reveal how empty such thinking is it a very negative view, and also a dangerous one. Seekers must endeavour to get at the bottom of the matter by delving into Baba's teachings that really is the purpose of the Study Circle.

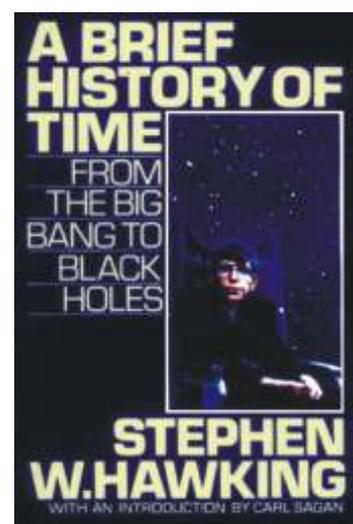
Incidentally, Stephen Hawking, the celebrated physicist says towards the end of his famous best-seller, A Brief History of Time, "We find ourselves in a bewildering world. We want to make sense of what we see around us and to ask: What is the nature of the Universe? What is our place in it and where did it and we come from? Why is it the way it is?" What this quote reveals is that after all the triumphs of modern science, the basic questions still remain. That is because people are not prepared to look for the answers in the place they ought to, in spirituality. And that precisely is where the Study Circles must focus.

To conclude, clear and unambiguous answers exist for all the questions raised by ancient man. These answers have come to mankind via revelations made to Wise over the ages. They are enshrined in various scriptural texts. Moreover, they have been heavily underscored by the *Avatars* in various ways. More than anything else, the *Avatars* have pointed out subtleties never before revealed to man. Thus, an in-depth study of the teachings of God in Human Form

assumes great importance. In other words, the Study Circles have an important task to perform and a crucial role to play! They must help seekers to discover their Inner Divinity, and later assist others in doing the same. When man rises to the level of God, Earth would become Paradise! ■



Stephen Hawking



ADDITIONAL NOTES RELATING TO THE ABOVE

Enquiry is a MUST for all spiritual seekers. A spiritual seeker is essentially in quest of God. Thus, most if not all of the seeker's questions would be related to God in one manner or the other.

Ancient man did not know anything about God to start with. But when he began to notice the great marvels of Nature, he realised that there must be a Supreme Power that was present everywhere.

Gandhi refers to the Omnipresence beautifully with the words: "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it though I cannot see it."

Swami tells us the same things via the words: "I am in you, with you, around you, above you, below you...."

Ancient man had many questions but no one to turn to for answers. He therefore tried to find the answers himself. In some cases he was successful but in others, he was not. The answers he found for himself came from his intellect.

Man did not know it then [he does not even now!] but intellect is nothing but God speaking from inside! As Swami says, the intellect is an aspect of God and His Supreme Power. [For greater elaboration, see, *Summer Showers in Brindavan*, 2000, in particular, pages 45, and 48.]

By his own effort, man understood to some extent the Omnipresence of God. But he did not quite appreciate that God was present within him too. That fact was revealed to man in various ways.

God revealed this truth about His Immanence in all beings to Sages. The Sages then passed this Knowledge on to those who sought it.

In addition to this, God directly explained [via the *Bhagavad Gita*] how He is the In-dweller, and how He subtly manifests as the life-force.

In spite of all this, mankind has forgotten all these valuable lessons. [Why does man forget valuable lessons while remembering trivia? Swami narrates a story to explain the point. Locate that story!]

Today Baba is teaching [with enormous patience one might add] all those lessons, not just once but over and over again, in extra-ordinary detail. So we must pay attention, absorb, and enquire deeply on them so that the lessons become permanently embedded.

If the lessons taught by Baba get permanently etched on our Heart and we are able to draw upon them at will, then life's journey would be smooth.

POINTS TO PONDER OVER

Modern man is not given to deep enquiry. Why? Is it because he has no time? Is it because this is a waste of time? Or is it because he really has no questions to ask, his mind having already been conditioned by the incessant barrage from the media? [Swami: "You see through the eyes of others (TV), you hear through the ears of others, and you think through the minds of others!"]

What arguments do atheists normally advance to deny God? How would you counter them?

What external circumstances are needed to promote enquiry? And what internal qualities are needed for developing discrimination?

What precisely is meant by discrimination? Why does Baba attach importance to discrimination?

Is discrimination in secular matters different from discrimination in spiritual matters? If so, why?

What in your opinion are the important issues facing humanity today? List them in the order of importance as you perceive it. Where do the solutions lie? In the spiritual or secular domain? If you cannot compartmentalise in this manner, why not?

Why is modern man so reluctant to accept God?

Notice that as explained to us by Baba, answers to questions relating to the external world constitute EDUCATION, while answers to questions relating to the inner world form the essence of EDUCARE! [Look up Swami's sayings on the matter.]

Swami often says that the Universe is the greatest book, and Nature is the greatest teacher. How does Baba illustrate His point? [This relates to how one may find answers to the questions that puzzle us.]

Once, Krishna taught some lessons to Uddhava, by recalling what was taught by Lord Dattreya to a seeker. This teaching imparted to Uddhava is sometimes called Uddhava Gita. A digest of it may be found in *Message of the Lord*, p. 667. Essentially, it is about lessons that can be learnt from Nature.

What precisely is meant by Inner Divinity?

Swami has been talking for ages about devotees recognising their Inner Divinity; yet, few seem to have succeeded. Why? What are the obstacles, and how are they to be removed? ■

The Sri Satya Sai International Center And School For Human Values was established by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, in March 1998 at New Delhi, as part of His overall mission of transforming Human Consciousness. The center, with His blessings, is visualized to have global implications and reach out to all nations, all peoples and all professions. As part of this mission of promoting Swami's message of Human values, love and service, the center organizes, regularly, a variety of programmes like group discussions, workshops and talks by eminent personalities.

On the 27th of April 2003, Maulana Waheeduddin Khan, the noted Islamic scholar, delivered an emotionally charged speech on "India: The Potential Spiritual Super Power" to a packed auditorium at the center. There was hardly a dry eye at the end of that spiritually elevating talk:

Spirituality is a higher level of consciousness. When one elevates oneself to a level where material things become secondary and inner meanings assume prime importance, then one is a spiritual person.

Just as the body needs bread, the soul needs nourishment. One can develop the soul by choosing forgiveness instead of anger, converting jealousy into a sentiment of wishing well, turning hatred into love, defusing tensions instead of harbouring them and opting for introspection when one feels aggrieved at the turn of events.

India is a land of spirituality. When the western world was engaged in technical activities and producing material experts, India was busy in spiritual activities and producing spiritual scientists in the form of Swamis and Sufis.

Swami Vivekananda was one day walking on the streets of Chicago and heard a lady saying to her husband that Swamiji did not appear to be a gentleman. He went up to her and said, "Excuse me, madam. In your country, a tailor makes a gentleman. In India, one is a gentleman if one has character."

India might be an underdeveloped country in the



SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

material sense, but it is a highly developed country in the spiritual sense. It is a potential spiritual super power. We need to generate a spiritual renaissance in the 21st century.

