



# HEART TO hEART



RADIO SAI LISTENERS' JOURNAL



*THE TEACHINGS OF PLATO  
ON EDUCATION*

Cover Story

A PARALLELISM WITH SWAMI'S TEACHINGS ON EDUCARE

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PRANAMS AT THE LOTUS FEET

# Journal

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# Between You and Us

Dear Reader,

Sai Ram. In this issue we feature an unusual article, a wonderful contribution from our Sai brothers in Greece. For many years, there has been a heart warming bond of Love between Swami and His devotees in Greece, and many a time Swami has talked about it to His students. On one occasion when Greek devotees staged a play in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Swami went out of the way to arrange for the costumes and even taught some of them how to put on the [Indian] dresses!

Some time ago when a few devotees from Greece dropped in to visit us at the Prashanti Digital Studio they asked us how they could contribute to Heart to Heart. We suggested that perhaps they might consider producing an article that relates the teachings of their famous philosophers to that of Swami; the article that appears in this issue is the result.

It is no exaggeration to state that Greek thought and philosophy form, in a sense, the corner stone of modern Western thought and Civilization. True the original ideas got modified in due course, with Western thinking becoming increasingly outward looking; and there are good historical reasons for that. However, one need not necessarily imagine that this is an altogether undesirable development. On the contrary, it is the seed planted by ancient Greeks that eventually led to the blossoming of modern scientific thought in the West. That is why Swami Vivekananda once said that what the world needs today is a balanced mix of Greek philosophy and Eastern Wisdom. In Swami's language, this would amount to a balanced mix of education for living and education for LIFE or EDUCARE, as it is more popularly known these days.

Perhaps there are two things we might briefly make a special mention of in relation to Plato and ancient Indian philosophy. The first is that Plato observed that there is the world we all live in, an imperfect world, and a Perfect World above. Further, everything we find or discover here is but a mere projection of something in the Higher World. There are clear echoes of similar thinking, in the Bhagavad Gita, for example. The second is that Plato talked of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. This is remarkably parallel to the words Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram, that Indian philosophers often used to describe God.

The long and short of it is that if we enough spend time looking for parallels and similarities between various systems of thought, we would have far less conflict in the world. Instead, the media today seems to be hell bent on discovering differences [even if there aren't any], and magnifying them to the point of even distortion. We trust the wonderful example set by our Greek brothers would inspire our readers to come up with similar articles drawing parallels between say, ancient Chinese philosophy and Swami's teachings, between Talmudic thinking and Swami's teachings, and so on.

Incidentally, all that all philosophers have ever said and would ever say necessarily has to be a subset what Swami has said. Reason? Simple; He is the Ultimate Knowledge and all Revelations anyone has had or will ever have has to be rooted in what Swami has said!

Agree? Think about it! And while you are about it, how about emulating the Greek brothers?

Jai Sai Ram. SGH TEAM



# The Teachings of Plato on Education

A parallelism with Swami's teachings on Educare



The Academy of Plato in Athens

**E**ducation is the foundation of society. For a healthy and happy society education is the basis, because the students of today become the leaders of tomorrow. Swami has stressed again and again the high importance of the proper educational system.

In all times and in all different places of the world, great sages have spoken about this crucial matter of education and they have given their valuable teachings to all the coming generations. Such a great sage who shines in the firmament of ancient Greek philosophy is Plato, who is unbreakably bound with his beloved Teacher Socrates. Socrates did not write anything and his teachings are found in the dialogues written by his student Plato. In all his dialogues Socrates is the speaker and Plato does

not mention anywhere his own name, showing by that a deep humility and devotion to his beloved guru. Maybe in this way he wants to give us the first great lesson and the basic foundation of education, that is the respect and love of the student to his teacher. The deserving teacher earns this love not only because of his wise teachings, but mostly and mainly because of his personal example. Swami has given us this great saying:

**"FIRST BE, NEXT DO,  
AFTER TELL"**

Socrates was such a Divine Guru, who finally sacrificed his own life staying faithful to his words and his love for Truth, Goodness and Beauty (Satyam Sivam Sundaram).

