

Heart2Heart



...connecting love to Love

RADIO SAI LISTENERS' JOURNAL



Chaitanya Jyothi Museum

Testament To Living Divinity



Pranams at the Lotus Feet

Journal
DEVELOPED BY

HEART²HEART

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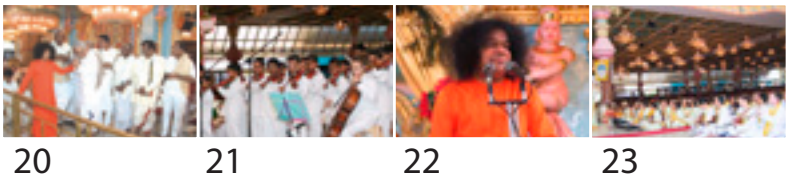
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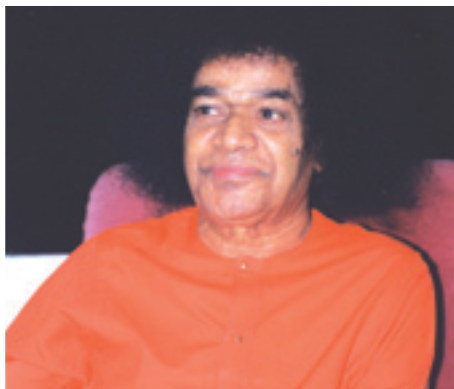


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Dear Reader,

We hope you had a holy start for this New Year, 2005. We did not say 'happy start' because of a fact which we all know: the Tsunami disaster. How could we truly be joyful when so many thousands of our brothers and sisters were suffering?

We at H2H spent the day praying for all those who suffered on that fateful day and we are sure you too did the same. Prayers apart, teams of Sai workers swiftly swung into action for providing relief for the victims. Swami himself handpicked a team and sent them to Tamil Nadu for relief. We are soon bringing to you a detailed report on this calamity and services rendered by Sai devotees in those places. In fact, if there is something positive that came out of this disaster, it was the human solidarity that was displayed in helping the victims. People belonging to all countries, castes, creeds, ages came together with the single aim of providing succour to their unfortunate brethren. H2H salutes each and every one of them.

The cover story this issue is on the Chaitanya Jyothi, a magnificent edifice that attempts to depict the mission and the glory of the Sai Avatar. The building, which was inaugurated on 18th November 2000, is a marvel and the story of how it came into existence despite all odds is amazing. This is what we present to you in this cover

story. We later intend to start a serial in this magazine, which will take you on a virtual tour of this grand museum.

There are several interesting articles in this issue. Don't miss reading 'The Shadow Self' in feature articles and 'The Miracle of the Ashes' in the section miscellaneous.

We thank each and every one of you for your constant support and encouragement. Do keep us posted of your valuable feedback.

Loving Regards,

The Heart2Heart Team

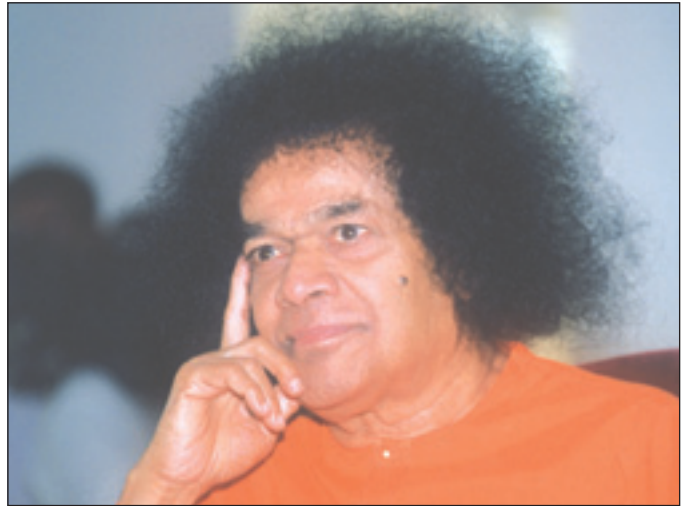


SATHYA SAI SPEAKS

Discrimination and detachment are the first and the second steps that man has to take in order to reach the Eternal *Atmic* Truth. The mind can be steadied only by means of the mastery of desire, the quality of unwavering Detachment. Once the mind is still, peace reigns and bliss prevails. Detachment or the giving up of the tendency to pursue what attracts the mind, is often misconstrued as asceticism which renounces social and family life and escapes into the loneliness of the forests. But, it involves, more than anything else, awareness of the basic blemish in all material things. Without this inquiry and this discovery, all claims for detachment or renunciation are false. No one can have real detachment in their absence. The sense of dislike that results from the recognition of the temporariness and triviality of pleasure is best called 'practical detachment'.

The giving up of external struggle is not enough, nor is it a great achievement. The real struggle is internal - the withdrawal of the extrovert senses into the mind and making them ineffective through the exercise of the intellect or discrimination. Investigate each material object that entices the senses by beauty, fragrance, sweetness and softness. Realise that these are all momentary, depending on your mental condition, physical health and emotional balance. Man is enamoured of such fleeting phenomena; he accepts them as valid and valuable. He is entangled in these unrealities and he strays far away from the path of liberation. This is really not man's goal.

When we are drawn towards some source of pleasure, we examine it carefully and analyse the pleasure that it promises to give. Imagine that you have longed to eat a



particular sweet dish. You have got it cooked and served on your plate. You are anticipating all the while the relish it can confer. But while about to place it on the tongue, the cook rushes in and informs you that a lizard had fallen into the vessel in which it was cooked, and so, your favourite food is fouled and poisoned. This creates disgust and your attachment disappears.

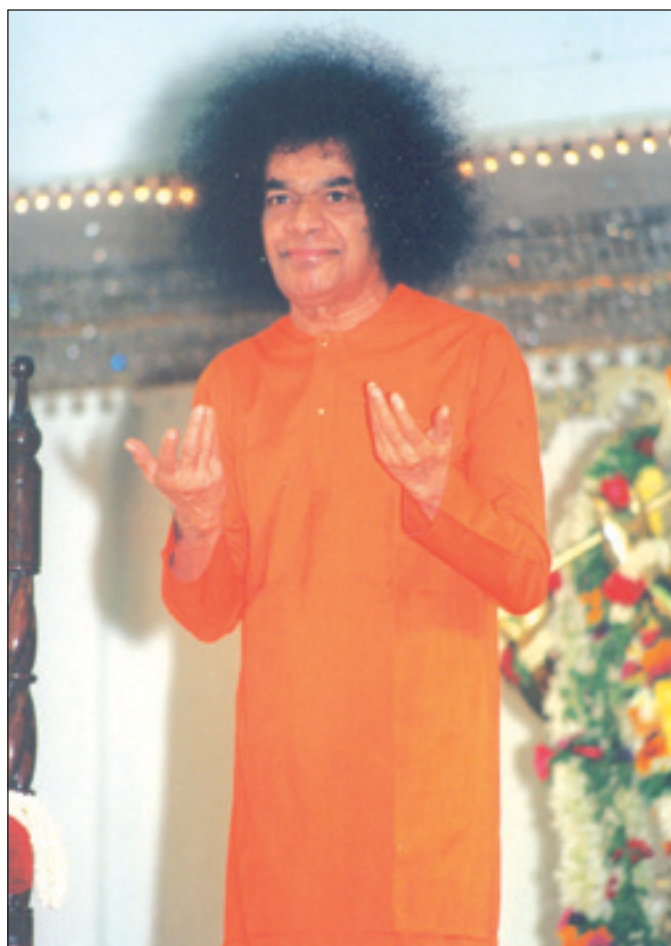
So too, when you examine the quality of the pleasure you hope to derive or the fame you toil to earn by your struggles, you will certainly blame yourselves for being so serious about them. It may be asked: we build a house for us to live in; is that not a source of joy? We listen to fine music; is that not a source of joy? Does it not fill the heart with tenderness? In the same manner, are not these worldly pleasures real? Consider for a moment, whether even fine music will give uniform joy, if listened to continuously for hours! Even the heavenly musicians, Narada and Tumburu will tire a listener if they hold forth for too long, however mellifluous be their voice. Sweetness too is bound to be disliked after some mouthfuls. After the limit is reached, every additional mouthful gives less and less pleasure, while disgust intervenes.

The classical poet-philosopher Bhartrhari asks, "How can medicine, resorted to for the sake of curing an illness, be deemed a luxury, a desirable pleasure?" Hunger is a 'disease'. Food is the medicine that cures the disease. That is the plain fact but no one recognises it and behaves accordingly! They have made it a costly ritual, a futile feast, a fertile source of further diseases! For, they cater to the whims and fancies of the tongue and behave like slaves of the senses.

The King was hunting in the depths of a forest from dawn until early afternoon. He was afflicted by intense thirst. At last, he found a hermitage where he took refuge. The inmates gave him cool clear water to drink. That was the medicine which he needed most. It made him fresh and fine. If the drink intoxicates him, robs him of reason and degrades his personality, it is the cause of many other diseases. Discrimination will reveal the dangers lurking in becoming a bond slave of the senses.

The special instrument that God has allotted man, namely, *Buddhi* or the Intellect, has to be used by man to become master of these down-dragging senses. The Intellect has to be used to judge and decide the means for the upliftment of the human to the Divine. It has to help man to realise God and nothing less. Nevertheless, it is now misused in finding others' faults and belittling others. It is like using a mirror, not to improve one's appearance, but to ridicule the appearance of others!

The *Antahkarana* has four instruments that prompt man. Of these, *Buddhi* is two-faced; it draws light from the *Atma* to which it is closest; it illumines with that light, the mind and the senses. It regulates the passions and emotions, the impulses and instinctive reactions. Some perverse minds confront with questions, like, "Is not ensuring the safety and happiness of our wives and children our duty? How can you declare that it is not



desirable?" Yes. But remember the prime purpose of the education you earn in this life is to concentrate on your *Atmic* Truth. Do not be diverted from this fundamental duty. Other activities must smoothen and straighten this Path. They must be contributory *Sadhanas* for this basic purpose of man. ■

~ Divine Discourse, 26-09-79

CONVERSATIONS with SAI - Part 5:

Direct Directions from the Divine

(continued from the previous issue)

Hislop (H): What does surrender to the Lord mean in such common things as shaving, going to the market, walking and so on?

SAI: Surrendering to the Lord is surrendering all thoughts and actions, not wishing for the fruits of the action, not doing action to gain its fruit but doing the action because it is one's duty. The act is dedicated to the Lord and the results, therefore, are borne by the Lord. Actions done thus - fruits abandoned at the time of the action - such action is free of *karma*. Since the ego, in this way, is not fed and cultivated, it disappears before long.

For example, if one shaves, which is classed as an uninspired mundane task, the attitude is that one is preparing for the sake of the Lord in the heart, and one is making the best of his appearance to honour the Lord, and not for one's personal vanity or reward. Also, in walking, offer the action to the Lord to maintain a body fit for the Lord to live in; and that is the attitude for every single act of the day. Sweeping the house is dedicated to the Lord so that He may have a fit dwelling. And cooking also is dedicated to Him so that the body may be strong and vigorous for the benefit of the Lord. It is folly to seek the fruit of action. When one dies, the only items taken with one are one's good and bad deeds. None of the power, the money, the position, the prestige, the vigorous beauty of the body, the culture of the personality - these things are all gone, and therefore what folly to work for them. Man is life with desire; life without desire is God. Mind is desire; when mind disappears, desire disappears.

H: Swami, a taxi will arrive here for us on the afternoon of the 26th for our departure.

SAI: No, no - that is wrong. When you came from so far to see Sai and then take a taxi for Bangalore, Sai is

shamed. It should be left for Sai to take care. You should not do it yourselves.

H: I will at once cancel the taxi.

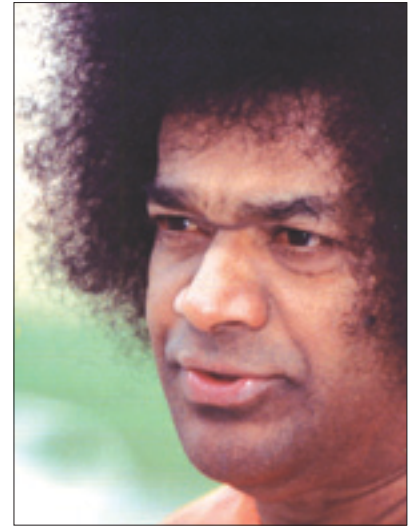
SAI: In the last day or so there have been riots in Bangalore by students protesting

against the campaign by northern politicians to have Hindi as the national language instead of English. There were bomb blasts and other violence. It might be better for you and your wife to leave here on the 25th instead of the 26th. A high northern official will be arriving, and probably there will be more rioting.

H: What is meant when Swami says to a departing devotee that 'Swami will be with you wherever you are; Swami is in your heart'.

SAI: The situation can be compared to a man and a stick floating in the ocean. Both have the same motion, up and down with the waves; but the stick does not know what is happening, whereas the man is conscious of the movement. The movement of the stick could be compared to a person in America in whose heart God resides but who has never been here to visit Swami. The conscious movement of a man swimming in the ocean could be compared to an American who has visited here and then returned home; now there would be conscious spiritual experience and that would be the case whether we consciously invited that experience or not.

There are three stages to knowing God. One is intellect, which is just imagination; one is drawing near; and third



is union with God. Another example: the river merges with the ocean, but if one takes sweet water from the river and places it in a sealed plastic bag and places that sealed bag in the ocean, there is no mixing of that water with the ocean. Such a condition could be compared to one's state before coming here; but after coming here it is as though the sweet water were not held separate from the ocean but were merged and mixed with the ocean. The mixing stage is here. Swami is the servant of all, and as servant He enjoys much better than as Master.



H: What is the meaning of the word, *Dharma*?

SAI: The word *Dharma* does not mean 'duty'. In duty there is no freedom; in reason there is freedom; and in religious obligation there is the union between duty and reason. *Dharma*, then,

refers to religious obligation and in that word are the concepts of both duty and reason.

Visitor: There is a difficulty that arises in giving honour to two different aspects of the Lord. For example, Mother in Sri Aurobindo's *ashram*, and Swamiji here.

SAI: There are two ways; one in which the Divine is seen everywhere and there is then no conflict whatsoever; and the other way in which one feels strong devotion to one single person and is happy in that devotion. In the latter case, one should hold strictly to that Guru and have nothing to do with other Gurus. When one works at a task one needs to give that task full attention and concentration and cannot be thinking of the Lord while doing that task. But the principle involved is the attitude of dedicating everything to the Lord and not doing work

because of the fruit to be gained from that work but, on the contrary, doing the work because it is one's duty to do it very well.

Visitor: Can I wear shorts while here at the *ashram*?

SAI: No. That is not allowed. In spiritual life, the fastest progress is made when the boat sails with the wind, and if the boat has to sail against the wind, progress is slower.

Visitor: Well, Swami, the trouble is to determine which way the wind is blowing.