Vivekananda had predicted that after independence, India would assume the spiritual leadership of the world. The days of materialism and violence are over. The world is craving for spiritual solace and peace. It is here that India can play a major role.

Turning this potential into actuality would need a long and sincere effort. It is a struggle involving four phases.



Maulana Waheeduddin Khan

First we have to build individual minds. Then we have to build a spiritual society. Then we have to fashion a nation based on peace, non-violence and spiritual values. Finally, by changing itself, India can change the whole world.

We can make a start by establishing an international university for spiritual studies in India. Its students can be sent out as ambassadors of peace, harmony and goodwill. In the process, a world based on peace and spirituality will gradually be brought into existence.

Spirituality is the very identity, the true soul of India. The magnificence of the lofty Himalayas, the eternal flow of our majestic rivers, the solace of our lush greenery and the songs of our beautiful birds exemplify it. Let us all work for the achievement of India's destiny.

WORKSHOP ON " HUMAN VALUES AND THE POLICE "

The general consensus at the one-day workshop on "Human values and Police" was unambiguous. Although it

appeared at a superficial level that it was idealistic, if not utopian, to think of practicing values in the Police, deeper analysis showed that there was, in fact, nothing more urgently required and practical.

The workshop, which was attended by IPS officers of various levels of seniority, including those who have retired from the service, was held in the conference room of the Sai International school at New Delhi. Lt. Gen. M.L.Chibber presided over the proceedings and the guest convenor was sri H.P. Bhatnagar, retired director general of BSF.

The workshop felt that the function of the Police was not merely to maintain law and order. The police could transform the dominant value system of a society and create a citizenry with respect for law, justice and the rights of others. It could be a catalyst of change, especially in times like these when there was a great churning on. It could contribute in a dynamic way to the restoration of the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation by taking the side of the poor, the marginalized and the dispossessed in the society.

The argument that police officers could not be superior to others in society because they also came from the same general stock was rejected. A police man *had* to be better, because he was charged with the sacred duty of protecting the social order from various dangerous elements like criminals, drug-peddlers, terrorists, communalists and so on. Society trusted its policeman and gave them special powers to arrest, to search, to seize, even to kill. The policemen had to repay the trust with honest, truthful and dedicated service.

There are, no doubt, various hurdles in the way of practicing human values. There are corrupt and powerful people who like to use the Police for their selfish interests. An individual officer has to decide for himself how to withstand pressures and still manage to practise the vocation of Policing in an honest fashion. Each officer had to devise his

One of the most enduring images of the Christmas 2002 celebrations in Prashanti Nilayam, is the sight of this imposing gentleman with this thick mop of hair, setting the festivities rolling at the break of dawn, by blowing on his giant, oversized conch shell. These



Harold with the conch

notes were not the dire rumblings of war (to those of us used to the *Mahabharat* fare on Television) but were rather a clarion call for peace and goodwill on Earth that traditionally heralds the birth anniversary of Lord Jesus Christ.

Meet Harold E. Smith, musician and healer having his home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. His instrument of choice is the Didjeridoo, an Australian aborigine flute-like instrument with no holes. The instrument is about 5 feet long and has been hollowed out naturally by termites. Harold uses a circular breathing rhythm (inhaling through the nose and continuously blowing out through the mouth) to produce one continuous, seamless note. Each instrument is of a particular length and

has a hole of certain diameter and thus creates an associated note. Harold uses external tools (like cymbals) to add interesting variations to this sacred note produced by the Didjeridoo.

The other unusual instrument used by Harold was the giant conch shell mentioned earlier. This shell is about 25 inches in length, weighs over 5 kilos and is about 200 years old. Right after the Christmas festivities, Harold visited us at Radio Sai and shared his experiences and philosophies with us. Catch Harold E. Smith and feel the vibrations of his sacred instruments when we next play the interview with Harold on Radio Sai. ■

own *lakshman rekha*, demarcating the line he would not cross on any account.

There were many suggestions on how the practice of human values by the Police could be facilitated. Suggestions ranged from the need to modify laws and procedures, to providing modern gadgetry for conducting scientific investigations, to the grant of autonomy to the police as suggested by the national police commission.

At the same time it was felt that a lot could be done even within the present system. No one stopped a Police officer from training his subordinates in the art of living, meditation techniques, stress control or the art of dealing with the public. No one prevented Police officers from changing the entire organizational culture of the office they were called upon to head or to provide the right kind of leadership to their men.

Lt.Gen. M.L.Chibber summed up the discussion in the workshop as exemplifying the dilemma of leadership. It was the essence of leadership first to be and then to do. The hub of the universal inner structure of the good leader was selflessness based on an ideal or a vision. The potential of leadership was directly proportional to the range of one's vision and the extent to which one is capable of transcending the self. ■

COMING NEXT.....

Ganesh Chaturdhi at Prashanti Nilayam is a special festival when lord Ganesha is worshipped with great fervour. Ganesha idols are installed at all places of work and in the hostels too. On the third or fourth day, the idols are brought in a spectacular and colourful procession to the Mandir for swami's blessings. Thereafter they are immersed in a nearby well or a pond. An exclusive photo feature on this colorful festival that was celebrated on the 4th of September 2003 at Prashanti Nilayam.



The *Shirdi Avatar* is both extra ordinary as well as enigmatic in many respects. Though this incarnation belongs to recent history, myth and mystery continue to surround the story of this Avatar. However, thanks to the enlightenment provided by Bhagavan Sri Satya Sai Baba, one is now in position to place the essential aspects of the Shirdi Avatar in a proper perspective. Presenting in the next issue: 'The story of Shirdi Sai' complete with wonderful illustrations!

An old merchant from Kuppam arrived late one evening by car with his family. As soon as Baba saw him, He asked, "How deep is the well?" I thought the inquiry was about a well he was digging in his field, but his son told me a very thrilling story.

V.R was suffering from acute stomach pain for over ten days and the doctor in attendance left him one dark January night about 10PM. Every one went to bed and all was quiet. An hour later, it was noticed that V.R was not in his bed! Minutes passed, he did not return. A feeble voice was heard from the distance, "Amma! Amma!". The sons ran helter skelter and discovered that the voice emanated from the well! It was 50 yards away from the house, 10 feet across, with water 25 feet deep, an irrigation well, with a wall all around, slabs criss crossing the depth, with a pumping set worked by an electrically operated engine. The old man had fallen into it!

It was pitch dark, but, with the help of a torch it was found that the old man was most miraculously standing erect close to the wall with no apparent foothold, more than half his body immersed in the water. He was praying aloud to Sathya Sai, his only succour. Shuddering and shivering, one of the sons got down the well and tied a rope round the waist of the old man; others went about frantically calling for help, but they could collect only two timid individuals. Then, as luck would have it, or rather as Baba willed, the Sub-inspector of Police (whoever could have expected him of all people to pass that way?) butted in to find out the reason for their commotion. He helped in the rescue, by letting down a sofa for the old man and slowly lifting him up.