In this brief work we will make an effort to give the views of Socrates-Plato for the most essential matter of education. As the basic source of this study we will use the famous dialogue of Plato "Republic"\*, which was written on about 375 B.C.

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\* The title of the book is not actually "Republic", which means democracy, but "The City" (because it describes an ideal city, which is not democracy according to Plato! It is very strange indeed that it has been translated with this word in English.)

The first aim of Plato is not to describe an ideal city as is done in the biggest part of the book, but to inquire about Righteousness. That is why the dialogue has another title

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also: "About Righteousness".

Plato wants to prove his basic thesis: the righteous man, the man who follows Dharma, is happy. The view which most of the people have, that the righteous man is unhappy because others treat him in a bad way, is totally wrong. He says:

*"A moral person is happy, whereas an immoral person is unhappy"*  
*"Immorality never gives more happiness than morality"*

(Rep 354a)

To prove this he uses the following thought. He considers a City being the enlargement of a man and he starts his inquiry from the city where the different situations are more easily investigated and finally he goes back to the inner psychological and spiritual reality of the individual. He says:

*"Let's first try to see what Righteousness is in the cities; and then we can examine it in the individuals too, seeing the reflection of the larger entity in the features of the smaller entity"* (Rep 369a).

In this study we'll mostly deal with the part of the dialogue that describes the education of the people who are going to be the citizens of the ideal city. We will present the ideas of Plato for the ideal rulers, keeping in mind that he gives us an ideal not only for the rulers but for all citizens. This

ideal is the aim to which education must guide the children. Inevitably we will speak about what is Philosophy and who is the real philosopher, because after all this is the aim of the great sage, that is to turn our vision towards Truth and Light and through the right Intellect to guide us to the Being-Goodness-Beauty (Satyam Sivam Sundaram), that is GOD.

## The Educational System

Plato starts speaking about education by giving its two basic components: Gymnastics for the body and Music for the soul (Rep. 376e). In ancient Greece the term music meant the spiritual, moral and artistic education in general and not only melody and rhythm. First of all Plato speaks for the high educational importance of stories.

*"Don't you know, that we start by telling children myths which though they are, by and large untrue, they contain elements of truth?"*

And the dialogue goes on:

*"Do you appreciate that the most important stage of any enterprise is the beginning, especially when it has to do with something young and sensitive? Because, that's when the character is shaped and it absorbs every impression that anyone wants to stamp upon it."*

*-You are absolutely right."*

*-Shall we then allow our children to listen to any stories and take into their souls values, which contradict those we want them to hear as adults?"*

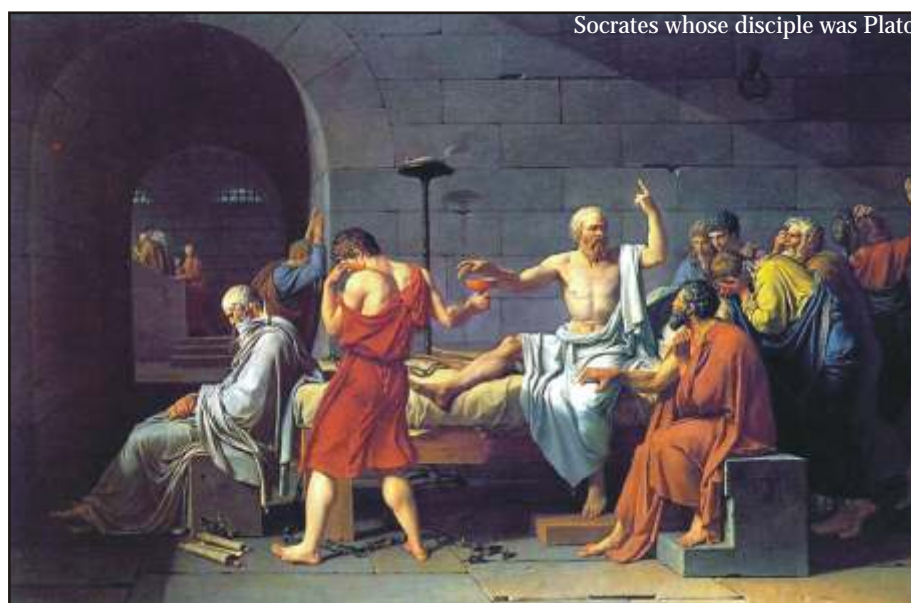
*-No, we won't allow that at all."*

*-So our first job is to inspect the work of the storywriters and accept any good story they write, but reject the others. We'll let nurses and mothers tell their children the acceptable stories and will have them devote themselves using these stories to form their children's souls, far more than using their hands to form their bodies..."*