SAI: That is really very simple. With practice, a driver of a car learns to be so skilful at driving that either a wide boulevard or a narrow road makes no difference to him - he drives on both with equal confidence. In the same way, a Guru is necessary in order to learn how to take advantage of the wind in the sea of the spirit.

The trouble is that nowadays it is very difficult to find a Guru. As soon as a person puts on a yellow robe he considers himself a Guru and wants to teach people. The best way to determine whether or not a Guru is genuine is if his words are full of wisdom and if in his life what he practises is the same as his words. If the Guru speaks only words of wisdom, and this is an age where people speak wisdom without being wise, the words of wisdom will produce no result whatsoever and are useless.

The best Guru today is God. In the spiritual world, the Guru is a doctor who takes the temperature of the aspirant - from the temperature he is able to gauge his condition and what is best for him. But if the Guru himself has temperature, then the temperature of the aspirant would be distorted by the temperature of the Guru. So the best Guru today is God. ■

(To be continued)



CHINNA KATHA

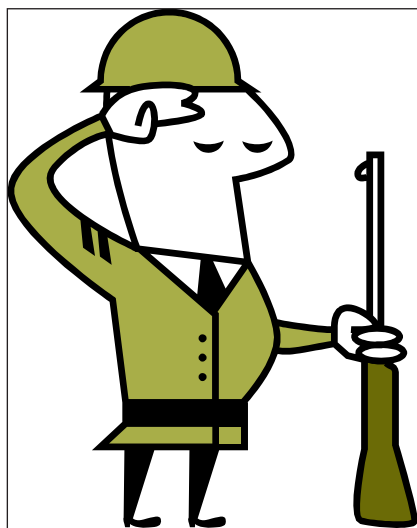
Remembering Things By Rote Is Dangerous

A Little Story from Bhagavan

ONE uneducated and simpleminded person joined a military recruiting Centre. He was undergoing a few months' training course which would make him eligible to join the army. Unfortunately, just after completing a week of this training, news reached the Centre that there would be a visit of an army officer who would interview the candidates and inspect the type of training being given by the centre. The person in charge of training these candidates was very much worried about the newly recruited simpleminded man. However, since he happened to be an experienced army officer, he knew well the type of questions that would be put to the new recruits. So, he coached this man thoroughly to answer correctly the most plausible questions. He asked him first of all to remember the sequence of the questions. The first question would be, "What is your age?" You are to say '22 years.' The second question would be, 'How long have you been in this centre?' You are to answer, 'Two years.' And the third may be, 'Are you happy in this centre or do you feel homesick?' You have to say, 'I am at home both here and in my place.'"

remembering the sequence of the questions said, "22 years" The officer was rather surprised. Then he asked, "What is your age?" The cadet said, "Two years." "What nonsense is this? Are you mad or am I mad," roared the officer. The cadet calmly answered, "Both," as he could only remember just that word because he had by then got scared. It is dangerous to remember things by rote. Students must understand, and then get by heart whatever they desire to memorise to get a firm grasp of what they learn. ■

~ Baba



The Cadet learnt these answers by rote. On the day of inspection, he was asked to come to the interview room. The inspecting officer asked him, "How long have you been here?" The cadet just

THE CHAITANYA JYOTHI MUSEUM

TESTAMENT TO THE LIVING DIVINITY



Chaitanya Jyothi
- a blooming flower in His Garden

How would you sum up the Lord and His Works, His Life, Mission and Message to a friend? With a few words? Surely too short. A book - little better. How about a whole building with beautiful exhibits, wonderful pictures and breathtaking artefacts dedicated to Him. That's just what devotees felt inspired to do to commemorate the Sri Sathya Sai Avatar's 75 years of service to humanity.

That dream building came alive as the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum. 'Chaitanya' means 'consciousness' and 'Jyothi' is 'light'. So, the 'Light of Consciousness' is a mammoth attempt to portray Swami and His Message by way of the building's architecture and its contents of 90 exhibits based on the life and Teachings of the omni-faceted Lord. But can a mere building do justice to His Love? It is after all to be apprehended by the five senses, which Swami says we have to transcend to glimpse His Love. But like the finger pointing to the moon the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum is a bold and beautiful endeavour to facilitate our awareness of the Divine - the Light of Consciousness within.

Rising from the rocky hillside it stuns the devotee with its grandeur and originality. **Bhagavan paid the building a fitting tribute when He saw the first plans, asking if it was possible to build it; He then stated that "It will be the wonder of the 21st century".**

Captivated by its splendour, devotees flock in ever increasing numbers. Over 1.2 million have passed through its hallowed portals since inauguration on 18th November 2000 and the record daily figure surpassed 8,200 on Swami's Birthday, 2004.

The building incorporates architectural styles from all over the world and thus embodies in its very design Swami's teaching on the Unity of Humanity. There are Roman arches; Gothic windows; a Singapore designed fish pool; Moorish domes; Japanese roofing (for the lift shaft); a Greek inclusion on the roof; and Indian religious figures.

Of course the majority of the influence is from China. Witness the unforgettable roof, the largest outside China. It is laid with ceramic tiles glazed using traditional methods. There are Chinese dragons, religious symbols, and decorative designs to be seen all round.

One is left in awe as one takes in the exquisite nature of this offering to the Lord. One is lost in wonder at this blooming depiction of divinity that transports one's feelings in praise of Him.

Coming into the precincts of the Museum, one first delights at the entrancing masterpiece of the *Stupa*; it leads the eye to His Divine hand supporting the Universe. The *Stupa* is not only a work of art but also a work from the Heart as it conveys deep





The 2 Japanese flat roofs and the Greek inclusion rising behind



Seven Chinese religious figures with Nandi bull at the rear



The glazing finish on the roof tiles



The Chinese dragon



Decorations all around

spiritual lessons for the onlooker to imbibe and treasure.

The five swans portray discrimination as the swan chooses milk over water. So they remind us to seek the Lord's Grace, rather than the tinsel of the world.

The lotus stem rises from the mud untouched and resplendent in its inherent nature and reaches upward towards the Creator. It teaches one to be detached from the world (the mud) and to be attracted by the spiritual path alone, so as to shine in our Divine *Atmic* nature.

The 108 petals portray the creator *Brahma*, upon which the hand of *Sathya* is to be seen, holding the Universe aloft with His forefinger. Originally the artisans had shown the World atop but Bhagavan had explicitly redirected them by saying "Not World, Universe". It is a reassuring reminder for the devotees that the Lord that they worship as the Embodiment of Truth has all the power of the Universe at His fingertips.

Thence, the visitor is captivated by the Koi fish, now 200 in number, who glisten in the dark water, giving joy to all who see them. Fish are renowned for their relaxing effect on the viewer and everyone likes to wait awhile at this point and admire them. They ever dart here and there, reflecting the sun's rays in a myriad colours. They have been well tended and some are rather large, up to 4ft in length.

Nearby an enormous granite ball can be seen rotating bathed in a continuous stream of water.



The edifying Stupa

This ball weighs 670kg and is actually moved entirely by water hydraulics. This arrests the mind in silent contemplation of the gentle, soft water moving the heavy, hard granite.

Looking up one can see the Moorish titanium domes, proudly showing the *Sarva Dharma* symbol. The metal is only half a millimetre thick and the domes' use of titanium is unique in India. From the



The delightful Koi fish



Granite Ball

roof one can see the blending of architectural styles. The dome is complimented both by the Gothic windows and the Roman arches.

Next the devotee is beckoned to climb further and then waits in the cool shade of the upper stairs. Here one cannot only enjoy the view in front of the sports stadium and hills, but also look up and marvel at the roof above. It is filled with a canopy of colours and designs in glorious Chinese style. The central flower has embedded fibre optic lights which change colour in delightful patterns. One is surrounded by 108 Hanumans who are supporting the roof confirming the belief that this great devotee is ever in service to Sai.

When the Lord came to pay a gracious visit He stopped by this area and remarked, "Why have you painted it red? Red is a communist colour". The



A canopy of Chinese colour

reply from the chief engineer was that red was traditionally used in China well before communism. Of course, this is known to Swami, but maybe He wanted this clarified for others who would not know.

The building also incorporates some numerological features relating to Divinity. The number 9, Swami’s own Divine number, and the number 75 are prominently used throughout.

Here are some examples relating to the *Stupa*. Its total height is 36ft. The lotus stem rises 27 ft up to the 108 petalled lotus which is 9 ft in diameter.

Other references to the number 9 include 108 Hanumans supporting the roof; 90 exhibits and 90 doorknobs. The roof is 81ft above road level and the Museum was inaugurated on the 18th.



The flower lit up



Hanuman’s devotion is renowned

Relating to 75, there are 75 steps in the staircase up to the balcony and the building itself is 75ft high.

Thus the reader can be in no doubt that the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum embodies a testament to living Divinity. In its stunning structures, and delightful designs, what better way can there be to convey the Lord’s Love. Inspired by Love for Him, it is a fitting ‘finger pointing to the moon’. On a full moon’s night one can indeed see His face inscribed; so let the Chaitanya Jyoti lead you to gaze on Him and to know Him more and more - deeper and deeper...

THE MAKING OF CHAITANYA JYOTHI



Heightened view

Devotees coming to Prashanti Nilayam always make it a point to visit the Chaintanya Jyoti Museum. Capturing devotees’ hearts at first sight, Chaintanya Jyoti attracts all who view it to come closer and wonder at its sublime beauty. The building is like a gift-wrapped present from Swami to His devotees. One cannot resist the temptation to step inside and unwrap this wonderful gift of the Lord. Inside this magnificent gift are wonders to behold - breathtaking visual treats for the eye and entrancing music for the ears; wisdom for the mind and sustenance for the soul.

Walking through the Museum is like walking with Swami at your side - nay inside. Many declare how the experience is ecstatic, transforming and moves them to tears.

This second part of the Cover Story will introduce to you how this magnificent edifice came into being, the designs, the building process, the problems encountered and of course Swami's divine guidance and involvement, for it is He who inspired this living testament to the Divine.

Genesis

The Chaitanya Jyoti Museum was planned to commemorate Bhagavan's 75th Birthday as a fitting tribute to the Lord's Life, Work and Teachings.



At the beginning

Various designs from all over the world were submitted to Swami at the time of *Gurupoornima* 1999. Swami chose the design that came from Malaysia and said that "It will be the wonder of the 21st century." The building proposed would be 75ft high and form 8 levels. There was one year and 3 months to be ready for the Avatar's 75th Birthday, on 23rd November 2000, which was less than half the time estimated by the architect to complete the project.

Swami suggested the auspicious date of 25th August 1999 for the Bhoomi Pooja (ground breaking ceremony) and performed the ceremony even as the architect finalized the drawings for the construction. The engineers of ECC, a division of Larsen & Tourbro worked overtime to translate the architectural drawings into those needed for construction at the site. In the meantime, Swami selected a very experienced and dedicated engineer,



The Lord performs Bhoomi Puja

Col. S. K. Bose to look after the construction. Col. Bose shifted his home from Delhi to Prashanti Nilayam in 10 days.

The Work Begins

The plot required 65m x 60m of levelled ground. The contractor found huge granite hillsides and massive boulders which posed a great problem. It took about two months for the main portions of the rock to be cleared away. Blasting of the rock had to be undertaken in controlled conditions to preserve the sanctity of the holy place. Where this was not possible the building's reinforced columns were anchored to the rock. Due to the nature of the terrain the construction was not able to proceed at the necessary pace and this led to the building being undertaken from right to left. However this departure from the conventional system did not



The right section was built first

affect the overall schedule.

Devotees from Malaysia and Singapore took responsibility for the custom-made roof tiles, decorative items and curved stone balustrades. This involved travelling to China, locating the materials, and having a selection of the Museum's decorative features crafted in China. The rest were assembled at Prashanti Nilayam and worked at on site.

22 containers of these materials had to be located, fashioned and dispatched from China. This seemingly routine arrangement turned into a frantic last rush. Let's now turn to the architect himself, Mr. Gopal Goh Say Tong, for the complete account:

The first 13 containers that arrived at the Chennai Port were duly cleared and transported to the site without hassle. Somehow, this gave us assurance that we would not encounter any further problems, as the initial items were delivered to the site smoothly. However, this was not the case with the last nine containers, which coincidentally contained the major portion of the decorative components! Worst still, it was less than a month until the inauguration of the building. Somehow, the containers could not be located, despite repeated checks of the documents and verification of delivery by the dispatcher in China - the containers had seemingly disappeared. The team prayed for Baba's help. Miraculously, the containers were found and finally reached the work site on 6 November 2000, just 12 days before the inauguration date of 18 November 2000. The specialist and main contractors rushed to assemble the final items into place. Strangely, there was no panic on the ground. Everything fell into place and all the pieces fitted nicely without much hassle or changes. Everyone played his/her part perfectly.

Included in the last 9 containers was the Stupa, which was a major item as it was one of the focal points of the design concept. 36 feet tall, the Stupa was imported in parts and made of a special material moulded in sections; these parts were supposed to encase concrete columns cast on site to combine as a single structure. However, the



A swan being crafted for the Stupa in China



**The Stupa's lotus stem in progress
- again in China**

parts arrived late due to the delay, and work started immediately as the assembling of the Stupa involved several steps, all of which needed sufficient time to complete. It was the 9th of November 2000.

Component sections were unpacked and dimensions matched to the location base. The main and specialist contractors immediately prepared reinforcement bars for the column structure. Unfortunately, we could not obtain a crane, which was crucial for lifting, positioning and maintaining the verticality of the heavy upper sections of the Stupa. We managed by lifting the first and second sections of the mold into place. Baba's Vibhooti was applied at each section. Thereafter, we somehow got a crane that was originally used for lifting the stone balustrades. Using this crane, we manipulated the third, fourth and fifth sections into place. However, the crane could not go higher for the final two sections, which needed to be lifted up and positioned together as a single piece.

No other cranes were available and the nearest suitable one had to be ordered from Bangalore; time was running out.

When the ordered crane finally arrived, another crisis occurred; the extension arm was not the right type! This was when things got a little frantic; the arm had to be extended, and extended fast. By then, it was the late afternoon of the 17th of November.



The architect inspecting the work in China

Somehow, the modification was made possible by combining the booms of both of the cranes on site, using welding equipment belonging to the fencing contractor, who was also coincidentally on site. Apparently, all the tools we needed were on site to make the miraculous happen! The final placement of the lotus hand and the sphere took place at 9.45 PM, with concreting work still to be done. By the time the entire structure was assembled, it was just a few minutes before midnight. The concreting had only 8 hours to set fully before the inauguration took place at 8.00 am on 18 November 2000. Baba's Grace completed the Stupa just in the nick of time.

The Touch of the Divine

That the Museum was finished in less than half the time believed to be necessary by the architect and in spite of scores of challenges, was only possible due to Swami's Grace. In fact the chief engineer told Heart to Heart that he never believed that the Museum would finish on schedule.

At one point Col. Bose, was despairing over the amount of rock that they were encountering. He mentioned this to Swami who said casually "Yes, I

know, many rocks". However, after this point the clearance went on apace and the previous problems disappeared.