The doctor, who was called in, was stunned because there was not a single scratch or cut on the body; the patient was perfectly normal and unconcerned and was reciting Baba's Name. He looked as if he had just returned from a bath in the Chithravathi! How could he have stood

erect, clinging to the side of the well, with 25 feet of water beneath him? That was the wonder, the wonder of all who could not grasp that the escape was Providential, nay, *Sathyasaidential*, to be more exact.

A family came from Nellore and stood facing the portico of the Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba appeared before long and He asked them, "Where is the dog that took your son up the Hill?" I thought the question referred to some pet dog which was faithful and intelligent and I asked them whether my surmise was correct. No; it was not. It seems his son left the house one night with out notice, a week



previously. Since he was not in the best of health, either physically or mentally, the parents were naturally very worried; they telegraphed to Baba; they searched all likely and unlikely places. In the morning, someone came and gave them a clue.... he might have gone to Tirupathi. So, they hastened to that place and drove up the Hill and arrived at the Temple, to discover

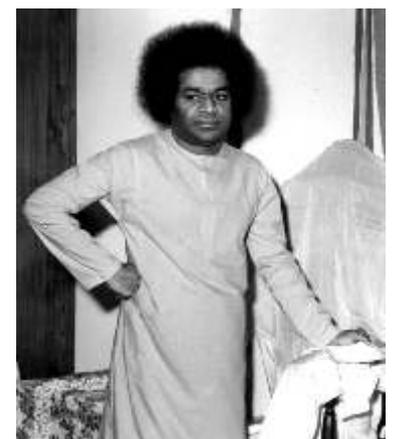
the boy there! He had climbed the steps in spite of his ill health, because, as he said a lovely little dog had inspired him and guided his steps. It seems that dog appeared suddenly from nowhere just after the first few steps; it would climb seven or eight steps and sit looking affectionately towards the boy, encouraging him to do likewise, urging him on, and intimating to him that it was all so easy. Without knowing how, the boy had followed the dog, talking to it and inspired by it, never doubting its intentions or its authenticity as guide. A few yards from the Gopuram of Sri Venkatachalapathi Temple, the dog melted away. That was the story the son related to the astounded parents on the Hill and at Puttaparthi to me, when I asked him about the dog, that was mentioned by Baba, as soon as they came.

An officer who had to tour uninhabited tracts and jungles for at least a few months every year as part of his official duties came to Puttaparthi; he was looking up the verandah on the first floor of the Nilayam, to get a glimpse of Baba. Presently, Baba appeared and recognising him, asked, "Did you get the lorry I sent?" I thought the man was a businessman who had dispatched a lorry to Puttaparthi and was expecting it back. But the man had a different story to tell!

He said that the question revealed to him that the arrival of a lorry, along a god forsaken jungle road to pick him up from his sick bed and convey him to the nearest doctor, 40 miles away, was the act of Baba and the saving of his life by that doctor's timely ministrations was a *Sathyasaidential* act of mercy. It seems he had developed a septic wound while in camp and that he had fallen into delirium on account of the fever. It was raining terribly and thunder roared overhead. He prayed to all the Gods he knew, including Baba, but, found no ray of hope, for he was on the very center of no man's land. Then, suddenly, he heard the noise of a passing lorry. Yes. The driver had lost his way and was nosing his way about the jungle tracks. His servants ran after it shouted desperately, and caught it, by the side of a deep nullah, where it had perforce to stop. That lorry saved his life.

And, now, he knew that Baba had sent it!

(ARTICLE WRITTEN BY LATE PROF.KASTURI, SANATHANA SARATHI APRIL 1961 ISSUE)



Right from the time He was a little boy, serving others was a passion with Swami. After He declared His *Avatarhood*, service continued to be high on His priority list. In this way, Baba not only emphasised the importance of service but also affirmed that even for the *Avatar*, the first priority is service to mankind. Indeed, it should be so for all of us, which is why, times without number, Bhagavan Baba stresses that 'Service to man is service to God'. While others merely preach and teach, Swami leads by setting an example not just a small or trivial example, but one of monumental proportions that will inspire for all times to come. The Seva Organisations, the chain of educational institutions, the different hospitals, the homes for the aged, and the various drinking water projects, all drive in the lesson of service. Shortly before the Seventy-fifth Birthday, Swami added yet another dimension to that lesson and gave it an expression, more eloquent than His own saying: "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray."

Gandhi often remarked that India lives in the villages. Indeed. Not only does eighty percent of the country's population still live in the villages, but, more importantly, as Baba Himself stresses, it is the villages of India that have kept alive the country's ancient traditions and sustained *Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa*. However, most of the politicians, businessmen, administrators, financiers, IT experts, etc., do not really bother about the country's villages. For people belonging to the upper strata, India is largely a conglomeration of advanced scientific laboratories, modern factories, business concerns, five-star hotels, thriving shopping centres, luxury tourist spots, etc., trying to crash into the Twenty-first century and take its place among the so-called 'Developed Countries'. All these symbols of modernism no doubt exist but behind this illusory façade lies hidden the real India, not visible to those who do not wish to see poverty and suffering.

The village representative of real India has no decent roads, hardly any school, not even an apology for a dispensary, no sanitary facilities worth the name, and no safe drinking water. The term village is just a name for a cluster of dilapidated huts in which are huddled people, a good

fraction of whom exist not by eating food but on sheer hope, hope that God above would in some manner take care of them. Others may forget but God does not ever abandon, never.

God who has come in human form in the present age chose to be born in one such village, possibly in order to draw attention to the importance of villages. While today many people leave the village of their birth to seek their fortune in big cities or even a different country, Baba stayed put in His native village and showed how, with determination and love, even a very backward village can be improved beyond recognition. Most people praise Swami to the skies but do precious little for rural uplift. And so, even as the Seventy-fifth Birthday was approaching and devotees were making great plans for a glittering and gala celebration, Bhagavan launched a service project that would direct attention to where it was needed.

It all happened rather suddenly, at least so it seemed. In October, 2000, the *Yajna* was duly performed and the *Navarathri* Festival was celebrated with the usual enthusiasm. After this came the *Deepavali* festival, and with it a dazzling fireworks display in the lawn facing the Poornachandra Hall. It was the 26th of October but even then one did not have much of an idea of what was going to follow pretty soon. Here and there, especially to students, Swami was dropping hints about village service, but no one knew what exactly Baba was going to do. But this much one was sure of; whatever it was, it would be breath-taking.

And then, just a couple days before the month ended Baba lifted the veil. Every year on 18th November, there is a massive programme [*Narayana Seva*] to distribute food and clothes to the poor and the

destitute, in the Hill View Stadium. This year, Swami decided to go the poor instead of calling them over. He asked the students to get organised and be prepared to distribute food and clothes in hundreds of surrounding villages and hamlets. Actually, the most difficult part of the planning was being quietly done behind the scenes by Baba Himself, unknown to most people, including the staff and the students of the Institute. The background planning included (1) the ground work for making over half a million food packets and *laddus* [a sweet dish], and (2) the procurement of about a hundred thousand *sarees* and *dhotis*.