(Rep. 377a,b,c)

So the need of selection of the right stories is emphasized. A careful checking shows that many mythological traditions, which are contained in the works of many writers and poets are improper for the children; because in these stories

Gods are full of human passions like jealousy, sensual desires, lying, hatred, avarice, cowardice etc. If however the Gods who should be the ideals for men, are described in such a way, what is the example and the values that the children will imbibe from such



Socrates whose disciple was Plato



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stories?

So, Plato in accordance with relative views of older philosophers like Xenofanis and Heraklitos suggests with no hesitation the rejection of such a wrong poetry from the ideal city.

He ends in the two basic principles concerning the content of the stories with regard to God. The first principle is that

*"God is not responsible for everything, but only for good"* (Rep 380c)

That is, we must have faith in God's goodness and not blame Him about the bad things that happen in our daily life, as it often happens with people. In Swami's words the first principle is that *God is Premaswarupa, Embodiment of Love*.

The second principle to which spiritual discussions and literature must conform is that

*"God is entirely straight and truthful in words and deeds and He does not delude men in anyway"* (Rep 382e)

That is, in Swami's words, *God is Satyaswarupa, the Embodiment of Truth*.

Going on, Plato mentions the virtues that the stories must cultivate in the hearts of children. First of all is the fearlessness for death. Death must not be presented like a calamity and the lamentations do not suit to brave men. Here we would like to give a relative text from the tradition of the Far East, which shows the great importance of this virtue.

*"Tajima-no-kami was a great swords-man and teacher in the art to the Shogun of the time. One of the personal guards of*

*the Shogun one day came to Tajima-no-kami wishing to be trained in fencing. The master said, "As I observe, you seem to be a master of fencing yourself; pray tell me to what school you belong, before we enter into the relationship of teacher and pupil."*

*The guardsman said, "I am ashamed to confess that I have never learned the art".*

*"Are you trying to fool me? I am a teacher to the honorable Shogun himself, and I know my judging eye never fails."*

*"I am sorry to defy your honor, but I really know nothing."*

*This resolute denial on the part of the visitor made the swordmaster think for a while, and he finally said, "If you say so, it must be so; but still I am sure you are a master of something, though I do not know of what."*

*"If you insist I can tell you. There is one thing of which I can say I am complete master. When I was still a boy, the thought came upon me that as a Samurai I ought in no circumstances to be afraid of death, and I have grappled with the problem of death now for some years, and finally the problem of death ceased to worry me. May this be at what you hint?"*

*"Exactly!" exclaimed Tajima-no-kami. "That is what I mean. I am glad that I made*

*no mistake in my judgment. For the ultimate secrets of swordsmanship also lie in being released from the thought of death. I have trained ever so many hundreds of my pupils along this line, but so far none of them really deserve the final certificate for swordsmanship. You need no technical training, you are already a master."*

From Eugen Herrigel's book, *"Zen in the Art of Archery"*

Swami says, that we have to remember always three things:

*Never believe in the world  
Never forget God  
Never be afraid of death*

But as the young men must not be carried away by the calamity of death, they must not be prone to laughter either, because *"the stronger the laughter, the stronger the consequent emotional agitation"* (Rep 388e)

Swami always teaches that we have to be equal on both joy and sorrow and He emphasizes that equal mindedness (*samatvam*) is essential

for the spiritual aspirant.

Lying is totally wrong and no one should have anything to do with lying (Rep 389b - 389d). The next virtue is self-discipline of which the most important aspects are obedience to those in authority and establishing one's own mastery over the pleasures of drink, sex and food. (Rep 389d)

Then we have patience  
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# The Teachings of Plato on Education

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and resistance to all kinds of temptations (390d), avoidance of avarice and bribery (390e), devotion to Gods (391a 392a) and love for righteousness (392b 392c).