Indeed there were other points where the lack of time was mentioned even by the Lord Himself. Witness this divine conversation that Swami held with one of the project managers, on 30th October 2000.

"Will there be the inauguration on 18th November?"

"Swami, it is your *Sankalpa*."

"But there is too much work remaining."

"We will complete it with Your Grace."

"Time is short."

"We will work day and night."

Swami smiled and said "*Manchidi*" meaning "Very well" in Telugu.

Swami visited the site twice during construction to sanctify the work and bless the artisans. He admired the craftsmen's progress, giving encouragement and valuable suggestions to be taken up. He also saw the exhibits on a number of occasions making valuable comments on how to improve them.

On one such occasion five days before the inauguration, on the 13th November 2000, Swami was entering the building when the glass front door shattered into a myriad pieces. This was because of people pressing against it to see



The door that shattered

Bhagavan. None were injured and Swami waited for the glass to be cleared up before proceeding. This took a full five minutes, but in the meantime Swami waited - the Embodiment of Patience and Tranquillity. He then walked through as if nothing had happened. Of course, a new door had to be ordered at breakneck speed to be ready for the opening ceremony.

One might be forgiven for seeing this as a negative incident. But the Chinese present were able to shed a different light. They pointed to their traditional belief that such an occurrence was actually auspicious. For it heralded the absorption by the Divine of any negative *Karma*, leaving only positive energy.

There is a Chinese saying "All the pieces that touch the ground will bloom into flowers and shall bear fruits". And this is indeed what happens when the Divine touches our lives - the negative becomes positive. There were indeed no more problems leading up to the Museum's opening.

Thus, the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum was inaugurated on the 18th November 2000, and Bhagavan thereby bestowed a new and sacred gift upon His devotees.

Swami's Visits after Inauguration

Swami visited the building twice after 18th November 2000. The first occasion was on 19th February 2001. The Avatar sanctified the finished building, imbuing all the exhibits with His Divine Consciousness. It was an intimate tour. Swami spent 45 minutes viewing the exhibits with only 5 people at His side and an hour in total at the Museum.

Later, Bhagavan said in all graciousness **"I did not have time to read everything. You need two days to see everything"**.

The second time was on the first anniversary, 18th November 2001, when Swami blessed the staff who have the treasured role of maintaining the building and exhibits. The staff are after all most precious, for the Museum will last hundreds of years and millions will behold this testament to the Avatar. One of the building's purposes is to

preserve for future generations the experience of the Divine Embodiment that the contemporaries of the Avatar are able to enjoy.

Conclusion

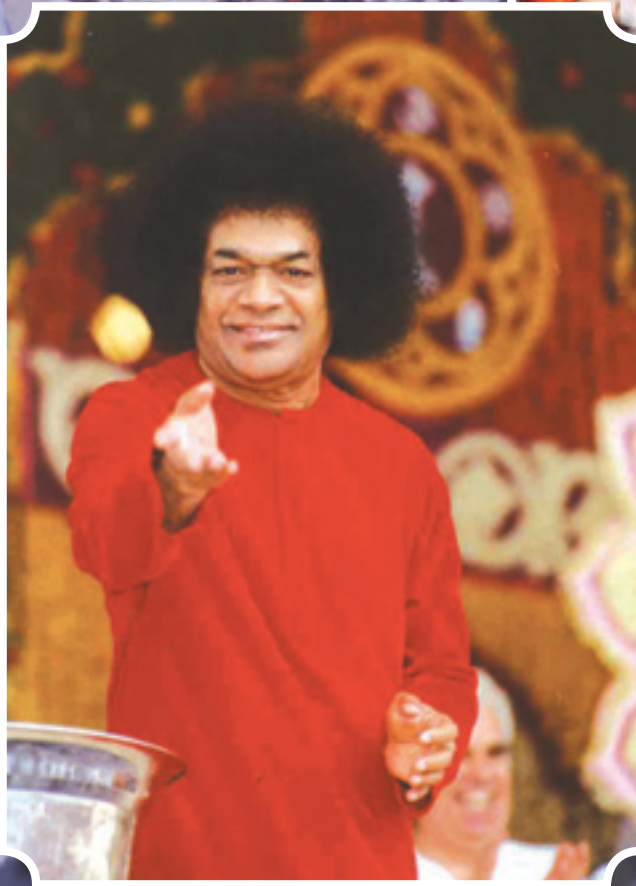
To say that Bhagavan is omni-faceted means that only a building of this architectural and aesthetic value with its ninety illuminating exhibits, its educational and inspirational features can attempt, in however small a manner, to do justice to His Glory - now and for future generations. Of course, even the Museum falls short of the depiction - which is why the devotees' journey culminates at the Chaitanya Jyoti Meditation Hall. This affirms to



The Meditation Hall - now used for daily Bhajans until the 80th Birthday
the visitor that having viewed the enchanting Museum's edifying contents, we must learn from one of its messages. For it is when we See Always Inside - SAI - that the real gift of Chaitanya Jyoti is experienced. ■

~ Heart2Heart Team

*He Nourishes
The World...*



...With His Love



WARMING HEARTS

Seva By Sathya Sai Alumni



Swami says that the quality of our service is more important and not the quantity.

The world around us is full of suffering. There are people who do not have homes. There are people who do not have two square meals a day. There are people who have no one called their 'own'. We may not be rich, but if we have the attitude to serve there are plenty of ways in which we can help our less fortunate brethren.

This is what a group of young former students of Swami do every year. During the winter months of December and January, there is considerable cold in and around the villages in Puttaparthi. This group of boys load scores of new thick woollen blankets in a couple of vehicles and set out in the night for a round in the neighbouring villages and towns.

Railway stations, bus stations and pavements....These are the resting places for the night for several unfortunate homeless people.

The students spot a sleeping old man and gently cover him with the new blanket. The surprised man is told lovingly that this is a gift from Sai Baba. He is so overwhelmed by this gesture that he can't even speak. A photo of Swami and some vibhuti is given to him which he accepts reverentially. The students move on searching for their next God in waiting.....

Through this 'Blanket Seva' as they call it, they say that they are not merely helping their poor brethren to

keep themselves warm. They are also warming the hearts of those people as well as their own.

Can you make a small difference in the lives of the people around you? ■

~ Heart2Heart Team



PRASANTHI DIARY

Chronicles of Heaven on Earth

(From 14th December 2004 to 14th January 2005)



DEC 14th, 2004: A POETS GATHERING IN SAI KULWANT HALL

On December 14th, 12 noted poets from all over the state of Andhra Pradesh gathered in Prashanti Nilayam for a *Kavi Sammelan* - a gathering of poets for a reading of their poetry. This *Sammelan*, harking back to the rich old traditions of the princely states when such august personages would assemble in the royal court to sing the praises of the king, now gathered in Sai *Durbar*, under the auspices of the Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, to sing paeans of praise to the unending glory of the Lord.

They recited one after the other, in mellifluous tones, in creative and enchanting Telugu poetic expressions, their unbridled feelings of love towards Him. While one sang about the glory and grandeur of the Avatar, another poet using the Telugu grammatical metre, sang in English about the intimacy of Sai. Yet another described Swami as two-eyed Shiva and four limbed Vishnu while another plaintively opined that he intentionally trod on the wrong path just to ensure that God descends in human form to correct him. On the whole the entire evening was a gentle cascade, an outpouring of words, feelings and emotions that enthralled every heart and exposed all to the expressive beauty of the Telugu language. To bring the evening to a close, Swami requested a student

to address the gathering. This student expressed his gratitude to Swami for blessing these poets with an opportunity which even the renowned Telugu poet Pothana could not obtain. Swami finally honoured all the poets by individually draping an *angavastram* on their shoulders and then posing for group photographs with them.

DEC 24th: CHRISTMAS EVE - PERFORMANCE BY AN INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND ADULT'S CHOIR

The evening of December 24th, Christmas Eve, saw the entire Sai Kulwant Hall dressed up with traditional Christmas decorations hung from every conceivable place. The pillars in Sai Kulwant Hall were draped with red cloth fringed with decorative creepers and red flowers. From each of four decorated T-brackets on each pillar in Sai Kulwant Hall hung a paper board profiled in the shape of a lotus on which quotes from the Bible were printed. The façade of the Mandir was richly done up with red cloth, and decorated with wrapped gifts, stars, angels and glitter so that the entire building itself seemed to be gift wrapped! Two oversized angels hanging from the balcony, one on the gents' and the other on the ladies' side, seemed to be protecting the entire audience. Two twinkling Christmas trees on the veranda, in front of Ganesha lent the right ambience for the rich celebration to follow.



Posing for a group photograph with the poets

Swami stopped His cart in the centre of Sai Kulwant Hall and talked with the members of the choir before ascending to the veranda. The evening programme started with the children's choir first. There were 86 children from 21 countries who sang beautifully under the direction of Ms. Radha Reyes of USA. The small children looking beautiful in their white clothes sang the perennial Christmas favourites for their Lord. The songs included "Come All Ye Faithful", "El Camino", "Feliz Navidad", "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer", "Silent Night", "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and finally the crowd favourite - "When the Saints Go Marching In".



Members of the Children's choir singing for the Lord

The adult choir consisting of about 400 ladies and 200 men sang a number of wonderful songs under the direction of Ms. Sylvia Alden (USA). The songs sung in the Divine presence included: "Gananaam", "In Moments Like This", "Go Tell It On The Mountain", "Almighty God", "Keep Me, Baba Keep Me", "All My Love to You", "I Am I", "Remind Me My Lord", "Sweet Lord Your Love is So Great", "You are So Beautiful", "Your Wondrous Face", "You are the One", "Take Me Home", "Turn Your Eyes Upon Swami", "Sathya Sai Baba Grant All the Beings Happiness", "Sathya Sai Baba Sadguru Jai Jai", "Swami Let Your Peace Descend upon our Hearts", "Sai Baba Name Above All Names", "Sai You are More Precious Than Silver", and for the finale "We Come Into The Lord's Presence".

Though they had just come together days before from diverse countries like Australia, Bolivia, and Canada and so on; though they spoke in a babel of tongues, they still practised assiduously, for hours each day, so they could sing in unison, in one sweet voice for the dear Lord. Swami enjoyed it immensely in obvious bliss with His eyes closed and the crowd too listened in hushed silence, hoping the magical evening would never end. Swami requested that they sing Bhajans while *Prasadam* was being distributed.

DEC 25th: CHRISTMAS DAY PROGRAMMES THE MORNING PROGRAMME - THE INSTITUTE BAND, THE PRIMARY SCHOOL ORCHESTRA, AND CHRISTMAS CAROLS BY THE STUDENT BODY

Christmas Day dawned bright and joy was writ large on everyone's face. In front of the dais, across the railings, were idols of Joseph and Mother Mary in the

Manger, watching with awe their Child and our Saviour! On the other side were the three Wise Men bringing presents to the Divine Child. The few lights that were on in the Mandir spread a warm glow all around. The Nagarsankirtan group singing "Silent Night Holy Night" - added to the serenity of the surroundings.

The Institute Band with 33 musicians opened the morning's celebrations with a programme of 6 tunes. The grand "O Come Little Children", followed by the gentle "It came upon a Midnight Clear", and the medley of "Silent Night", "Sai You are More Precious than Silver", "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" came next. Following this there was a 300 year old composition called, "Trumpet Tune"; followed by "Sleigh Ride", and finally "Jingle Bells".

Swami's Primary School Orchestra then stole everyone's hearts. The orchestra consisting of 18 violins and a cello first played "Oh Come All Ye Faithful". This was followed by a solo cello with the minuet from J.S. Bach 1st Cello Suite. A brand new piece composed specially for the group, "Sai Joy" was played next. For the finale they played "Jingle Bells" 9 times while 4 primary school Santas threw candy to the joyful devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.



The Primary School Orchestra playing on Christmas morning

The boys of the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School and the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning sang merry songs to seek the choicest blessings from their Lord. Beginning with the carol "Merry Christmas" to greet one and all on this auspicious day, they followed it up with a beautiful song "Let Your Glory Fall", conveying the pining of the devotees for the Almighty. The song highlighted the very existence of a devotee - to be thirsty,

hungry and to live a life only in want of God's Grace. The next carol, "Said the Night Wind" described the joy of the creation on the arrival of its creator. Generally night is associated with *Tamo guna* and day with *Sattva guna*. But Christmas night is considered to be the holiest of all, for it is the night when Jesus arrived. The carol "O Holy Night" showcased the importance of a night which was holy and which had an impact on the lives of millions.

And of course, Christmas is not Christmas without the entry of a plump jolly man clad in red and white. The High School Santa Claus made his entry into Sai Kulwant Hall to the strains of the song, "Fun on Christmas" and made it a fun time by distributing chocolates all around. The enchanting programme ended with the songs "Hallelujah to the Lord" and "Christmas Card" which conveyed the profound gratitude of one and all to the giver and sustainer of everything.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAMME - 3 GUEST SPEAKERS FOLLOWED BY THE DIVINE DISCOURSE

In the afternoon, as soon as Swami came to the veranda, a new silver gray Toyota four seater car, a right hand drive vehicle with only two doors (one on either side), was brought and parked in front of the veranda. Everyone's curiosity was whetted. Prof. Anil Kumar announced that the car had arrived from Japan this morning and that the front seat of the car was specially designed for Swami to get in and out of the car effortlessly. In this new car, the front seat next to the driver was motorised and will turn 90 degrees and come out automatically out of the door at the press of a button. The seat can then be lowered by the controls on the seat itself. Again, the seat can be taken back in and docked to its original position at the turn of a switch. The features of the car were then demonstrated to the crowd to the delight of all.

Christmas afternoon featured three guest speakers followed by the Divine Discourse. The first speaker was Mrs. Rita Bruce (USA). Rita Bruce is the author of four books named: Vision of Sai I & II, Sathya Sai Parenting and Love of Conscience. Rita dedicated her talk to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Mother Easwaramma. She asked what we were doing as Sai parents to mould the character

of children? Calling women as pillars of society she opined that women need to play a more leading role as agents of transformation.

The second speaker was Dr. K.K. Mistry from India. Hailing from Mumbai, Dr. Mistry has been intimately connected with Dharmakshetra and is instrumental in organising all the social service projects there like medical camps and so on. Dr Mistry talked about his long association with Swami and related movingly how Swami had cured him of an incurable golf-ball sized tumour in the passage connecting his nose to his throat.

The last speaker was Mr. John Behner (El Salvador). John has a Masters degree in philosophy. John first came to Swami in 1979. He has been an office bearer in the Sai organization for 20 years. He is presently Zone 2 Latin America chairman and president of the Sathya Sai Trust of El Salvador. John related how once Swami served food to everyone in Poornachandra Auditorium. When his wife thanked Swami, Swami told her that "it is My duty". This seemingly innocent sentence moved both of them immensely and they have become ardent devotees of Swami. John also drew parallels between the teachings of Jesus and Swami and said that man has the potential to discover his divine nature and true relationship with God.