Two days before action started, Swami came early for *Darshan* in the afternoon. All the teachers of the Institute were called into the Mandir Hall for an Interview, and in moving terms, Baba explained the genesis of the project. He said that despite so-called progress in urban areas, people in the villages lived in abject poverty. Recently, a mother, unable to feed her children, gave them poison instead, after which she ended her life by consuming poison herself. As Swami recalled this tragic incident, His eyes became misty and His voice trembled with emotion. He who was above all worldly feelings, was nevertheless moved. He showed how our hearts ought to melt, instead of being like stone. He then asked: "Are all of you prepared to go from village to village, from house to house, to distribute food and clothing? I want you to speak to people in a loving voice and make them all happy. You must become the instruments through which they experience Swami's Love. Are you ready?" In one voice the teachers replied, "Of course Swami!" Baba smiled sweetly and said, "Good! You have My Blessings. No matter how gigantic the task, you will succeed for I shall be with you all the way!" After this, Swami reeled out a long list of names of villages to be visited, and also the names of hamlets surrounding them, where tribals lived. Nobody has seen Swami go these places at least in recent decades, but He knew everything about them. When the teachers came out, no one had the slightest doubt about the execution. They all were beaming with confidence and full of spirit. A Silent Revolution was taking shape.



Narayana seva before the year 2000

...to be continued ■

LIVING ON HOPE

SCENES FROM AN INDIAN VILLAGE



LIVING ON HOPE

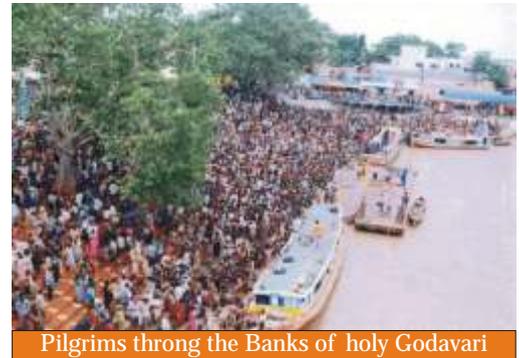
SAI SEVA AT THE PUSHKARAM

Once every twelve years, in the southern part of the Indian peninsula, millions of people congregate at the temple town of Rajamundry, on the banks of the mighty river Godavari. They are consumed by only one desire: to take a dip in the Holy river during this auspicious period called Pushkaram. The Hindus believe that a dip in the Godavari during this period rids one of all impurities: physical and mental. This of course is in consonance with the Hindu practice of revering all aspects of nature as a direct manifestation of the Divine. Whatever may be the other religious or spiritual reasons for this event, the fact is, that over a period of 12 days, in the month of August 2003, specific spots along the banks of Godavari witnessed a convergence of lakhs of people everyday...yes, lakhs of them everyday!

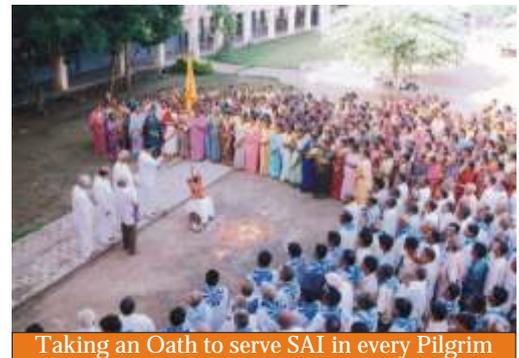
Imagine the consequences of such an event. The very numbers implied a system operating on the edge of chaos...with every possibility of things going wrong: stampedes, public health disasters, and deaths by drowning. Moreover, majority of the devotees who came there belonged to the poorer sections of the society; with just a pair of clothes, little for their food and a bounty of faith! The government, of course, did its best to organize this mega event. But it had its own limitations as far as the resources and manpower was concerned. This was where many voluntary groups swung into action and foremost on the list was the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization of Andhra Pradesh.

On the 29th of July, 2978 volunteers of the organization gathered at the Sathya Sai Gurukulam at Rajahmundry and made a commitment to unto themselves: 'We shall see SAI in every pilgrim we encounter and serve him/her to the best of our capacity'. Several months of planning had gone into this event. All the raw materials were ready. Three buses and four trucks were in place, ready for use. Every volunteer was given specific duties at specific locations. The service was to be rendered in turns by batches of thousand volunteers (600 men, 400 women), for a period of four days each.

Taking the name of SAI, the volunteers plunged into service. One could see SAI volunteers wherever one went. As soon as one walked into bus terminals and railway stations, volunteers offering service in the free cloakroom facility welcomed them. There were others who gave guidelines on how to reach the bathing *ghats*. The volunteers were there near the bathing ghats too, maintaining cleanliness and helping the old and the disabled to take a dip. They took care of the children when the parents went for their holy dip. They prevented stampedes by helping police maintain the queue. ▶



Pilgrims through the Banks of holy Godavari



Taking an Oath to serve SAI in every Pilgrim



Helping the Aged take a Holy Dip



Taking Care of the Pilgrims' belongings

SAI SEVA AT THE PUSHKARAM



Maintaining Queues



Cleaning the Bathing Ghats



Distributing free Food and... Love !



Pure Drinking Water for the Plgrims

There was no outbreak of any kind. Volunteers supplied pure drinking water, carrying water tanks on their backs. Medical camps were organized on the banks to tackle any health problems. Others were seen cleaning the river water of the offerings that the devotees made. Some others were busy elsewhere preparing large quantities of food, which was given away in the form of packets, free of cost, to the pilgrims everyday. The total number of packets given in these twelve days was a staggering 3,27,750!

The numbers would surely have impressed you too. But there was also quality to this quantity. The pilgrims and the newspapers were all praise for the wonderful service rendered by the Sathya Sai Seva Dal. In response to all this one of the young volunteers from Rajamundry remarked, " We only pray that this little act of serving His devotees, has pleased Bhagwan!"

Not many of us get a chance to serve the Lord directly...but a service to those who seek Him, is by itself service unto Him! ■

JAI SAI RAM

Dear Readers...

If you have stories from your land, where your people have touched the lives of others in any little way through their service and love...let us know about it.

We seek your inspiration on this path, too!

Dear Reader,

This is a special article. It is a reproduction of a talk in the series MUSINGS, regularly broadcast by Prof. Venkataraman. To make the text interesting, we have specially included some pictures to go with it. Hope you like it. Tell us your reactions by writing to: h2h@radiosai.org

Jai Sai Ram. Yours in Sai Seva,
The Publisher.

Loving Sai Ram, and greetings once again from Prashantinilayam.

It has been a long time since I talked to you, more than four months in fact. As you all know, Swami left Puttaparthi for Brindavan soon after Sivarathri. I was supposed to go too, but I had to stay back since we were about to launch our broadcasts on AFRISTAR service to Africa and Europe. There were several matters that needed my personal attention, and I just could not take off till I had completed all these tasks. Finally I was able to leave on 23rd March and be once more in the physical presence of Bhagavan Baba. By the way please note



Before the Injury, walking back to Trayee

that right now, Radio Sai can be heard 24 hours daily, from Ireland to Japan and in Africa too! Isn't that great?!