Here the discussion about the contents of the stories is finished and Plato goes on with the style and form the stories should have, that means the presentation techniques. He mentions that there are two basic styles, the pure narrative and the representation (role playing). Both have to be used but as far as representation is concerned, Plato says: "Any roles the young men take on, must be appropriate ones. They should represent people who are courageous, self-disciplined, pious, just and generous; they should never play a role of anyone who is bad or unrighteous in case the role becomes reality. Haven't you noticed how repeated representation becomes a habit and a second nature and has an effect on a person's body, voice and character? (395c)

Now we have finished with the aspect of music (spiritual study), which relates to stories; both the content and the way in which it has to be taught have been already discussed.

Next we still have to discuss about the melody and the rhythm, that is what we call music today. In the beginning the selection of melodies is done; the plaintive musical modes that suit for laments, as well as the soft and loose that suit

for drinking parties are excluded. Only these melodies are left, which perfectly represent the great deeds of self-disciplined and courageous men, both in failure and success, both in battle and in time of peace (398e 399c).

Afterwards Plato makes a selection of the instruments and he keeps Apollo's instruments, that are the lyre and the guitar or even the windpipe for the herdsmen in the countryside. He excludes the complicated instruments, which are designed to produce a wide range of modes, remaining established in his basic thesis for simplicity and frugality and restriction of luxury and pleasure (399c 399e). On the same principle the selection of rhythms is made, making sure that we avoid complexity of rhythm and a wide variety of tempos, but we should try to discern the rhythms of a life which is well regulated and valiant, and we'll force the meter and the tune to conform to the words which express such a life (399e 400c).

Rhythm and harmony are of primary

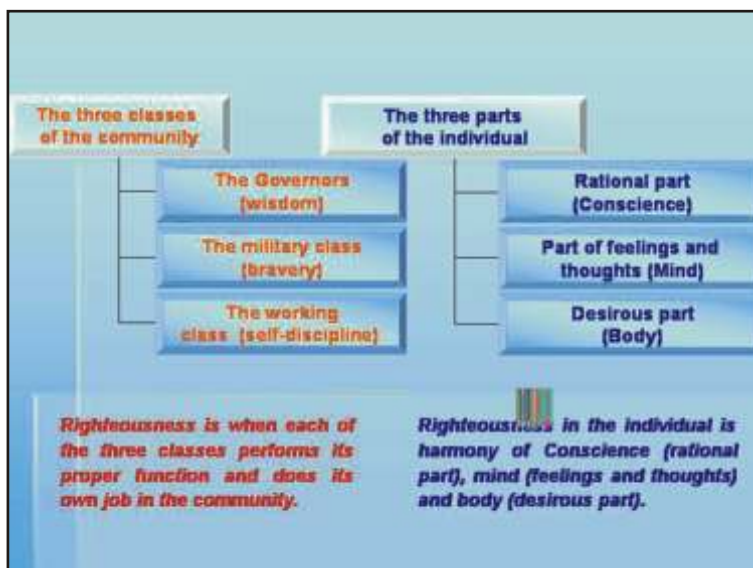
importance, because they sink very deeply into the soul, and bring with them Beauty and Grace. He who will be properly educated through music, will be able to discern beauty from ugliness and he will appreciate and enjoy only fine things, accepting them into his soul as nourishment, therefore becoming perfect in values and truly good. (401d 402a)

A really learned man is he who knows in depth the values of self-discipline, bravery, generosity, broadness of mind and all the relative virtues and he can instantly discern them from their opposite vices wherever they occur (402c)

Now, because self-discipline and excessive pleasure cannot go together, Socrates suggests that the authentic love should not have body involvement, because sexual pleasure is the greatest and most excessive pleasure. So the lovers should love each other like relatives and never give the impression that there is more to it. Otherwise they will be blemished for lacking spiritual and moral sensitivity (402e 403c). Here

the discussion about music, that is spiritual education, is completed.