Swami gave His Divine Discourse next. At the very outset, He explained the mystery behind the new car. As He said, "A small boy and his sister were studying in our Primary School 20 years back. Their parents were so full of gratitude that Swami had given their children a seat in our School. It is out of this gratitude that they have offered this car to Me. The children were very intelligent. They have done their MBA and even received a gold medal. It is they who have sent this car as an expression of their gratitude to Swami".

Stressing on the efficacy of prayer, Swami said, "Pray to God silently, without any desires, with Love. Everything will be added onto you. With Love any task can be fulfilled. Some say that they have been praying so hard but still they are not successful. Here the mistake lies in your prayer and not in the power of God. One must not pray to God in anticipation of any gifts. Pray to God for Him. God will supply all that we need. He knows what, where and when to



Divine Discourse on Christmas Afternoon

give and to whom. Even if we do not make any effort, He will surely give us what we need. To desire and then get frustrated when the desire is not fulfilled is not the quality of a devotee". Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Mana Se Kaho*". (For a full text of the Discourse visit the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust site www.srisathyasai.org.in).

Bhagavan then blessed the devotees by sitting in the chair of the new hi-tech car that was projecting out. In a few seconds the chair was lifted and positioned into the car even while Swami was smiling and blessing everyone. He then gave everyone a last Darshan by driving slowly around the hall before disappearing into the dim evening light of Poornachandra! What a glorious Christmas. We pray to Sai that the Christ consciousness of this magical Christmas afternoon live with us and elevate us for the rest of our lives.

JANUARY 1st, 2005 - NEW YEAR'S DAY THE MORNING PROGRAMME - PERFORMANCES BY A NATIONAL CHOIR AND A WORLD CHOIR AND BHAJANS BY THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BHAJAN GROUP

With the recent tsunami on the day after Christmas that resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of lives in the coastal regions of many countries in South East Asia a solemn and sombre mood engulfed the *Ashram*. Thousands of devotees assembled in Sai Kulwant Hall on New Year Day, with hope and prayer in their hearts, seeking the soothing balm of the Lord's Feet and His tender comforting words and Blissful Divine Presence.

The Mandir wore a festive look with coloured banners with the words "80 Years of Love in Action", seen

hanging from every pillar as well as on the first floor of the veranda. Swami in His immense mercy had acceded to the prayers of the SSSIHL alumni to decorate the Mandir and they had done a magnificent job. An abundance of flowers added colour and fragrance to the *Mandir*. An arch of 3 types of flowers - pink lotus, yellow-hued sunflowers and red roses adorned the area in front of Lord Ganesha in the veranda. A stream of pink roses and white orchids interlaced with green leaves lined the entire façade and also ran down the entire height of the elevation. Bouquets of bright yellow roses also adorned all the niches and corners of the brass banisters surrounding the steps.

Almost instantaneously, with Swami's entrance, the mood changed to one of joy and happiness and the hope of renewal and a new beginning. The New Year Programme after all kick-starts the celebrations of Swami's 80th year of advent. Thus a series of events are planned to culminate with the grand celebration on November 23rd, 2005.

The programme began with a talk by Sri Indulal Shah, former Chairman, World Council, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and currently International Advisor of the Organisation and Member of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. In his talk Sri Indulal Shah said that the devotees should be what Hanuman was to Lord Rama and the Gopikas to Lord Krishna. The lives of the devotees should be an ideal to carry the message of Sai.

The morning's programme consisting of the offering of a musical programme to Him by a National and a World Choir was labelled as "Sri Sathya Sai, Our Divine Destiny". This theme set the motif with which all the



The World Choir singing for Swami on New Year Day

men and women welcomed the New Year by singing praises of the Lord and expressing our devotion and love for Him.

The National Choir consisting of about 98 men and 94 women drawn from 19 states of India was organised by Mr. Nimish Pandya and conducted by Mr. Girish Atve. They sang about 6 songs including *"Soham Sai Om"*, *"Sai Sathyam, Sai Nityam"*, *"Vishwa Ke Adhar Hai Sai"*, *"Jai Jai Sai Ram"*, and *"Prema Rupa Sai Deva, Prema Data Sai Deva"*.

The World Choir co-ordinated by Mr. John Behner, had 53 men and 96 women from 42 countries, and sang about 8 songs for Swami. The songs included *"Now is the time to celebrate the presence of Our Lord, Embodiment of Love"*, *"At Your Feet we fall dear Lord"*, *"Teu Nome e Sathya, Bendito Seja, Eterno Sai"*, *"Baba Father let me be yours and yours alone"*, *"Yakanaka! Be one in the Spirit"*, *"Sing for joy and bring our praises to the King"*, *"Om Sai Baba, Eighty years with us on planet earth"* and finally *"Celebrate Swami, celebrate, celebrate on this Holy Day"*.

As an unexpected bonus, at the conclusion of the World Choir, a group of young men and women from Southern California were then escorted into the front and squeezed into the narrow area between the veranda steps and the seated National and World Choirs. They immediately launched into singing *Bhajans*, singing not only the perennial favourites like *"Allah O Akbar"* but also some English *Bhajans* like *"We're never far from the Avatar's Eyes"*, *"Chant the Name of God, Sing the Glory of the Lord"*, *"More Love, More Power, More of You in My Life"*, and *"Shalom Hallelujah"*.

This brought to a close the morning programme to welcome the New Year. The morning's rousing and soulful music had filled everyone with ecstasy, as only singing the praises of the Lord can. Truly it is said - 'Happiness is only in Union with God'.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAMME - SSSIHL ALUMNI MUSIC PROGRAMME AND A PROGRAMME BY THE BRASS BAND

New Year's Day evening brought the alumni of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning flocking to Sai Kulwant Hall to offer their tributes to Him at the dawn of another New Year. These old students of the Institute who had decorated the *Mandir* for the day, now offered

a musical programme to Him and serenaded Him to welcome the New Year. The students sang about 16 songs for the Lord, in Telugu and Hindi, with appropriate commentary in both Telugu and English to introduce each song. Almost all the songs reflected the sentiment of Swami's deep love for all His students and their reciprocal love and attachment for Him. Starting with *"Vidyaku Vinayame"*, a prayer to Lord Ganesha, the students sang numerous songs like *"Saieswara"*, *"Mere Sai"*, *"Jab Bhee Tum"*, *"Naa Yee Tera"*, *"Raghuvara"*, *"Sarf Ek Hi Kam"*, *"Tum Bin"*, *"Sarwavatara"*, *"Lee Lee Tera Nam"* and concluded with the group song, *"Kaise Batayen"*. Throughout, Swami was immersed in the songs, while all of us were lost in the bliss of His Heavenly smile and the gentle beats of His Divine Hands keeping time with the music.



SSSIHL Alumni singing the Lord's Glory to welcome the New Year

Following the song programme presented by the old students, Swami next called the leader of the brass band of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and blessed that the band may commence its New Year's programme. The 30 members of the band performed a lively programme of 6 pieces (which included two *Bhajans*) - *"Gajavadana"*, *"Final Countdown"*, *"Hungarian Dance"*, *"La Bamba"*, *"Shankara, Shankara"*, and *"Bread Fan"*. Swami twice requested more music and the band happily complied, responding with *"Air"*, followed by *"Brass Explosion"*. Swami blessed the band leader by calling him to the dais and materializing a beautiful gold bracelet for him.

Swami then blessed Mr. Ajit Popat from U.K. to address the gathering. He spoke about the inner significance of the word *"HAPPY"* in the term *"Happy"*

New Year” as explained to him by Bhagavan: H - Holy, A - Awareness, P - Patience, P - Purity, Y - Yogi. He said that only when we put this meaning of the word HAPPY and Swami’s teachings into practice can we really call it a Happy New Year.

Thus ended a beautiful day that provided respite from recent events and the hope that with the Lord’s Grace, things will be much better in the New Year.

JAN 6th: KRISHNAM VANDE JAGADGURUM - A DRAMA BY THE SRI SATHYA SAI VIDYA VIHAR, VISAKHAPATNAM

Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Visakhapatnam, a school with 1,600 students on its rolls, had the unique privilege of staging a musical dance ballet titled “*Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum*”, in the Divine presence on Jan 6th, on the occasion of the completion of 20 years of excellence of the school.



Krishna asserting His right to steal butter to Mother Yashoda

This musical ballet, inspired by Bhagavan’s *Bhagavatha Vahini*, depicts how loving Krishna reveals the secret of His incarnation to His mother Yashoda and the Gopikas, while enchanting them with His mischievous *Leelas*. The ballet opens with Yashoda searching for her son, and on finding Him decorates His body lovingly. It also shows the Gopikas complaining to the Divine mother that her son has become a butter thief. Unable to believe this as abundant butter is available in their own household, Yashoda is however entreated by the Gopikas to enquire further into the matter. While cradling Krishna lovingly in her lap and singing Him a lullaby, Yashoda sweetly asks Krishna if the Gopikas were right. At first feigning sleep, then ignorance and also mock anger Krishna teases Yashoda, before finally confessing mischievously

that He really is a butter thief! Denying any fault on His part, Krishna asserts that it is His right to do so as He has protected the Gokulam by punishing the snake Kaleeya, by killing demons and lifting the Goverdhana Hill to protect the village from Indira’s downpour. He further proclaims that in *Kaliyuga* He will incarnate as Sri Sathya Sai. The ballet concludes with Yashoda and the Gopikas realizing Krishna as the Lord of the Universe and singing and dancing His Glory.

The baby Krishna stole everyone’s hearts and the young girl who acted the part of Yashoda really brought out her maternal *Bhava* for Krishna and brought tears in everyone’s eyes. Swami at the end manifested a chain for the young Krishna and also posed for group pictures with all the young actors to show His appreciation of their fine effort.

JAN 11th: THE ANNUAL SPORTS AND CULTURAL MEET OF THE SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of the Sri Sathya Sai Educational Institutions is a much awaited event. January 11th of every year thus marks a sort of homecoming as the students and the staff of all the 3 campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Educational Institutions (at Brindavan, Anantapur and Puttaparthi) as well as the Primary and the High Schools assemble for the big day in Sai Vidya Giri Stadium.

The intramural sports part of this annual event is actually over much before this big day. The events start in early December and the students in each campus are broken up into 4 houses (*Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema*). While sports everywhere is a matter of winning at all costs, the sports meet here emphasizes more on co-operation rather than competition, the spirit of participation rather than the mechanics of prize winning. The boys in these 4 houses then “vie against each other” in games like cricket, volleyball tennis and so on. There are also talent competitions like singing and debating contests, essay writing and other literary activities. It is all in fun - in a spirit of camaraderie, fellowship and brotherhood.

Sometime in the middle of December however, the students become a little more determined. They now think of the cultural and daredevil events to perform on the Big Day in front of the sweet Lord. Not only events

have be creatively dreamt up but sets organised, uniforms and clothing arranged, props to be made and so on. And of course committees are formed with each boy being assigned a specific duty. There are also many sundry things to do like making torches to carry the flame on this day, offering a selection of different mascots so Swami could pick one, and so on. After the events are decided on, the students now start the arduous task of practising again and again till perfection is reached, and the new skills learnt rapidly are internalised till they become second nature.

While the initial practise sessions are done in their respective campuses, in the early part of January (this year on January 8th) all the students assemble in Puttaparthi to practise at the Stadium and finalise things like positioning and so on. A ground sharing arrangement is in force and different campuses use the ground as per the schedule throughout the day. Thus an air of excitement pervades the town and it is not uncommon to hear the brass band practise as late as 10:30 p.m!

As the day approaches, Swami also encourages the students and inspires them by occasionally dropping in on the field during the practice sessions. Sometimes He silently watches the practice from His car itself, but sometimes He alights and sits in the chair specially put out for Him. Then all the students who are not scheduled for practice gather around Him, like one big happy family, while He watches the other students go through their routines. Swami gently makes suggestions but for the most part shows His appreciation by His silent smiles and happy looks at all the eager faces around Him. This year on January 9th, the benevolent Lord also had



Swami watching the Sports practise
on Jan 8th

clothing material distributed to all the students as a symbol and token of His love for them.

Finally the Big Day arrives! The events start early. Swami enters the Stadium around 7:30 a.m., in the open car where His seat is in the front and the driver's seat is behind Him. A gasp goes up as people realize that He has come in His white robe as a special blessing. Swami is received at the entrance by the Brindavan boys on horses, and the Puttaparthi and Anantapur marching bands. After entering the stadium Swami's car goes through a canopy of flags formed by the captains of the different events. The procession then goes all the way up to Shanti Vedita where Swami alights and climbs the stage. He immediately lights the lamp to signify the start of the meet and the ceremonial march past begins.

All the students of the Educational Institutions starting with the Primary School, followed by the Anantapur campus and the Anantapur Junior College march past saluting the dais. The girls are then followed by all the boys of the Puttaparthi High School, the students of the Brindavan campus, and lastly the host - the Prashanti Nilayam campus. The singing troupe and the athletes bring up the rear. All the students look smart in well co-ordinated clothes and decked out in their house colours. Swami then hoists the flag after which the oath taking ceremony takes place. The Institute boys then bring the torch to be blessed by Swami and the torch is carried by runners up to the bottom of the hill from where this year's mascot (*Garuda* or the eagle) made out of steel wiring and paper and painted in gold, is pulled up to the top of the hill carrying the torch. When the torch reaches the top of the hill, it lights the big urn and the lighting of the fire signifies the start of the meet. Swami then releases pigeons and balloons also.

After the formal opening ceremony, we had the campus presentations. The morning belonged to the Brindavan and the Anantapur campus. The Anantapur campus opened their programme, "The Path of *Dharma* is the Path of Sai" with a short welcome dance. This was followed by an exhibition of martial arts (stick fighting, fencing, sword-fighting) with the theme that when you protect others you protect yourself and when you protect yourself you protect others. The girls then gave an exhibition of stunts on motor bikes, including jumping

through hoops of fire and clearing 16 of their peers lying on the ground after taking off on a ramp. Then followed a cultural item with a peacock dance and for the finale there was a song and dance item that had a patriotic theme to exhort everyone to serve the motherland.



A cultural program by the Anantapur college

After the Anantapur Campus came the children from the *Deenajanodarana Pathakamu*, from Swami's orphanage, who stopped in front of the dais on a decorated float performing magic tricks to illustrate that life is an illusion.

The last item of the morning programme was the display by the Brindavan campus entitled – 'A Journey from I to We and We to He!' The highlight of their presentation was a breathtaking display of acrobatics, entitled 'Celestial Rhythms', on a metal grid suspended in the air about 80 feet high lifted by a crane. They made numerous patterns in the air in their coordinated and contrasting uniforms with only the background of the blue sky. Starting with the figure 80 to signify the 80th year of advent, they formed numerous attractive diamond shapes and other symmetric patterns including the word SAI. While the Celestial Rhythms were air-



Celestial Rhythms from the Brindavan campus

bound, their more down to earth brothers, calling themselves Creative Expressions, displayed various formations on independent hollow decorated metal cubes arranged in many symmetric patterns. With their theme of 'bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind', they really bent their body around these arrangements of the hollow cubes to give a visually pleasing performance. Simultaneously on either side of the Creative Expressions display a group of about 100 students performed exercises using coloured wooden planks to create different patterns and effects as well as an item using it as a seesaw and as a diving board for a student to dive off from into the hands of his brothers. This brought the morning's programme to a close.