This summer was very different from the preceding ones, last year's, for example. As you perhaps know, when Swami is in Brindavan, He holds what are known as Trayee sessions that Swami's boys look forward to very much. This year there were a few such sessions in the beginning but soon they were suspended. No doubt there was wide-spread disappointment but I personally was happy because to me

it seemed that Swami DID need physical rest.

Few have the foggiest idea of how heavy is Swami's physical load. He is God in human form no doubt, but have we not heard Him tell us again and again that where His body is concerned, He will not invoke any of His special powers, leaving everything to His disciplined routine? In practical terms, what it means is that His body too requires rest because it too is bound by the limitations He has ordained as Lord God, on all human bodies.

There was also another thing. Swami's knee appeared to be bothering Him. He did not give any indication of it, but those who were in His physical proximity knew about it. In fact, after He went to Brindavan, Swami took the unusual step of using a golf cart to return in the evening after Bhajans, from the Sai Ramesh Kishan Hall to Trayee. After the Bhajans were over and after taking Aarathi, Bhagavan would leave by the door behind Krishna's statue and then ride the golf cart.

Normally, Swami bends backwards in refusing any aids or things like that. For example, when it drizzles and He is walking, He flatly refuses umbrellas. If such a One was now using a golf cart, it really meant He was having a lot of difficulty with His physical body just as you and I would have.

Incidentally, this prompts me to narrate an incident that took place in Brindavan. This happened before the hip fracture, and in fact Warden Narasimha Murthy

made a brief reference to it in his talk which we have broadcast many, many times. This is what happened. One day, upstairs in the Mandir, Swami was talking to some of the people who work inside the Mandir. Swami asked one of them who serves Bhagavan a lot, "What do you want?" This person replied, "I want nothing Swami." "Don't be shy. I will give you anything you want" that was Swami. The other person now said, "Swami, I really want nothing. Why at all should I want anything when You are there for me?" "No, no, that is different. Tell Me what you want at the personal or material level. I shall give you immediately." This loyal devotee then replied touching Bhagavan's knees, "Swami in that case, please cure Yourself. I cannot bear to see You have a problem." There were tears in the eyes of the devotee as he spoke. Swami was deeply moved, obviously. Slowly He said to the others present, "Look at this man! This is true devotion."

I narrate this incident for an important reason. This is the way one becomes dear to the Lord. Now of course, people would immediately say, "Listen, you are absolutely crazy. How many people can be physically near to Swami and say such



Before the injury, taking the ride back to Trayee

things? This clearly is not a suitable way to become dear to the Lord." Legally perhaps, such an argument would have validity. But we are here not talking of law but about Spirituality. So, from a spiritual point of view, what lesson does this incident have for us? Simply this: 1) We must wish for the well being of others without wishing anything for ourselves. 2) We must also look upon the others as God. In that case, wishing others well is the same as wishing Swami well. Let me illustrate with an example.▶

After the injury, the first Darshan at Sai Ramesh Hall

There is a man and his mother is ill. He prays to God: "Lord, please cure my mother. Physically she is the mother of this body, but in terms of the love that she has showered on me, she is God personified. In that sense, my prayer is, please cure



Yourself! You alone have the power to do that, and I can only pray. Kindly heed to my prayers." Such things have worked in the past and will continue to work in the future. Some people pray in a slightly different manner asking that the illness be transferred to them. There are many variations possible. What I am trying to drive at is that the way to become dear to the Lord is via the Heart. It is the Heart to Heart connection that offers the opportunity to become dear to the Lord.

Let me get back to the Brindavan diary, if I may call it that. As the month of May approached, rumours were in full swing. Some were betting that there would be a Summer Course while others were busy trying to detect signs of an impending Kodaikanal trip. True to His nature, Swami kept both groups guessing! It is nice to play such guessing games and look forward to such events, but I was concerned from a different angle. To start with, both such events meant extra physical strain for Swami. And then there was the expense. People little realise how much money has to be spent for all this. It is one thing if these were the only activities in the Avatar's Mission. In the forties, in the days when Swami resided in the old Mandir, things were different. At the present time, it is an altogether different ball game. Swami has many educational institutions to run, hospitals to look after, and added to all this, there is the massive drinking water project for Madras. All these cost money, a lot of it in fact. That is why I worried about additional financial burden.

Anyway, middle of May, Swami went to Kodaikanal, but as it turned out, the stay was unusually brief. Presently I shall not say much about the Kodaikanal part of the stay because we intend to broadcast a whole series on it later. Let me just say that the timing of the Kodai trip was such that it ruled out all possibility of a Summer Course after that.

OK, came June, and it was time for a new academic year to start.

Normally, our Institute reopens on June first but this year, the first of June happened to be a Sunday; the reopening was therefore scheduled for Monday, 2nd



June. On 4th June Swami was supposed to visit the residence of the Chief Minister of Karnataka and on the 8th, He was supposed to make His annual visit to the Sai Darshan Centre in Indiranagar in Bangalore. It was widely expected that after these two engagements, Swami would leave for Puttapparthi. Of course, the Bangalore people were praying to Swami that He should extend His stay since He could rest properly and all that, but Baba brushed aside all those entreaties saying, "You may not have work to do but I have!" So it seemed very much on the cards that



Swami would leave say by 9th or 10th. The betting had started.

On June first, Sanjay Sahni the Principal of the Brindavan Campus, prayed to Swami to come to the College and bless the commencement of the new academic year with a Divine Discourse. In previous years, Swami has done this many times. This time Swami said to Sanjay Sahni, "You ask the students to assemble in the Sai Ramesh Kishen Hall, and I shall speak to them here." Thus it was that we had a special Divine Discourse on the morning of June 2nd. I believe we have broadcast that Discourse, and you probably have heard it.

June 3rd went off as usual, and on June 4th we were all waiting for Swami to come out in the morning for Darshan. He did not come out at the usual time. May be He was busy and so we continued to wait. Ten minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes and 40 minutes. No sign of Swami. We were beginning to get worried. And then word came out from inside the Mandir, "You can all disperse. Swami is busy and will not come out in the morning. He will give Darshan later." And so we dispersed. Some wondered whether Swami's absence was in any way connected with His proposed visit to the house of the Chief Minister. My mind worked differently. As I was going back to my room, I was beginning to have some fears. This sort of thing, namely Swami missing Darshan, had happened on rare occasions in Puttapparthi earlier, and on those occasions, there was always a physical problem; once it was with the eye. What was it now? Just at that moment, Narasimha Murthy, the Warden of Brindavan who was walking

that way, whispered "I think Swami has had a fall." At that time, no one really knew what had happened, and so this was I would say, an inspired guess.

Around 8.30 AM, a few of us who have access went inside the

After the injury, the Lord comes to watch the Texas Drama

Trayee Mandir via the back door to get some authentic news. We discovered that all doors leading to the upstairs where Swami's room is located, were barred; no one could really go to Swami's room! Even the so-called close people could not have access.