The sketch of physical training that follows, stresses moderation of diet. Neglect of a simple and moderated diet is the cause of ill health, as the neglect of discipline in emotion is the cause of corruption (403d 404e). The result of corruption and ill health is the growth of the





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professions of lawyer and doctor respectively. But when a community needs doctors and lawyers this is the most clear evidence that the educational system is bad, because it promotes ill health and moral corruption (405a).

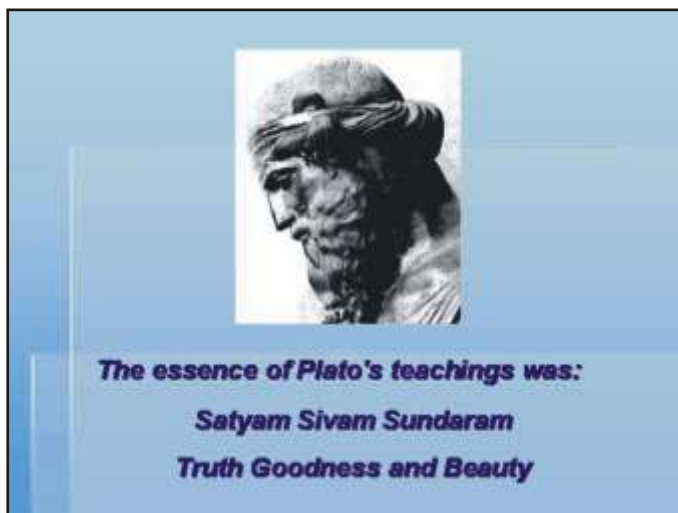
Finally Plato concludes that correct education means a balanced combination of spiritual learning and physical exercise (music and gymnastics) so that both the basic elements of the soul are cultivated harmoniously. These two elements are the will power and the spiritual knowledge. With these two the Soul becomes both virtuous and brave (411e).

Swami gives us the four F's :

<i>Follow the Master (Conscience)</i>	}	Spiritual Knowledge
<i>Face the devil (vices)</i>		cultivated by "Music"
<i>Fight to the end</i>	}	Will power, Bravery
<i>Finish the game</i>		cultivated by Gymnastics

Inner and Outer Righteousness

What is important in the community is the integrity and unity and not the great number of the population. As Swami says "quality, not quantity". For this to be done, the most crucial factor is the quality of education, which has to be kept pure, as it is stated before; any dangerous change or innovation must be avoided, "because any change in the spiritual education affects the most important laws of the community" (424c).



The children must engage in lawful games right from the start, because when the games become lawless it is impossible for the children to grow in law-abiding, exemplary adults. On the contrary when children play in a proper manner and their cultural education instills law and order into their souls, lawfulness accompanies them in everything they do and guides their growth.

In this way they learn to have good manners like to be silent in the presence of older people, to give up their seats for their elders, to stand up when elders enter the room, to look after their parents, to take care about their combing, clothing, footwear and in general about the way they present themselves. (424e 425b)

All these do not have to be legislated, because they come as a natural result at the primary spiritual and moral education. In the same way there is no need to make special rules and regulations for all the commercial deals people make with one another. If the citizens are pure and have

mutual love, then bureaucracy is totally useless. (425c,d,e)

A genuine legislator does not have to deal with laws of this kind in either a badly governed or a well-governed community. In the first case they cannot help and don't accomplish anything; in the second case all these trivial laws are not necessary as they follow automatically

from the good character the citizens have already acquired. (427a)

The most important, valuable and fundamental laws are those which define how to build temples, to conduct sacrifices and how in general to worship gods, deities and heroes, how to conduct the burial of the dead and all the services to propitiate those who have gone to the other world. All these are defined by Apollo, God of Light and Music, who has His seat at the earth's navel and He is our paternal Guide (427b,c).

Now the ideal community has been founded and Plato locates its four basic elements: Wisdom, Bravery, Self-discipline and Righteousness (427e).

Wisdom is the science of right discrimination (428b)

Bravery is the ability to retain under all circumstances a true and lawful notion about what is right and what is wrong. No pleasure or pain or fear or desire can change the principles that the ideal citizens have taken deep inside their souls through the right spiritual and physical education (430b)

Self-discipline is the control over the  
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pleasures and desires (430e) and a harmony between the parts of society as to which of them should rule in the community (432a).