The afternoon saw the primary boys and girls and the girls from the High School take centre stage. The tiny tots performing in their costumes in the hot afternoon sun managed to make everyone else forget their own discomfort. Their presentation lasting about 1 hour was a delectable mix of songs and dances, all done with gusto and bubbling enthusiasm. Elaborate costumes and pleasing props enabled them to put on such visual treats like a fan dance where they opened the fans in many different ways to display different colours and designs; a balloon dance with peacocks, a sunflower dance and other myriad representations.

Veritably the whole school participates and the resulting blend is a fast moving and thrilling display where small tots would pop up and then disappear in a myriad of colours and artistic symmetry. The tiny boys in the primary school also did a lot of acrobatic tricks in front of the dais. Earlier these tiny acrobats had welcomed Swami to the stadium amidst loud applause from the crowd, in their imitation of the 'centipede walk' by curling up their legs on the shoulders of the boy behind



The centipede walk to welcome Swami in the afternoon

while all of them are on all fours.

Finally the host campus, the Prashanti Nilayam boys, took centre stage to cap a fine day of programmes with their display. The opening item was a *Shiva Tandava* dance done against the background of a huge Nataraja idol fabricated by the boys themselves. Lord Shiva is the epitome of the dancing art and the boys outdid themselves in dancing in front of Lord Shiva Himself. The sight of the 2 boys dressed as Lord Shiva and Parvathi dancing on an elevated platform while about 30-40 boys danced in synchronous fashion on the ground, in various costumes as sages and ordinary village folk, was delectable eye candy for the crowd.

In quick succession other items followed. First was Caribining - where the boys came gliding down ropes tied from a high point on the hillside to the ground; the trampoline stunts including dunking the basketball after taking off from the trampoline and performing a somersault; the Moving Marvels wherein six pairs of boys did tricks on 6 large rimmed moving wheels; a Gun Drill focussing on perfect synchronization as the boys (dressed in red and dark blue) performed various movements with their guns in rapid succession to give a pleasing wave effect. 'Terrestrial Champions' a display of stick exercises combining speed, dexterity and synchronisation was next, ending with a display of a mock stick fight in the traditional Indian form of martial art. Roller Blading was next, wherein stunts on roller blades were done on a U-shaped ramp specially fabricated for the event using stainless steel plates.

The finale for this event where the boy jumps off a ramp and clears a Maruti van drew applause from one



Rollerblading over a Maruti Van

and all. In Waves in the Valley a myriad of boys from the High School, made various wave formations by holding onto the shoulders of the boys on either side of him. The last item for the afternoon and this year's Sports meet was a "reverse bungee jumping", by the Brindavan campus, where a student on the ground is tied to a rope stretched from the end of a crane and is catapulted about 100-120 feet in the air. These bungee boys then each came up to Swami and offered a bouquet to Him and received His blessings. As a grand finale, all the Prashanti Nilayam boys who performed in the afternoon, gathered in a semicircle in front of the stage to offer their respects to Bhagavan.

The Sports Meet served as a grand precursor to the celebrations of the 80th year of the advent of our Lord. It helped put the tragic events at the end of last year behind us and to look forward to a grand sequence of events to hail His Glory for the rest of this epoch-making year.

JAN 12th: A DRAMA BY BALA VIKAS CHILDREN OF ANDHRA PRADESH - 'SAI SANKRANTHI'

105 Bala Vikas children from Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh participated in this programme to celebrate '*Makara Sankranti*', a harvest festival, in the presence of Bhagavan.

The ballet, explaining the different practises in the celebration of *Makara Sankranti*, begins with an invocation to Parthi Ganesha describing Him as a *Prema Avatara*, and that the real Sankranti is one which sows the seeds of selfless service and sacrifice. This was followed by an invitation to '*Sankranti Lakshmi*', who will bring prosperity when she steps into a house. They then sang a song called '*Melu Kolup*' depicting Bhagavan as the Universal Lord. '*Haridasulu*' a folk art is enacted to spread the practice of *Namasmarana*.

The first day of *Sankranti* is *Bhogi* and on this day the children receive the blessings of elders in the form of '*Bhogipalli*', the title of the next song. This song depicts Swami as a sweet child and offers *Bhogipalli* to Him. Jamgama Devara comes every morning singing the name of Siva. This song thus depicts the Siva Tandava dance.

'*Bommalakoluvu*', is a beautiful tradition where people arrange the decorated deities of the different



A scene from the drama Sai Sankranthi

Gods on the altar and then invite their kith and kin, thus developing bonds of love among people. 'Buda Bukkalu' is a folk art where the artists go house by house to wish prosperity and good fortune to the inmates. On the day of 'Kanuma' people worship cows and bulls to bring them prosperity.

In the finale the small children declare that they are the children of Sai and that His word is the Veda to them. They promise to tread the path of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, and *Prema* and pledge that they would treat their parents and teachers as God, and everyone as their own kith and kin and that they would live every minute on the Sai path.

JAN 13th: 'TAALLAPAACA ANNAMAACHAARYA' A DRAMA BY THE BRINDAVAN CAMPUS OF THE SSSIHL

The evening of the 13th saw an electrifying performance depicted by the students of the Brindavan when they displayed the life story of a devotee poet called Annamacharya. This drama involved about 100 students including the dancers, actors, set boys and the music boys.

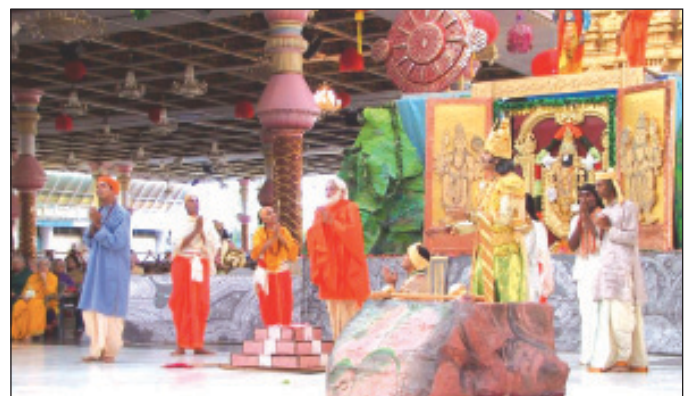
Annamacharya, popularly known as Annamaya, was born in the village of Tallapaka in Andhra and was the only son of his parents. He at first decided that only beautiful nature was worthy of worship. But the Lord willed that Annamaya's life be exemplary to all and in His inimitable way directed the drama of Annamaya's life. He sent the celestial sage Narada who gave Annamacharya a vision of the Lord, and thus Annamacharya was totally captivated. Narada also gave a *tambura* to him and thus was born the poet saint.

Annamacharya then poured out his love for God in the form of songs - the best way to win the heart of the Lord. As a Sankirtanacharya, he composed 32,000 *kirtanas* in praise of his beloved Lord Venkateshwara.

The boys brought out his devotion in an exemplary fashion. Elaborately designed sets, including the gold *gopuram* of a temple (fabricated and made by the boys themselves out of papier mache) lent a very authentic air to the drama. One scene in particular stands out, when Annamacharya came to the door of the temple but found them closed for the day and is chased away by the priest. The despondent Annamacharya plaintively cries out in anguish that he does not want to leave without the *Darshan* of his beloved Lord Venkateshwara. The doors of the temple then immediately swing open to grant this pure devotee his heart's desire, revealing Lord Venkateshwara in all His splendour (the deity also being lovingly made by the students themselves).

King Saluva, impressed by the divine charm of Annamaya's music, offers him the position of the royal court singer, which Annamaya politely refuses as he only wants to sing for the Lord. This prompts the king to become his disciple.

Years roll by and Annamacharya's prolific compositions inspire spiritual aspirants from all walks of life. In the next scene some low caste people complain to Annamacharya that they are not permitted to pray to the one God, the God of all, in the temple premises. Then Annamacharya himself leads them into the temple, which angers the temple priests and they throw all of Annamacharya's written compositions, his whole life's work, into the fire. But Lord Vishnu from *Vaikunta* (fittingly standing up high on the top of the temple *gopuram*) comes to Annamaya's protection and the



Lord Vishnu saving Annamacharya's verses from the fire

verses are saved. The disciple king pleads and gets his permission to etch Annamacharya's verses on copper plates and they are thus saved for posterity.

At the age of 95, Annamacharya decides that it is time for him to leave his body. In a sublimely emotional final scene the Lord tries to persuade Annamacharya to continue singing for him by promising him eternal youth and immortality. Eventually the Lord yields to Annamacharya's request for deliverance but asks him to sing a final song for Him. Annamaya then sings one final song, bringing tears to everyone's eyes, before merging with the Lord.

Such was Annamacharya's love for God that for all time, his name has become synonymous with that of the Lord Venkateshwara.

JAN 14th: VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF THE ANNUAL SPORTS MEET AND A PRIMARY SCHOOL DRAMA ENTITLED 'SAI BHAGAVATHAM' THE MORNING PROGRAMME - PRIZE DISTRIBUTION AND DIVINE DISCOURSE ON THE OCCASION OF PONGAL / SANKRANTHI

The morning session formally brought the Sports and Cultural Meet to an end. The Sai Kulwant Hall was aesthetically decorated for the occasion with a temple and a mountain scene printed on large screens forming the backdrop, against which the trophies and cups were arranged for distribution. Swami arrived in Sai Kulwant Hall escorted by the Anantapur and Puttaparthi marching bands and the captains holding up a canopy of flags for Him to pass through. He was received on the dais by the physical instructors of the Puttaparthi and Brindavan campuses, and then lighted the lamp to inaugurate the function. Sri Sanjay Sahni welcomed everyone. Swami then blessed the Vice-Chancellor Sri S.V. Giri to address the crowd.

Sri S.V. Giri talked about his experience with the Sports meet and also mentioned the enormous love and concern that Swami expressed for the students' welfare at every stage of the Sports Meet. Swami then blessed 2 students (from the Anantapur and the Puttaparthi

campus) to talk to the audience. They also talked about Swami's enormous love and guidance at all stages of the Sports Meet. The Anantapur girl mentioned that during one of the motorbike stunts the cable wire snapped but the motor cycle ran normally till the event was over (after which it stopped). The other speaker from the Puttaparthi campus talked about the confidence that Swami generates in all the students to do the stunts in spite of spills and accidents and said that life is worth only if it is lived for Him.



Divine Discourse on Pongal Day

After this Swami gave His Divine Discourse as January 14th is also *Pongal* or *Sankranti*, a harvest festival celebrated in almost all parts of the country. Swami in His Discourse alluded to the word Sankranti and said that kranthi means change. Hence He asked everyone to change and become happy and blissful. True happiness He said is only in union with God and cannot be found in the temporary and fleeting pleasures of the world. Everlasting bliss emanates from within and He exhorted everyone to find the God within and claim their legacy of bliss.

THE AFTERNOON PROGRAMME - PRIMARY SCHOOL DRAMA 'SAI BHAGAVATHAM'

In the afternoon, the primary school students put up a drama entitled Sai Bhagavatham. The little children from the age of 5 upwards put on an enchanting show.

With a well edited video projected on a giant screen providing a fitting and appropriate backdrop for the story line, the small students recounted His Story in a touching fashion in the foreground of the Poornachandra stage.

Starting with the story of Creation, they brought out how Swami created the world at His pleasure. But over time the world degenerates and everything in the Universe follows their ordained rhythm except for humans. This prompts Shiva of the trinity (of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu) to declare that He will incarnate in the world to restore Dharma into their pre-eminent place. The scene then moves to the *Ashram* of Sage Bhardwaja who decides to go to Kailash to invite Siva and Parvathi to his *Yagna* and gets from them a boon that He will be born in their lineage. The drama also depicts the prediction of Swami's coming in the other religions like in Christianity where Jesus declares that "I am the Son of God and I have come to prepare the way for His coming". Under the backdrop of a scene from Mecca's holiest shrine, the teachings of Islam which foretell the incarnation of Swami along with a description of His physical features, was portrayed (including the description of the mole on the cheek, the wearing of the flaming red robe and broad forehead).

The story progresses to show the first of Lord Shiva's triple incarnations as Shirdi Sai Baba. In a touching scene, Shirdi Baba gives some money to Sharda Devi and says that He will ask for it again in His next incarnation. This acts as a precursor to bring about the story of our own beloved Swami. We are then shown Kondama Raju talking to his Gurdeva about the incarnation of the Kalki Avatar. The story progresses quite fast then and shows Mother Easwaramma telling grandfather Kondama Raju about the blue light entering her while she was drawing water from the village well. The story then quickly moves through some of the prominent incidents from Sathya's boyhood, including the declaration of His Avatarhood. Moving on the play depicts the sorry plight of the poor, who are unable to either give a hefty donation for school admission, or have the ability to pay for expensive healthcare. The play also depicts how Swami's selfless service and love (in the form of the free hospitals and free educational systems) transforms these very same people who had oppressed the poor and they in turn vow to spend their lives in the service of others.

That is all for this issue. More in the next. Until then,
Sairam! ■

~ Heart2Heart Team



A scene from the drama Sai Sankranthi

SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI - Part 2

(continued from the previous issue)

SCENE 2



Devagiri Amma’s husband returns, enters the house, and sees his wife lying on the floor. She has swooned. He calls out to her.



Ganga Bhavadiya (G.B): Devamma,Devamma.

Devagiri Amma (D.A): Where are they?The Gods Parvathi and Parameshwara, Whom I worship everyday, appeared before me!

G.B: What are you trying to say? Were you dreaming?



D.A: No, no; it is not a dream; it is true! Perhaps it is due to the merit gained in many previous births. Parvathi and Parameshwara gave me *Darshan* here.



G.B: What?! You mean to say that the very Lord and His Consort gave you *Darshan*?It is all your imagination!

D.A: You call it imagination, a dream?! Please, why don’t you believe what I say?

G.B: Some things can be believed. But if Saints and *Rishis* who did penance for years and years could not get a vision of the Lord, how am I to believe that you, an ordinary housewife, were fortunate to have His *Darshan*?



D.A: If you cannot believe that the Gods gave me *Darshan*, how then are you going to believe something else that I want to say?

G.B: Something else?

D.A: Yes, something else.

G.B: What is that? Are you going to tell me that God gave you the boon of progeny?

D.A: Yes indeed! Goddess Parvathi Herself blessed that we would have a son and a daughter.

G.B: You are crazy! You are constantly praying that you be blessed with children, and that feeling has promoted this illusion!

D.A: No, no! This is really true! You have so far heard only about the boon that Parvathi granted.

G.B: Oh I see! I suppose Lord Parameshwara also granted you a boon!

D.A: As a matter of fact, yes. It is an unimaginable and incredible boon, almost impossible to get!

G.B: What is that?

D.A: The Blessed Lord said that He will take birth in our house as our son! Later, this son of ours would be worshipped in all the three worlds as the very Embodiment of Divinity, and be adored by the whole of humanity -- this is the boon that the Lord granted!