All we could see from downstairs, the circular central hall of Trayee that is, was the door of Swami's room upstairs, and it was closed. So we all waited below. We waited for one hour, two hours, three hours, and the vigil went on and on. No one thought of breakfast, lunch or whatever. Occasionally, we sipped water.

Around four O'clock in the evening, three people somehow managed to go partially up the stairs near to Swami's room; their idea was to somehow go to His room and find out if any help was required. This process obviously generated some noise, and as a result, the door of Swami's room opened. We who were watching from below became excited. And through that door, Satya Jit who is with Swami all the time came out. He beckoned the people who had come there to come inside. Clearly, Swami wanted them to go in. They went and came out in five minutes. We were told that Swami was fine and resting and would give Darshan soon that is all. We dispersed.

However, there was more to all this, as I discovered only much later. Between 4.30 PM that Wednesday and night of that day, much happened of which I was totally ignorant, though I was just a few feet away in the Guest House. Next morning, as I was going for Darshan, I was informed that there would be no Darshan. I then immediately withdrew to my room. Sometime later, I went to the office of Mr. C.Sreenivas to talk to him about something. I was informed, "Mr. Sreenivas has gone to the General Hospital. He is not here now. We do not know when he would be back." I did not attach much significance to this answer

since Sreenivas is connected with the General Hospital in Whitefield, and it seemed a natural thing for him to go there to attend to some matter or the other. Hours passed and Sreenivas did not return, but this still did not arouse any suspicion in me!



Around 1 PM, the Vice Chancellor Mr. Giri knocked on my door. I was most surprised to see him there. He had come to Brindavan the previous day to call on Swami, take His blessing

and go to America on a short trip. He could not see Swami, and so he cancelled his trip at the very last minute. This I was not aware of. He now told me, "Do you know Swami has had a fracture and has been moved to the hospital for surgery?" I was stunned. There I was just a few feet away and I knew nothing of what had happened. In a way, it was because I was immersed in work. I am made that way, and I just do not have time to look around or talk to people and fish for information. Anyway, the Vice Chancellor and I decided immediately that we would rush to the hospital. In our naiveté, we both assumed that Swami would be operated in the Super Speciality Hospital. So we rushed there. The hospital wore a normal look which sort of puzzled me. If Swami is here and that too as a patient, this is not how the hospital would be looking. What's going on? Just then we were informed that Swami had been taken to the General Hospital. Suddenly things began to fall into place. Sreenivas was absent because he was setting things up in the General Hospital. It was, incidentally, a Thursday. The authorities decided that the hospital would remain closed that day. Around 10.30 or so, Swami was taken there, and by the time the Vice Chancellor and I reached there, it was close to 3 PM. Just as our car approached the hospital, we found Seva Dals on the road furiously waving our car

away. And before we knew what was happening, we saw a convoy emerge out of the hospital and drive away. Strange, no ambulance. Nevertheless, it was clear that Swami was being taken back to Trayee. We rushed behind that convoy, and by the time we arrived, Swami had been taken to His room. It was all over, in no time at all.

Two days later, Saturday that is, in the morning, I went inside Trayee Mandir, just to be physically near Swami. I did not entertain even the slimmest hope of seeing Him it was just unreasonable to have any such expectation. And you know what? Swami sent for three of us who were waiting below, Dr. Safaya, the Vice Chancellor, and myself. We went up, to Swami's room. This was the first time I had entered it. I saw Swami lying in bed. It was a hospital ICU bed meant for patients. It was almost a surrealistic sight. Swami was wearing His robe. He was partially covered with a blanket the like of which He had distributed in thousands. And He had a gorgeous smile. I forgot all about His fracture. To me He looked like the Lord reclining on His bed in the Ocean of Milk, as the scriptures say He does. He did not give us any chance to ask any questions. With surprise He asked the Vice Chancellor, "What, you did not go to America?" And the Vice Chancellor replied, "How could I Swami, at a time like this?" Swami was touched and replied, "Bangaru". I was deeply moved and in tears. Swami then told us, "I am fine. I have to be, bathed as I am in the torrent of Love" Prema Pravaham was the actual phrase He used. He then told us not to worry and we were given permission to withdraw. ▶



About a week later Darshan started, but in an unusual manner. It was a Sunday I think, and the boys of the Brindavan campus were asked to quietly come inside the Trayee Manidir and sit in the circular hall. They then sang Bhajans. Swami came out of His room, stood in the upper balcony, and gazed down with much love. Swami was not quite OK, but it was obvious He just could not keep away from devotees and His students. Soon, this became the new style, shall I say? Every Thursday and Sunday, Swami would come out into the upper balcony, while boys below sang Bhajans. Besides the students, a few devotees were also permitted into the central hall. Slowly Bhagavan would start going round the circular upper balcony. Half way across, He would receive aarathai. And while completing the circuit and returning to His room, He would, from upstairs, greet people below and ask questions, like how is the Madras water project going, and so on. Devotees below who were quite satisfied with just a glimpse invariably found this too much and often wept like little children. It was an amazing and a most moving sight. What about women? They were gathered in the lawn outside, and Swami, after finishing His Darshan from the upper circular veranda, would go into His room and wave to the ladies outside from His window facing the garden.

This went on for a couple of weeks, and all the time, Swami kept sending messages that He would soon come out. And it did happen sooner than we expected. How? Well, there we have an example of the Love of the Lord for His devotees. You see, moving about after a hip fracture is no joke. First one walks with a walker and then one takes a few steps. It is a process that takes weeks if not months. Swami was short circuiting the entire process into days. And mind you, He was not doing with His Divine powers, no way! Instead, He spent a lot of time exercising Himself! How? Every morning, at four AM, He would go round and round the upper balcony in Trayee for one full hour! Imagine that, all so that He could give Darshan as early as possible.

And then came finally the day when He went out from Trayee to the Sai Ramesh Hall and the Sai Kishen Kalyana

Mandapam for the first time after the fracture. That happened as follows. In the third week of June, a big group was supposed to come from Texas in America to Puttaparthi by that time, Swami was expected to be back. After the fracture, a message was sent to the leader of the group to postpone the trip, especially on account of the shortage of accommodation in Whitefield. But the group did not pay heed and came anyway. When they arrived, the locals asked, "What's the use of your coming? Swami will not be giving Darshan for some time to come. You will not be able to see Him nor stage the Bal Vikas play you have been planning." And do you know what those devotees said? They said, "We don't care about all that. If your father is not well, would you not rush to be by his side? Swami is our Father, and that is why we have come. To be near Him is important; the other things are not." They were a model for all of us over there. They spent their time praying and doing Seva. And the children kept on with their drama practice even though according to all forecasts they did not have ghost of a chance of staging the play.

Prayers never go in waste. As they say, prayer is God's only weakness. And so it came to pass, that Swami suddenly announced, "This Thursday, I shall give Darshan in the Sai Ramesh Hall. I shall then go to the Kalyana Mandapam and see the play." The reaction of the American devotees was electrifying they were so filled with joy. Came that Thursday, and Swami came out in the golf cart, drove through Sai Ramesh Hall, and went into the Kalyana Mandapam. And He sat there for the entire play. We who were there just could not believe it. But that is Swami's compassion.