Finally, Righteousness is doing one's own job and following his duty. In Bhagavad Gita it is said,

*"One's duty, though imperfect, is better than another's duty well discharged. Better death in one's own duty; the duty of another is full of fear."*

Bhagavad Gita, 3-35

Righteousness is when each of the three classes (the one that works for a living, the military class and the governors) performs its proper function and does its own job in the community (434c).

Now Plato comes back to give an answer about what is Righteousness in an individual. As he said from the beginning the community is just an individual's enlargement and through the definition of Righteousness in the community we can define it in a person too. The three classes of the community correspond to the three parts of a person's being. The first is the rational part, the intellect (buddhi), which has the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong, between truth and untruth, between what is permanent and what is transient. The second is the assertive, the brave part, which is an auxiliary of the rational part, unless it is corrupted by bad education (441a). The third is the desirous part, the one that feels lust, hunger, thirst and in general is stirred by desires and pleasures. Since these three parts are precisely analogous to the three classes of the community, Plato now

defines righteousness in a way parallel to his analysis of the community. The rational part has the right to rule, because it is wise and looks out for the whole of the soul. The assertive part is its assistant and ally. And once these two parts have received the right education they have to be in charge of the desirous part, which is the insatiable and greedy one (441e 442a).

When each of these parts does its own job and there is a harmony between them, then the individual is righteous. So, Righteousness is harmony of thoughts (rational part), words (assertive part) and deeds (desirous part). Swami says:

*"Body is like a water bubble,  
Mind is like a mad monkey.  
So, don't follow the body,  
Don't follow the mind,  
Follow the Conscience."*

Body is the desirous part and Conscience is the rational part. The one that has to rule, the Master, must be always the Conscience, that is the Rational part.

The True Philosopher,

A Lover of Goodness

Plato goes on and states that the only solution to political and personal troubles is for true philosophers to become kings, or for current rulers to become true philosophers. But who deserves to be called philosopher?

Philosophers are those who perceive That which is permanent and changeless and not those who are lost in the midst of plurality and diversity. Those who perceive Beauty Itself behind the multiplicity of beautiful things, the One behind the many, Unity in diversity, Satyam Sivam

Sundaram Truth, Goodness, Beauty. True Science is the knowledge of philosophers, the knowledge of the Pure Being. The knowledge of the external things that are perceived with the senses is false knowledge and in no case can be called science or those who have this false knowledge to be called philosophers. The true philosopher loves the study that reveals That Reality, which is Eternal, beyond generation and destruction or any other change. He finds nothing more attractive than Truth. He yearns only for spiritual pleasures and has nothing to do with the pleasures of the body and the senses. He has self-control and is not interested in money. He has broadness of vision and contemplates on the Eternity of time, so he does not place much importance on human life and he is not afraid of death. He is moral, gentle and well mannered; he has got memory and an inherent sense of proportion and elegance.

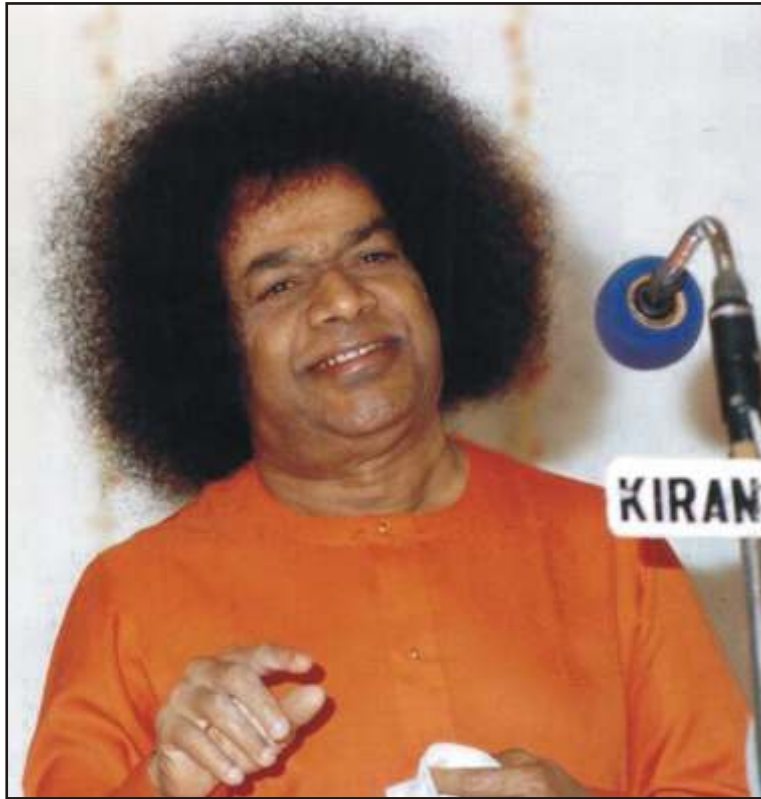
*"The true philosopher is a genuine Lover of wisdom and he is born to aspire to the Pure Being (Sat) without being attached to the multiplicity of all the external things that are assumed to be real. He moves on with his love ever intense and steady, until he is united with the Being Itself, with the part of his soul, which is akin to It. And when he has been united with It, intellect and truth are born; he earns the real knowledge and lives a true life, ever free from the pains of birth"*