G.B: Devamma, is this true? I know you always speak the truth and that there is none so good and noble like you. Yet, I have a doubt about what you are now saying. Even



great devotees of the Lord don't get such a boon; how then can we ordinary persons enjoy such Grace?

The great devotee Ramdas struggled so hard to have the vision of Lord Rama. Are we better than Ramdas?.....

Saint Tyagaraja was ceaselessly chanting the name of Rama and contemplating about Him. But did Rama grant the Saint *Darshan* so easily? These people were immersed in single-pointed devotion, totally detached from the world..... Devamma, how am I to believe that you got so easily the *Darshan* that these people could not, in spite of so much effort?

D.A: I cannot answer your doubts. But I know one thing: I have become your wife on account of God's will. If you accept that by Divine Grace we will soon have children, it is enough for me. I am not asking you to believe that I had God's *Darshan*. I know what I have seen, and I know it to be true. Some truths are known only to those who have seen and experienced. That is all I can say.

G.B: Well Devamma, if the words of Parvathi and Parameshwara come true and we are blessed with children, why should I complain?!

SCENE 3



Years pass. The couple already have a son and a daughter. Once again, Devagiri Amma is in the family way. One day, Devagiri Amma's husband is performing his daily worship. He is chanting hymns addressed to Lord Siva.



G.B: Om Kala Rudraya Namaha,

 Om Kalayah Namaha,

.....

 Om Neelakantahya Namaha,

 Om Virupakshaya

Suddenly he remembers what his wife had told him earlier, namely that they would be blessed with the Lord Himself being born as their son. He then continues his chants.

 Om Virupakshaya Namaha,

 Om Sivayah Namaha,

 Om Maheshwaraya Namaha,

 Om Sambhuve Namaha,

He hears voices from the adjacent room, where his son and daughter are having an argument.



A brother is going to be born.

No it is going to be a sister.

No it is going to be a brother.

I say it will be a brother.

I say it will be a sister

.....

Let us ask mother.

The boy and the girl go to their mother and start asking her questions.

SON: Mother, are we going to have a brother or a sister?



D.A: A brother will be born. That is the boon granted by the Lord Himself.

SON: Did you hear? Mother also says that a brother is going to be born.

Devagiri Amma’s husband hears all this and suddenly he leaves the house. The lady is surprised and upset.

SCENE 4

D.A: [to husband] Why have you suddenly stopped the worship? What is all this? What has happened? Why are you looking agitated?Where are you going?

G.B: It is true that Parvathi and Parameshwara granted you *Darshan*. It is also true that they granted you a boon. But you alone received the Grace of that *Darshan*. I did not believe you then, but I realise now that I am the one

who was mistaken. I now want to see what you saw. I too want to have that Divine Darshan! Only then would my life be fulfilled.



D.A: Oh no! What is all this? Please calm down! Why this grim determination? Why this adamant attitude and vehemence? Just because you go in search, do you believe you can get the Darshan of the Lord? Please think calmly!

G.B: Devagiri Amma! My mind is made up. I AM going in search of God!

D.A: Please,....., please, For heaven's sake please listen to me. God is going to be born in our house as a child. See that child and have the *Darshan* of Siva.

G.B: I am not interested in seeing Siva as a child. I want to see Him verily as Parameshwara, the Lord of the Universe.

D.AMMA: Please, please,please calm down!

G.B: *Om Namah Sivayah, Om Namah Sivayah,*



The husband leaves home constantly chanting the name of the Lord, without looking back even once. He is determined to go to the forest, meditate, have the Lord's Darshan, and merge in Him. The children are bewildered and start crying. Devagiri Amma is confused and torn between two minds. On the one hand she wants to follow her husband. On the other hand she is drawn towards her children.



She decides that she will leave her children to the care of someone else and go behind her husband,



despite the advanced stage of her pregnancy. She goes to the house of a neighbour and knocks on the door. ■

(To be continued)

GITA FOR CHILDREN - Part 2

(continued from the previous issue)

53. 'A person who is not cool will not be at Peace. Peace is inside and not outside! A person who feels Peace inside will experience Bliss. And a person in a Blissful state would radiate Peace in his neighbourhood. This is how Peace can be brought on earth. Someone must get the ball rolling. It is like lighting many candles with one candle.'

54. 'A flower is beautiful. But it also radiates fragrance. In the same way, *Shanti* is inside; when it spreads outside like the fragrance of the flower, it becomes *Prashanti*!'

55. 'Arjuna, what I am telling you now is not merely practical advice related to fighting this battle ahead of you. It has deep inner significance because it is related to fighting life's battles.'

56. 'A man who has vanquished internal enemies becomes a pure and elevated being. And when such a person finally leaves his body, he merges once and for ever with God. No more rebirths for him because he is merged in God, and is ever in a Blissful state. Remember – true happiness is total and complete union with God!'

CHAPTER 3

1. Arjuna says to Krishna, 'Krishna, I am totally confused. On the one hand you are asking me to act, to get up and to fight. At the same time, you are also asking me to look inside, develop discrimination and become wise. How can I do both? If I have to act, I can't be spending time looking inside. On the other hand if I start looking inside, I am sure I would get lost there! In which case, how would I be able to act? How would I be able to fight, as You are asking me to do? Therefore, please tell me clearly, which of these two paths is better and where exactly do they lead?'

2. Krishna smiles and replies, 'Arjuna, this is what they call a good question! Let Me, to start with, make two things very clear.

1) The two paths as you call them, are called respectively the Path of Action or *Karma Yoga* and the Path of Wisdom or *Sankhya Yoga*.

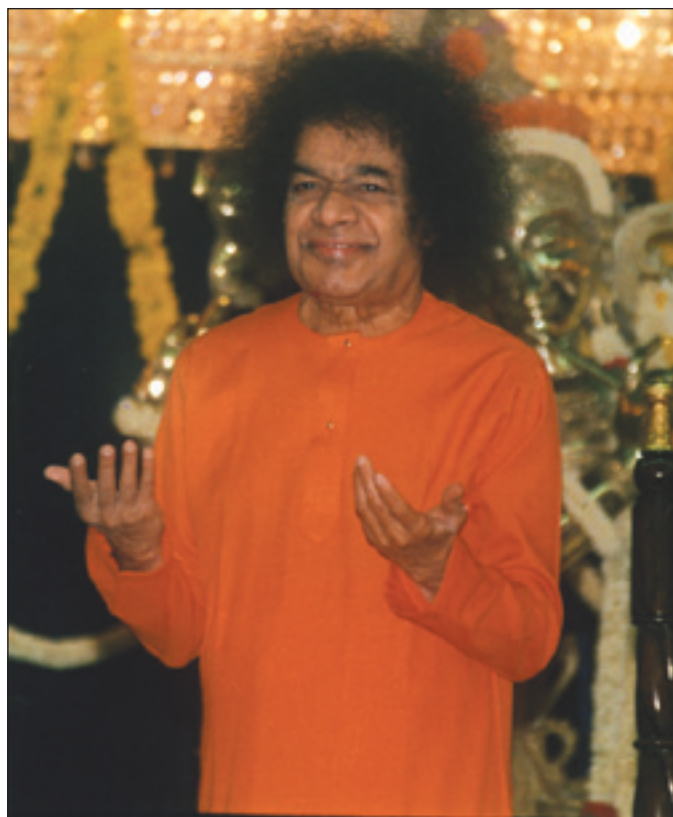
2) Both these lead to the same goal, namely Eternal Bliss and freedom from rebirth.'

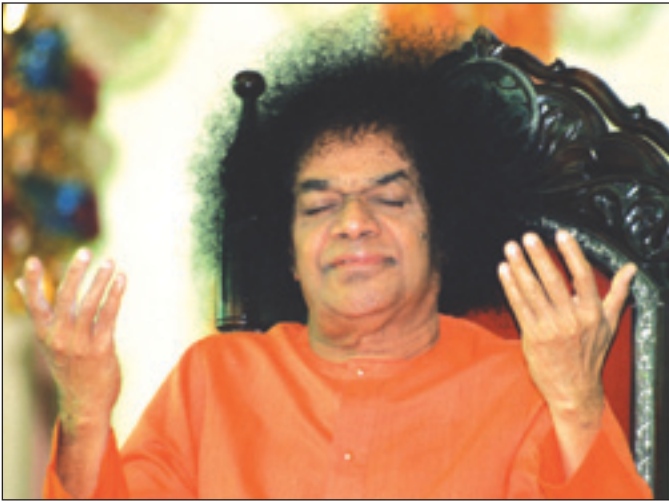
3. 'You are possibly wondering how that could be possible, since these two paths seem to be so very different. That is what I shall now explain.'

4. 'Let Me start with the so-called Path of Action. When I ask you to follow the Path of Action it does not mean that I am asking you to become a workaholic, go-getter and things like that. I mean something very different.'

5. 'First and foremost, a person dedicated to the Path of Action accepts the role Destiny has carved out for him and does his best in that role. Now take your own case. You are born a soldier, a warrior. The duty of a soldier is to fight for *Dharma*. That is what you must do, and not run away talking like a *Sannyasi*, as you were in fact trying to do a short while ago.'

6. 'Next, you must plunge into action with perfect calmness. You must always be cool and unperturbed; in other words, you must be the very embodiment of equanimity.'





7. 'Further, the action that you perform must be done as a sacred duty. Action becomes sacred only when duty is performed for duty's sake and not for personal gains and ends. You should never calculate about success and failure or dream about the benefits that would come to you if you were to act in a particular way.'

8. 'If it is destined that you should "fail" in whatever it is that you are trying to do, accept that outcome calmly as the Will of God. Let us say there is a person who is very sick, and that a doctor is treating the patient. The doctor cannot say, "This fellow is going to die anyway so why bother?" He must do his VERY BEST and leave the rest to God. And whatever happens, he should calmly accept that as the Will of God. With God's Grace, the patient may even pull through. For your information, this has happened any number of times.'

9. 'By the way Arjuna, don't ever get the idea that God causes failure. Things may not exactly happen the way you want things to happen but that does not mean that the effort is a failure. You see God always knows what is best, and if He has postponed what you regard as "success", it is with good reason. In the meanwhile, do not jump to the conclusion that there has been a failure.'

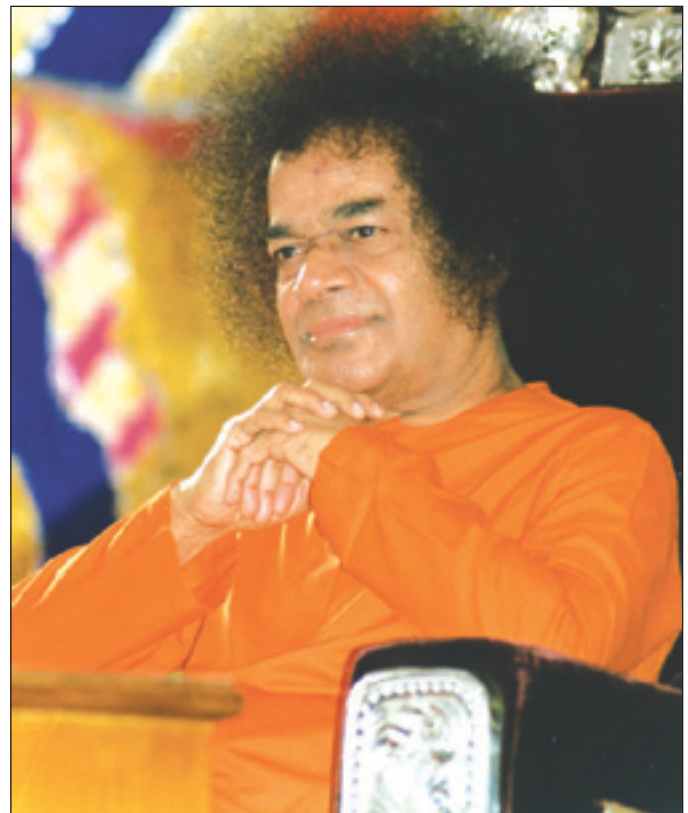
10. 'Arjuna, two important points must be noted concerning action. The first is that no one can be perfectly still and stay away from action. You talked of the Wise as if they did not engage in action. This is not correct. Don't the Wise eat, walk, bathe, etc.? Are these not actions?'

11. 'The second point is that there is action everywhere in the Universe. In fact a static Universe where nothing

ever happens is impossible! Up there in the heavens the Sun shines, the planets move about and so on. All this is Divinely-ordained action.'

12. 'If you examine carefully, there are generally two aspects to action, that of receiving and that of giving. In fact, in all cases except that of man, the giving is much more than the receiving. Just consider the example of the tree and examine how much it receives and how much it gives. This one example ought to convince you of the truth of My statement. The tree is really a fine example because in the end it gives its entire self up.'

13. 'Arjuna, the key principle on which the Universe functions is sacrifice. That one word says it all. That is why at the time of Creation God told man, "You can prosper only if you sacrifice".'



14. 'People imagine that sacrifice means giving up something valuable or giving away something precious, something that you would very much like to keep for yourself. This is a very limited interpretation of the word sacrifice. I use that word in a larger sense. I would in fact prefer to use the word offering in place of the word sacrifice.'

(To be continued)



COMPREHENDING CHANGE

- By Dr. Sara Pavan

[Dr. Sara Pavan is an Anaesthesiologist from Australia, residing in Prashanti Nilayam since 1993 and serving at the Super Speciality Hospital.]

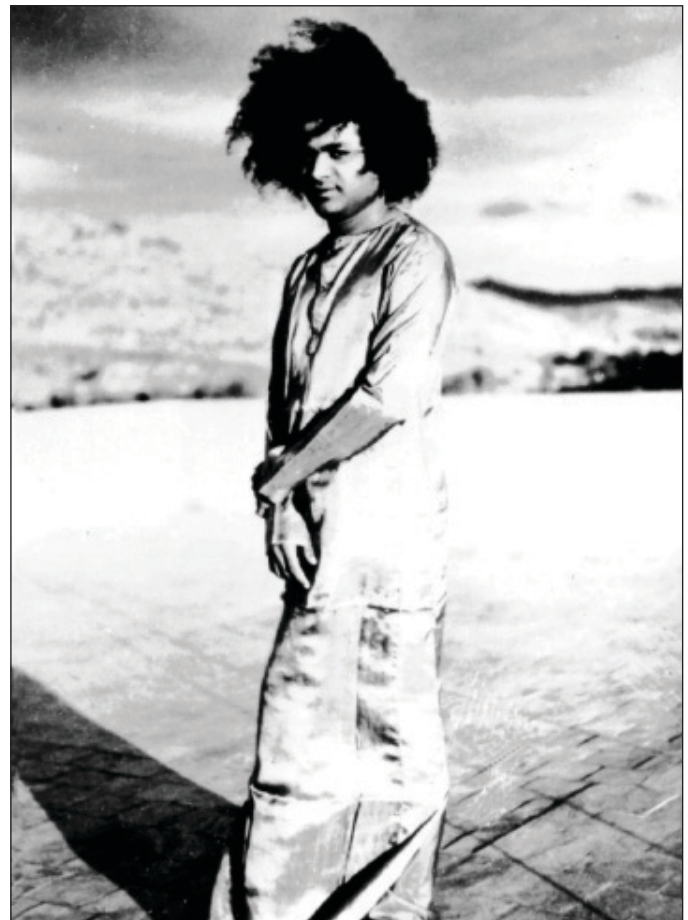
Ever since creation the manifest universe has always been in a state of flux and continuing to evolve, while *Brahman*, the formless essence and primeval cause of all creation remains the eternal and unchanging substratum. Everything has its origin from this primordial source, the ever-present God. Whatever enters the mind through the external sense organs is variously analysed and interpreted by the mind. The perceptions, therefore, are relative, subjective and within the confines of the mind. The mind is the sole interface between creator and the created. It perceives things as dual with their opposites, the yin and yang. There is nothing absolute in the nature of things in the outer world, for every object, thought or matter, is subjective and relative to the mindset of the observer, which, itself, is constantly changing. Hence, there is subjectivity and relativity between various observers.