I guess there are other things I would like to say relating to the fracture that Swami allowed to happen to His body but that would have to wait for another talk. For the present let me just say this: Through this hip fracture, Swami taught us all many new lessons. Of course, the lessons would be evident only if we are sensitive enough to observe, absorb and digest.

Hip fracture can be most painful. For sixteen hours or so, Swami just ignored it, and later allowed it to be treated the way anyone else would be treated for a similar fracture. And you know what? He did not go to any fancy hospital or even to His own Super Speciality Hospital but to the General Hospital [which incidentally started as a tin shed with just one tube light three decades ago]. And in that hospital, He was operated upon by the same orthopaedic surgeon who, as a part of his normal duty operates on thousands of poor and needy people. The same is true of the eye surgeon who operated on Swami's eye that day. For this country, this is a most important lesson. Even today, many of our VIPs simply dash off overseas for the slightest treatment they need, sometimes for mere check-up. Or else, a doctor is imported from overseas at enormous expense to the tax payer.

Well, Swami chose to have administered to Him the same treatment in the same hospital as all the poor who come to Him are treated. That, for me, is one fantastic lesson. There are of course many other lessons but about those, later. ■

Jai Sai Ram





God is Formless but He can and does project Himself to assume diverse Forms. The Universe is His macro form. God is described as *Sundaram* or Beautiful; no wonder every bit of the Universe is also beautiful. God is *Shivam*, a word that can be translated both as Auspiciousness as well as Purity. Thus it is that every atom in the Universe is Pure and Divine. The Glory and the Power of God are to be found everywhere, if only one bothers to look for them; there is no place where they are not. Before dealing with the teachings of God in His incarnation as man, a brief pictorial glimpse into the Glory of God as manifested in Nature.

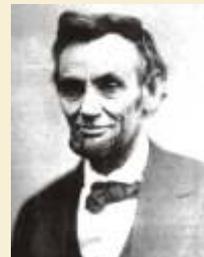
The enabling touch

*i dreamed i stood in a studio
and watched two sculptors there
the clay they used was a young childs mind
and fashioned it with care
one was a teacher the tools s/he used
were books music and art
the other, a parent, worked with a guiding hand
and a gentle loving heart
day after day, the teacher toiled with a touch
that was deft and sure
while the parent stood alongside
and polished an' smoothed it o'er
and when their task was done
they were proud of what they had wrought
for the things they had moulded into the child
could niether be sold nor bought
and each agreed that they would have failed
if each had worked alone
for behind the parent stood the school
and behind the teacher the home.*



THE LORD IS ALWAYS ON THE SIDE OF THE RIGHT

A friend once tried to console Lincoln in his many problems by saying: "I hope the Lord is on our side."



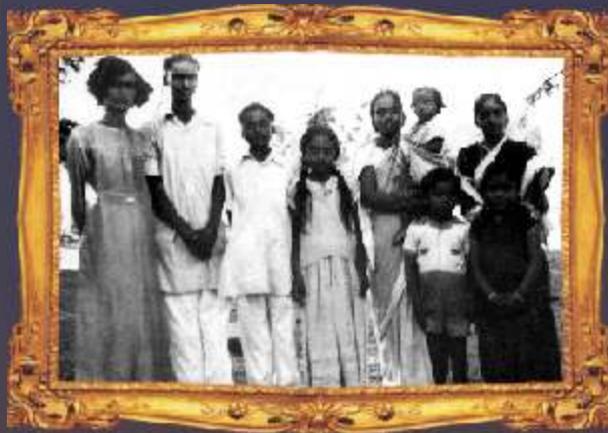
Lincoln replied emphatically that this was not his hope! "I am not at all concerned about that, for we know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

— wisdom, Oct' 96

DOWN MEMORY LANE

A Pictorial Peek into His-Story

A pictorial peek into His-Story down Memory lane: more of those Marvellous snap shots of our Swami in the Forties and the Fifties !



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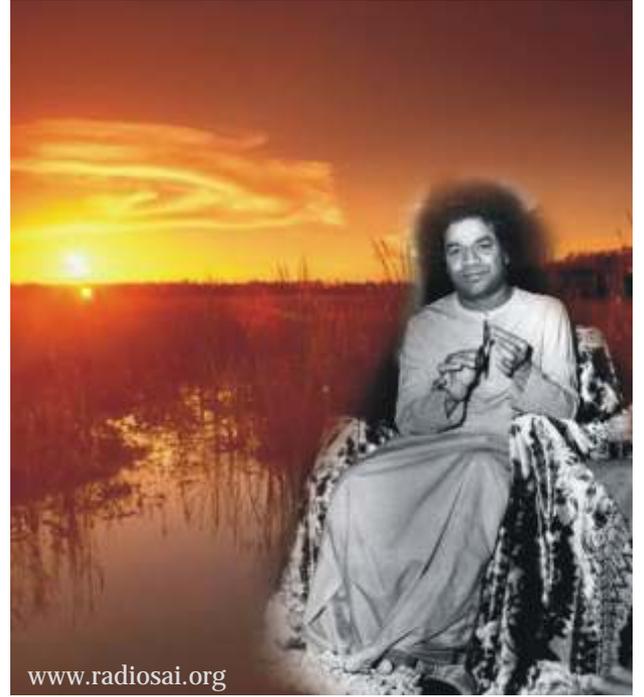
Now



BHAJAN CLASS

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Sai Bhajans Virtual Classroom. If you are wondering what this means, you will come to know about it in just a few moments. Swami says that singing the name of the Lord is the most effective spiritual sadhana in this modern age. No wonder Bhajans are a regular feature (in fact twice a day) at Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami always stresses the importance of Bhava, Raaga, and Tala i.e., the feeling, the melody and the rhythm of the Bhajans. In addition, one also has to pronounce the words correctly, which, if not done, could make the bhajan mean altogether something different! So here we present to you a virtual classroom, if you may say so, of Sai Bhajans sung at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Sanskrit version and the English translation are given below. Notice that there are three buttons on the right hand side of this page. Click the first one titled 'pronunciation' and you will listen to the correct pronunciation of the words of the bhajan. Next click the button titled 'tune'. You will hear a voice alone, singing the tune of the bhajan for you. Click the third button entitled 'full version' and you will listen to a full version of the bhajan with all the accompaniments as it was sung before Bhagawan! We hope to present to you one bhajan every issue. Of course, the first one has to be a Ganesha bhajan....so lets get started !!!