Experiencing change and understanding the inevitability of change with time enables one to comprehend all aspects of growth and evolution. It is the mind that changes. For example, that which is seen as an adversity one moment will be recognised as providential on hindsight. Therefore we should not be too obsessed over anything, however reasonable or unreasonable things may seem in the limited context. From the matrix of the divine, the cause of all creation, the process of creation and dissolution goes on and on until each individual who harbours the notion of a separate identity - with all the rights and wrongs, the good and bad, in this infinite field of life that even transcends death - birth after birth, ultimately merges in the unified field of divinity; the Oneness the soul longs to be.

From the paradigm of *Dvaita* (duality), driven deep into our belief system over centuries, nay millennia, for one to experience the dizzy heights of *Advaita* (non-duality) is possible only for highly evolved souls. They

have seen the Light and the Light has set them Free, the Freedom of Total Surrender to the Supreme Will. They do not see anything of substance or value in the surrounding events that are fleeting, nor do they entertain the idea that they have a choice. Swami once told a group of MBA students, **"For Me everything is predetermined. At a particular appointed time a particular event has to happen; all I need to do is to walk into the moment and it gets done!"** In the same breath He said, **"If it is so for Me what to speak of you?"**

We have to just accept all that comes our way, for everything is for our highest good particularly when the Lord Himself is presiding over the change. The vast majority of us are caught up in the delusion that we are the body, which is the very definition of ego. This gives each one of us a separate identity and consequently an attachment to our own conditioning, not just from this birth, but from many past lives, perpetuating further bondage and misery.



What then is the purpose of life? The purpose of life is not to be born again; to clear the *karmic* balance sheet; to overcome all barriers that hide the Truth by discriminating between the Real and the unreal. That is, to experience our essential Oneness with the Divine, the origin of everything and to realise that life is a dream game. For all of us bound to the body and the surrounds the dream appears real and we undergo mental suffering. In His Discourse on 5th July, 2003 in Sai Ramesh Hall Bhagavan emphasised the need to go beyond *deha-bhava* (body-consciousness) and to strive to experience *Atma-bhava* (Atma-consciousness). He is adhering to His Life as His Message and continuing with His Divine Mission unhindered by His recent physical limitations.

Humanity today has drifted away from Truth and is deluded. We are even engaged in destroying the planet itself. Will God, the Supreme Cosmic Intelligence and Power, passively watch the process of self-destruction? Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita that He incarnates from age to age to protect the virtuous and transform the evil doers. Now, God has incarnated as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for this very purpose. Vested with awesome powers and not revealing them too freely, yet using the most powerful weapon of all, His Love, His Mission is to bring peace and prosperity to the entire world. Let us look at some of the important milestones in the Mission of our Sai Avatar.

In 1940, young Sathya at a tender age of 14 declared that He is the reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi and has a Mission to fulfil, and that He does not belong to any creed but has come for the re-establishment of *Sanathana dharma* (Eternal Righteousness). In 1947, in His letter to His brother, Swami had painstakingly clarified what His Mission was about. True change is possible only by a shift in the plane of consciousness, and this is possible for the Divine alone, whose ways and means are not possible for people to comprehend.

Swami has brought about changes in the lives and thinking of many, who by strict spiritual standards are ordinary people, proving that spirituality is not something inaccessible but basically essential and relevant for each individual life and the world at large. With each World Conference, using His Birthday as the occasion, Bhagavan has been raising the consciousness of devotees far and wide. Stage by stage He has brought within His ambit

people from all walks of life and making them realise their true Self by freeing them of their false appendages.

At the first World Conference in Bombay, in 1968, Bhagavan emphatically declared that every step in the life of the Avatar is predetermined. Nothing is left to chance, as He knows our past and future. He is using all means at His disposal to bring humanity into alignment with Truth; the Truth that man is God by nature. By reviving the essence of the *Vedas*, Swami is practically validating the Eternal Values that elevate man to his Divine destiny, through a spiritual renaissance at the global level - something that has never happened in the history of our planet.

At the 55th Birthday World Conference in 1980 Bhagavan blessed the Charter for the Sathya Sai Organisation. The Charter clearly defines the purpose of the Sai Mission - **to awaken the Inherent Divinity in man**. Swami has often asserted that **MAN IS GOD!** The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is designed to provide the right environment for devotees to evolve towards Godhood, through participation in the various programmes of the Educational, Spiritual and Service wings. Earnestly pursued, such practises will lead the devotee towards greater awareness, expansion of Love and selfless Service. Only by practising Bhagavan's Teachings can we propagate His Life and Message. In other words, spread the Divine Message by being Role Models of His Message.

In His Inaugural Address of the World Conference of Active Workers of the Sai Organisation in 1985, Bhagavan cautioned the delegates not to speak of anything they cannot or will not do and not do anything they cannot speak about. When a few elders enthusiastically spoke about the great Sai Family, prior to Bhagavan's 60th Birthday Message in the Hillview Stadium, He commented that the entire world is one big family and one should not have a narrow outlook.

Any devotee earnestly on the path would not ignore Swami's Discourse on 24th November 1987. Quoting the prayer '*Asathoma Sath Gamaya*' Swami said, "In the context of today this prayer is misleading. While I am trying to propagate *Advaita*, especially since My 60th Birthday, this *Mantra* keeps reinforcing *Dvaita*." He



further added that it saddened Him to see devotees did not wish to move on from the 'primary school' while His Mission had already geared up to the 'University Level'.

Between 1987 and 2000 Swami had done everything possible by being very emphatic in all His discourses that devotees should expand their love and engage in more service activities to experience the divinity in everyone. We may also recall that many devotees were hyped up over the so called 'Lift-off' of the Sai Mission after the 75th Birthday, and some even looked for outer 'mega-miracles' to happen! In His 75th Birthday discourse Swami spelt out the *Mahavakyas* (great Truths) of the four *Vedas* in His Divine Message.

1. *Tat Twam Asi* (That Thou Art)
2. *Aham Brahmasmi* (The Self is Brahman)
3. *Prajnanam Brahma* (Awareness in Brahman)
4. *Ayam Atma Brahma* (The Atma in me is no other than Brahman)

Thus, the Divine hint was a command that His devotees need to move on to see and experience God in everything and at all times and places. Needless to point out that these four *Mahavakyas* form the basis of the big changes that are taking place ever since.

To start with, let us understand what the big 'Lift-off' meant - the 'Lifting' of the Spirit, to a higher Awareness or Consciousness. Let us remind ourselves that Swami's Mission is a Spiritual Mission, not any other. Swami had declared His Avatarhood and Mission at the age of fourteen. Sixty-six years have gone by and, as per His earlier declaration, His Mission will not fail. He is God Incarnate and can raise our spirit by His Will alone. Now, His Mission has well and truly moved into top gear on to the *Advaita* stage, that God and Creation are One, and everything is He and His Will.

Bhagavan is pushing us towards the Inward Path, the path of *Nivrithi* to experience the True Spiritual Connection, the Inner-Divine-Connection, that God and Man are One and the same! Let us recall His declaration at the first Word Conference in Bombay, that He is the Embodiment of All God Forms and will respond to prayers to any of the multitudes of God Forms. He also had declared that the events in His Mission are also pre-determined. Can anything happen by 'chance' or

accident' for the Divine, Who is the Supreme Will, and Controller and Wire-Puller of the entire drama of the Universe? Hence, whatever that has happened recently too, including His apparent physical limitations, are the result of His Mighty Will, only to raise our Consciousness.

The Divine Call is clear that we need to raise our game. With His Grace nothing is impossible. First we must believe that Swami is God and whatever He does is only for our good. He exhorts us to be more spiritual and not indulge in mere rituals. Our love must expand to include more and more beings. Through love and surrender we will sanctify our lives by serving others, especially the needy. Only when we experience that it is the same Divinity that is in everyone we meet can we enjoy the Bliss of the Inner Communion.

A few years ago I wrote the following and gave it to Baba and asked Him if these words were from Him in my contemplation.

"Self-Realisation is the awakening of the spirit to its highest dimension, wherein one is in constant awareness of the perfection within, surrounded by outer imperfections and chaos."

Swami corrected me and said, ***"Not contemplation but meditation."***

Bhagavan Baba is our *Sadguru* (Supreme Teacher). He has come to give us the Highest and the Best, and by His grace enables us to go beyond our physical limitations. He is GOD and He wants us to evolve into Lamps of Love, and Light up the path for others. He is *Yogiswara* and has come to make us *Yogis* if we are prepared to receive His Divine Gift - not continue to remain in the pre-school of spirituality, indulging only in external rituals and worldly fellowships. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is God descended only for our sake that we may ascend to Godhood. ■

REFLECTION ON THE SHADOW SELF

- By Phillip Cottingham, Satyavan, Karekare, New Zealand

Two Parables

Swami often tells stories to illustrate great truths. Like the parables Jesus told, they allow us to identify with the message that is being conveyed. Swami gives two stories or analogies that clearly state our relationship with what we believe is true.



He likens it to a man climbing a coconut tree. On the ground there is the shadow of the tree. As the man climbs, his shadow is also seen on the ground. The coconut also casts a shadow. He says we are like the shadow man. We are climbing the shadow tree in order to reach the shadow coconut. There is no reality in what we do. We are merely playing at shadows.

He also tells this wonderful story:

Once, at dusk, in a street, a boy was walking along when he came across an old woman. She was looking all over the ground for something.

The boy asked, 'Grandma, can I help you?'

She said that she had lost a needle.

'Where did you lose it?'

'Inside the house.'

'Then why are you looking out here?'

'It's too dark in the house and I cannot see, so I thought I would look out here, where there is a street light'.

How many of us are like that old woman – searching for the happiness we have lost, but looking in the wrong place? We search the world for happiness. We try to find it in possessions. We try to find it in relationships. We try to find it in work. But we can never find it. Why? We are looking in the wrong place. We need to search inside ourselves to find happiness. The shadow man can never find hunger assuaged by the shadow coconut. We are the same. We live in the shadow self and we search the shadows for happiness. It is time we turned and faced the sun.

The Sun of Truth

When we are walking along the road away from the sun, our shadow is large and very apparent. How do we get rid of the shadow? By turning and looking at the sun. Our apparent being, with its body, mind, emotions, etc. is the shadow self. While we are looking away from the Sun of Truth, we will always see the shadow. The shadow travels over rough ground, thorny bushes or smooth highways, but the person is not affected one bit by where the shadow goes. So too, our shadow self goes through the ups and downs of life, the pleasure and the pain, but the real Self – the *Atma*, is not affected one iota by this. Why then do we experience such highs and lows? Because we are identified with the shadow self.



Therefore to turn and face the Sun of Truth, the Truth of our own being is the first step on the path. This turning may be complete or partial, but it is a start. If we turn completely we begin to see the light – the light of who we really are. There are those who have turned, seen the light and walked towards it, finally merging in it. There are those who have turned, seen the light and stood still in wonder, as if rooted to the spot. There are those who have turned, seen the light, found it too bright, for it shows all the imperfections laid over their soul, and turned back. Lastly, there are those who have never turned, never seen the light and deny its very existence, preferring to remain in the shadows, chasing shadow happiness.

Which type are we? What do we wish to do? It is apparent that it is not enough to turn and look at the light, without walking towards it. This is the path of many of us who come to Sai, exclaim how wonderful He is, how He is God, miraculous, the great one, etc. and make no attempt to transform our lives. We are stuck in the wonder of the light, but have not realised that we have to walk towards it and become one with it.

Then there are those of us who have come to Baba, basked in the glow of His Grace, and then realised that there is work to do. We have imperfections and ego, all of those things that are in the makeup of most of us, but we can work on ourselves by helping others.

Some even turn away. As if this was not disappointing enough, some even have the temerity to cast aspersions on Him and His message.

There are others who have heard of the light but refuse to look. They remain in the darkness, pursuing false happiness, finding in the end, that it only leads to

pain and misery. Both these are part of the shadow self. They may have heard that there is a light, but they choose to remain in darkness.

There are some who have yet to hear of the light. For these souls, that time is to come, for the light is there and all will eventually come to know of it.

The Shadow Self

So what is it that keeps us from travelling towards the light? What prevents us from truly opening our inner eye and seeing what is really there? Even if we have become dissatisfied with the world, there is still an inertia, which slows our footsteps. This inertia may take the form of physical discomfort, depression, laziness, hopelessness or any other feeling that drags us down. It may be a lack of faith, a feeling that we are not worthy, or a sense of being too small or mean. All of these are tools of the shadow self to keep itself in control.

The shadow self likes to think that it has the upper hand. It uses diverse means, deceitful means to keep things that way. However much we may wish to change, the inertia that resists change is very powerful, but not insurmountable. The shadow self is the master of lies. In the Christian tradition the devil is portrayed as the master of lies. The devil is not an external force or being, just as demons in the Hindu tradition are not external beings. The devil is that which attempts to keep us from realising the Truth of our own being.

In horror movies darkness is the tool of terror. Whenever there is a need to create a scene that will frighten, darkness is used to set the scene. The shadow self, the demon, the devil, the vampire, uses the darkness inside us to create fear. That fear will keep us in a state of panic. You know, when we are in a state of panic, we cannot move, we cannot act. We are rooted to the spot,

our hair standing on end and our body all a tremble. This is how the shadow self keeps us from walking towards the light. We remain rooted to the spot, unable to move. Thus we are under the power of this false god. The Deva and the devil are but two aspects of our own being; two sides of one coin. We need to understand this clearly.

Laughter and the Light

We need to be able to laugh at ourselves. Laughter is the greatest defense, the greatest weapon against fear. In laughter we are lifted up out of the mire of fear and depression. If we take ourselves (the shadow self that is) lightly, then it will have less power over us. That is why Baba often uses humour to reduce the effect of the shadow self, the false self. In that laughter, we begin to realise that there is something more behind all this. There is a reality, which is attempting to break through and show us who we really are.

First we feel that we are in the light. We stand in the light of His Love. All around us is light. It is a wonderful feeling. We are bathed in light. We begin to realise that the shadow self has no power compared to the light. However, if we stop there we are like the one who stands and looks at the light. Wonderful though the experience is, we must move from that place if we wish to evolve.

We must take that light and bring it inside of us. This is the next step. This involves beginning to root out all that is false inside of us. The falseness inside us is merely shadow. If we allow the light to bathe our hearts, the anger, greed, jealousy, hatred, delusion and pride, all the six enemies identified by Baba, will begin to disappear. But we have to take the step of bringing the light inside of us. We have to shine a light on these facets of the shadow self. We have to acknowledge that they exist

inside, then realise the falsehood of their existence. Then they will gradually dissolve in the light of our new consciousness.

One with the Light

Lastly, we have to take the last step and realise that the light is not separate from us, but that we are One with the light. This is the greatest and the hardest step of all, for it involves that most subtle of all the tools of the shadow self, the ego. If we are not separate, then we cannot boost ourselves in any way. We cannot be proud, or possessive or any of the other aspects that we have cultivated so carefully and dutifully over the years. Instead, we have to become humble, prepared to be a small part of the whole, rather than separate from the whole. The paradox is, that when this happens, we begin to realise that true greatness lies, not in being separate, different, extraordinary, but in making ourselves a vessel for that which is greater, stronger, higher and purer than the illusory self.

So the shadow begins to dissolve. The process begins, and is ever beginning for as long as we do not realise our unity with the Light of the Sun of Truth. Let us resolve to turn from the shadow self, bask in the sun of Love, walk towards that sun and become one with it. It is the only path there is. All other paths lead to dead ends. The methods may differ, but the goal is the same. The realisation of our Oneness with all that is. ■

- Philip Cottingham, Satyavan, Karekare, New Zealand





BANGALORE SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL	
Cumulative Statistics from 19th Jan 2001 to 31st Jan 2004	
Cardiac Surgeries	4,993
Cardiac Catheterisation	9,138
Neuro Surgeries	4,395
CT Scans	14,410
MRI Exams	16,573



PUTTAPARTHI SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL	
Cumulative Statistics from 22nd Nov 1991 to 31st Dec 2004	
Cardiac Surgeries	14,503
Cath Procedures	14,936
Urology Surgeries	25,250
Ophthalmology Surgeries	24,904
CT Scans	3,961



HARISH SMILES AGAIN

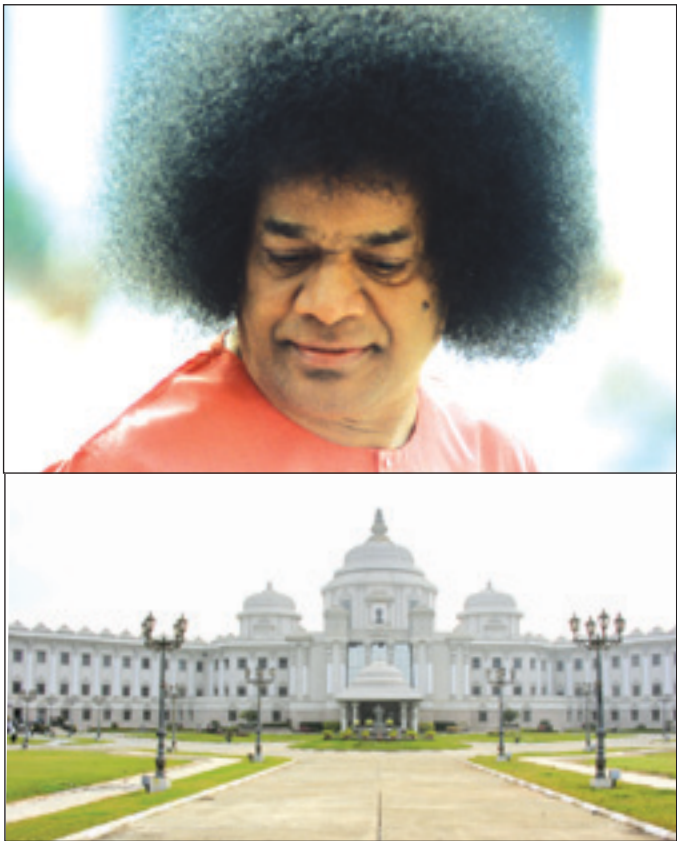
Ten year old Harish's father was working as a lorry Driver in Vijayawada. Unfortunately for Harish, his father passed away in a lorry accident 5 years back. After his father's death, Harish and his mother stayed with Harish's grandfather. The grandfather too was struggling to make both ends meet. He was working as a clerk in a textile shop earning a meager salary with which he managed to enroll Harish in school.

One day, while returning from school, Harish had an attack of epilepsy and developed high fever and his right side was partially paralyzed (right sided hemiparesis and facial weakness with slurred speech).

He was rushed to Guntur for treatment. Since there was not much improvement, the doctors there advised them to go to the Sri Sathya Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Bangalore. Harish and his grandfather came to the Hospital for checkup. It was diagnosed that Harish was having left partial arterio venous malformation and required surgery. Harish was admitted on 6-10-04 and underwent an operation and he has fully recovered. Tears of joy rolled down the wrinkled cheeks of his grandpa seeing his dear Harish walk again.



Harish with his Grandpa



Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Bangalore

The grandson and grandfather were last spotted boarding a bus to Parthi, with joy and gratitude written large on their faces, to thank the maker of this miracle: Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. ■

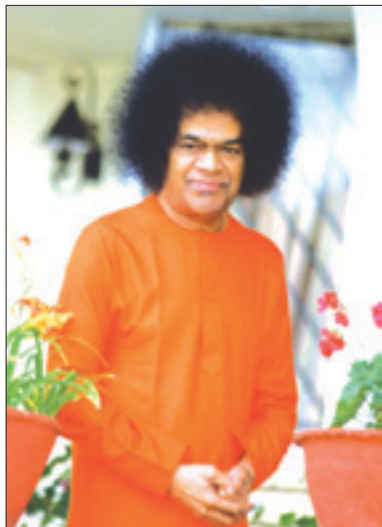
~ Heart2Heart Team
written in association with SSSIHMS



A MIRACLE OF THE ASHES

- By Anthony Paul Albanese

It all began when my wife, Adorine, in an effort to overcome the difficulties that running a home at 80 years of age (this happened in winter of 2003), plus the very harsh winter we were facing, overexerted herself and caused her spine, where she was operated upon many years ago, to ache. At the beginning there just an ache and some stiffness, but as the days went by the pain increased and so did her stiffness.



Being the brave girl she has always been, she bit her lip and continued with her work without regard for the pain, thanking God all along for the experience that the pain brings, and the knowledge to be gained by such experience.

She is an incredible person. Her devotion to God has no parallel to my knowledge. Not only has she the Name of God continuously on her lips, but also she lives desirous to dedicate her life to the service of others, thus serving God.

Some details about her life might be relevant for readers. She was born in France in the Alps town of Annecy, from Italian parents. She lived through the horrors of World War II when her family was deported to Italy and suffered deprivations that such a war inflicted on all.



Only her belief in God prevented her from going mad in a mad world. Her strength coming from God was her support in the hours of anguish that at her tender age she had to undergo.

When she came to know of Sathya Sai Baba, she said. "I knew God in Spirit, now finally I have found God in form". She was the one who introduced me to Sathya Sai studies, and we have read all the books of Sathya Sai Speaks, the Vahinis, and the Summer Showers in Brindavan series.

And so the days and weeks elapsed and all the while she continued to work indefatigably, without regard for her pain. Another person in her place might have thought, 'Why dear God do You bring this pain upon me when I am trying to serve You?' Yet, Adorine's words were always, 'Thank You dear Lord for the pain and the experience You place upon my way'.

Finally she told me, "I need to visit the chiropractor". She said it almost apologizing for the trouble she was causing me, when if it was not for her self-effacing sacrifice on a day-to-day basis, I would have to tend to all my needs, never mind hers!

By the time the appointment was made, Adorine was in such excruciating pain that tears were pouring from her eyes by the simple act of getting up from the chair, in spite of her efforts to contain them.

It was breaking my heart to see her suffering so much, but I was far from fathoming the intensity of her pain. The X rays taken revealed that her 5th lumbar vertebra had slid off alignment by almost 5/8th of an inch, and her pelvis was also out of alignment, at an angle. The chiropractor immediately put ice on the region and placed her on the table with wedges under her. This calmed her enough for the X rays to be taken, however the pain returned later.

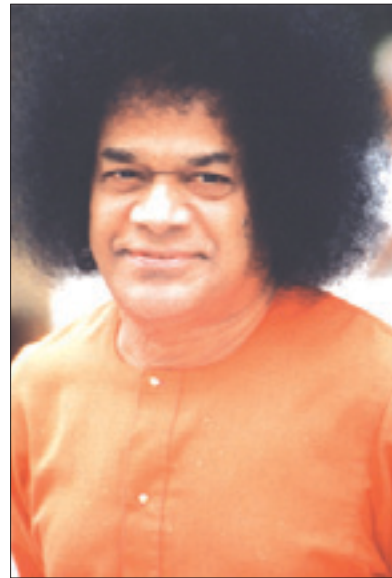
At that time the Christian Festival of Ash Wednesday was upon us and with it our very own 'miracle of the ashes' - a tale that can be told only by Adorine.

"That night, after taking the X rays, I went upstairs and tried to get ready, but any movement was causing me tremendous pain. As I changed and prepared for bed, I noticed some powder on my night table. Wondering about it I touched and smell it, and realized that it was *Vibhuti*.

I was curious as to why the *Vibhuti* had spilled over the night table without any reason for it, so, in desperation, I just took a little bit and rubbed it on my back. Then I went to bed, lying on my side, and fell asleep.

I slept the whole night, and in the morning, when I awoke, I felt these words spoken to my heart, "Remember, no pain, no pain, no pain". Gingerly I moved one leg

and touched the floor - no pain! The words seemed to reverberate in my heart once again, "Remember, no pain, no pain, no pain!" so I placed my other leg on the floor and placing all the weight of my body on my legs I raised



from the bed, still gingerly, but once again I heard the words, "Remember, no pain, no pain, no pain!"

The pain was gone and I felt as if I had a corset on my torso, but absolutely no pain. With tears of joy I thanked God for the miracle and ran downstairs to tell Anthony of the miracle that had taken place.

When we went to see the chiropractor, I told the nurse at the desk, "Don't worry, there has been a miracle and I am in no pain". I repeated the same to the chiropractor, who could not believe it. She examined me twice and then she examined the X rays, and told me, "Nothing is out of place, maybe you should give me a pound of those ashes for my other patients".

With Love in Sai Service,

Anthony Paul Albanese,

Brooklyn, New York, USA.

Anthony Albanese recently retired from a financial firm on Wall Street. ■

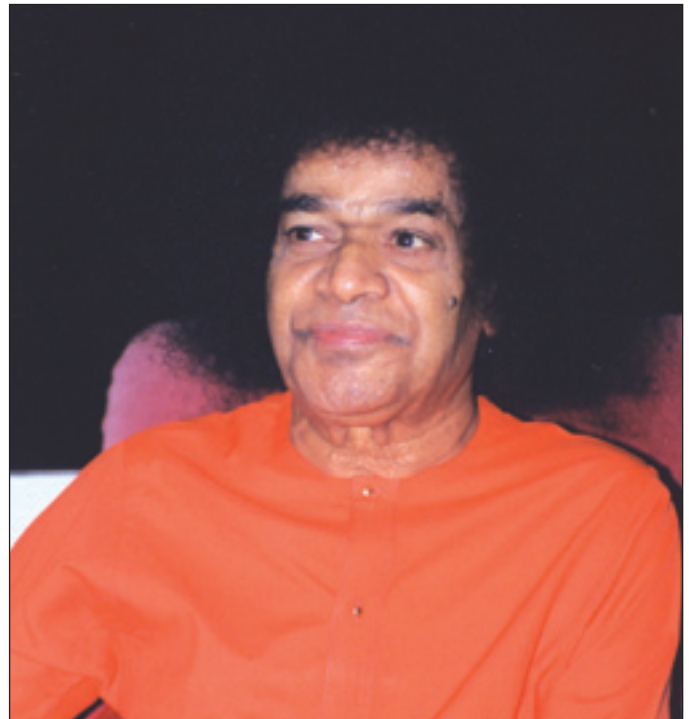
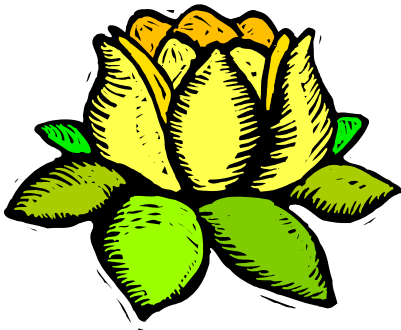


BABA

- By Priya Murali Mohan

What is He? Who is He?
An angel gliding on a beam of light?
A divine feather floating past?
A surreal Presence?
But definitely not a man...

He comes near, very close, just a few rows away....
And, His fragrance arrives before Him...
He comes closer and oh....
What calmness!
What calmness on His face....
I see That which Is
Permanent, Immortal, *Brahman*!
He sees and He does not...
He is and He is not....
The mind finally shuts up....
But, my heart is lost forever...
The eyes cannot behold Him any longer,
The ego sheds its tears and
The body shakes with grief long carried, and shivers
like a flower...



I calm down later,
And wonder at this in awe....
The millions here bonded together in love
Each with his own splendid experience of
His Divine Grace....
Isn't everyone's soul but a small drop from the
ocean of Your Divinity?
Oh Baba!
I realize mine found You at last...
And wishes to stay tethered like this, always!

Long after, I close my eyes in the car and there He is
in my eyes, bejeweled and smiling,
With a flute in His hand....
He smiles, plays hide and seek, and vanishes....
Oh Sai Krishna!
Stay within my heart like this forever... ■

THE TABLECLOTH - A True Story

- By Pastor Rob Reid

A brand new pastor (priest) Rob Reid and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry to reopen a church in suburban New York, USA, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run-down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting etc. and on Dec 18th, were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On Dec 19th a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm - hit the area and lasted for two days.

On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off



the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high. The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home.

On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory coloured, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colours and a Cross embroidered right in the centre. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the centre aisle. Her face was white like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked,

"where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, 'EBG' were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria. The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told her how he had just found the tablecloth.

The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. She was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth; but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home - that was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of town and was only there for the day for a house cleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor

recognized from the neighbourhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike? He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety, and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the 35 years in between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine. ■

Sai Inspires

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A person may think he is enjoying the pleasures; but really speaking, it is the pleasures that are enjoying man, for they sap his energies, dry up his discrimination, eat up his allotted years and worm into his mind, infesting it with egoism, envy, malice, hate, greed and lust. You should not plunge into action spurred by momentary impulse; ponder deeply over the pros and cons; weigh the expected benefits against the likely harm; then act so that you escape pain and you do not inflict pain. This is true in worldly matters as well as in the spiritual field.

- Divine Discourse, September 28, 1965.





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G L O B A L H A R M O N Y

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Love all Serve all



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