Bhajan name: gouri suthaaya

Sanskrit version:

<i>Gouri suthaaya om namah om</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>
<i>Lambodaraaya om namah om</i>	
<i>Vighneshwaraaya om namah om</i>	<i>Tune</i>
<i>Bhava dukha bhanjana om namah om</i>	

English translation:

<i>I bow down to the son of mother gauri (parvathi)</i>	<i>Full version</i>
<i>I bow down to the one with a large belly</i>	
<i>I bow down to the remover of obstacles</i>	
<i>I bow down to the destroyer of worldly sorrows</i>	

We sincerely hope that you liked your first bhajan class. Please send your comments on this feature to h2h@radiosai.org

Note: Download Bhajan from Radiosai Site, www.radiosai.org

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PRASANTHI MANDIR BHAJANS VOL 5
PRASANTHI MANDIR BHAJANS VOL 6
PRASANTHI MANDIR BHAJANS ON LORD GANESHA
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Cath procedures	5923
Neuro surgeries	2874
Ct scans	10,403
Mri exams	11,296
Puttaparthi Super Specialty Hospital	
Heart surgeries	13237
Cath procedures	13034
Urology surgeries	20566
Ophthalmology surgeries	21481
Ct scans	3395



Central prayer hall - Sri Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospital, Whitefield



WATCH OUT FOR

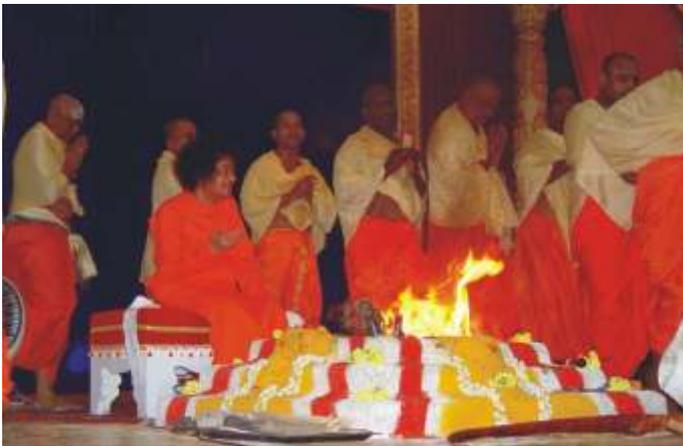


Watch out.....coming soon.....in h2h !

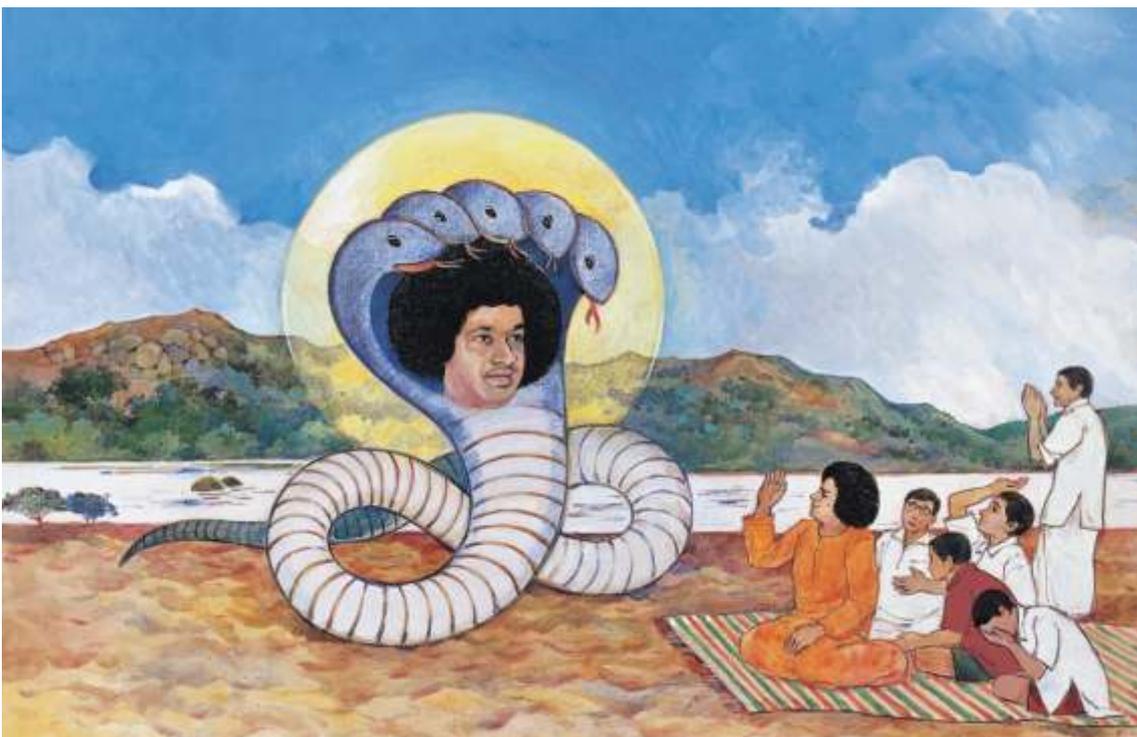
With Swami to Kodai: a feature on the extraordinary experiences of devotees and students fortunate to accompany swami to Kodaikanal each summer.

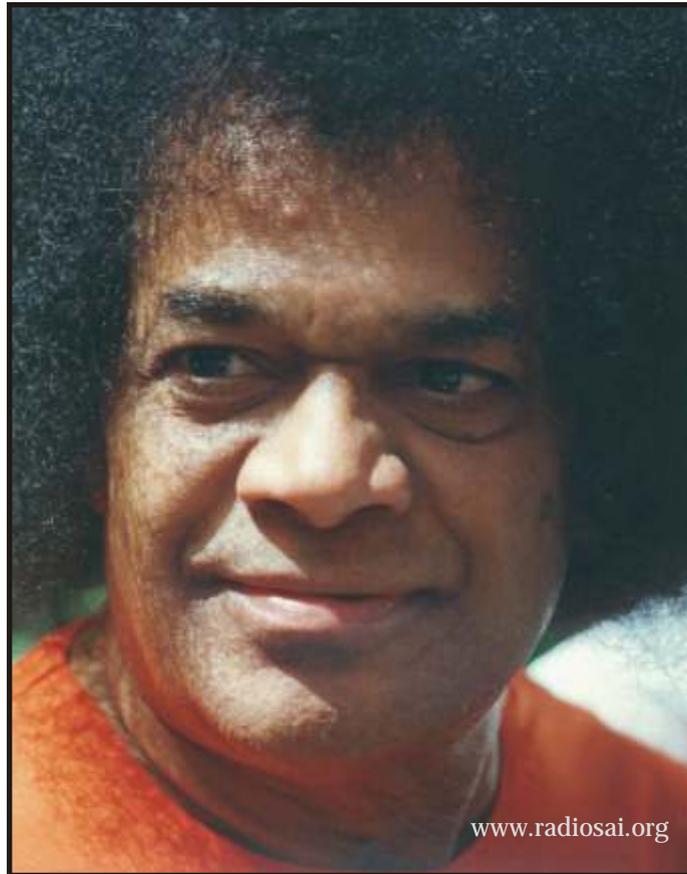
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Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam: what is Dasara? What is its significance? What happens during Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam? Answering these and many more questions, coming soon, an article on Dasara!



WATCH OUT FOR





*For health, the heart is important.
For knowledge, the head is important.
For the body, water is essential.*

*All these three - Health Care, Education and Water
- should be provided free. They should not be
commercialised. All these come from God.*

- Baba



Love All | Serve All