(Plato's Republic, 490 a-b)

(to be continued in the next issue)



# Meditate on the SELF



**A**lways have the meaning and purpose of life in view. And experience that purpose and that meaning. You are That; that is the truth. You and the Universal are One; you and the Absolute are One; you and the Eternal are One. You are not the Individual, the Particular, the Temporary. Feel this, know this. Act in conformity with this. Someone came to Ramanamaharshi and asked him thus, “Swaami! I have been doing intense *dhyana* for the last 18 years; but I have failed to realise the Ideal on which my *dhyana* is concentrated. How many more years should I continue thus?” Ramana answered, “It is not a question of a certain number of years. You have to continue *dhyana*, until the awareness that you are doing *dhyana* disappears.” Forget the ego. Let it melt and merge, with all its layers of consciousness.

There are some who, while meditating, strike at the mosquitoes that pester them! No, immerse yourselves in *dhyanam* until you transcend all physical and mental urges and impulses. Vaalmeeki was covered by the anthill that grew over him, people discovered him by the sound of

*Raama-naama* that emanated from that mound. Ignore the *deha* (body) so that you may discover the *dehi* (indweller). Do not get engrossed in outer finery but delve deep and discover the inner splendour.

What does the *saadhana* of ignoring the body imply? It means turning aside the temptations of the senses, the overcoming of the six enemies: desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and malice (*kaama, krodha, lobha, moha, madha* and *maatsarya*). Anger turns a man into a drunken brute. The other impulses are equally vicious. Seek only salutary *karma*. Eat only *saathwik* food, food that will not disturb the equanimity you earn through your *saadhana*. Do not break the even tenor of your spiritual practice. You can be really healthy and happy, only when you are immersed in the Universal. If you are in *Aathma thatwa* (essential nature of the Self), you will be fresh, happy and healthy. When you separate and feel that you are in *deha thatwa* (principle of body), you start declining.<sup>zz</sup>



# Atma = Brahman

The famous Austrian physicist Erwin Schrodinger is known to students of physics as the man who gave what is called the Schrodinger Equation, a corner stone of modern physics. For this discovery, Schrodinger received the Nobel Prize. Schrodinger was very much interested in the philosophy of ancient Indians or *Vedanta* as it is called. Swami's Discourses as also the *Bhagavad Gita* both echo *Vedanta*, setting it in the larger context of the relationship between man and God.

After extensive study of the *Vedanta*, Schrodinger wrote down another equation, which is given below. [This may be called Schrodinger's second equation!] He said:

*Atma = Brahman.*

What precisely does this mean? That is what we shall presently explore.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that there are basically two paths to God, the 'Outer Path' based on Devotion or *Bhakti*, and the 'Inner Path' based on Self-enquiry. Both lead to the same destination, i.e., God. The Outer Path will help us to see God everywhere in the Cosmos; this Omnipresent God is referred to as *Brahman*. The Inner Path leads to the Indweller or *Atma*. In other words, *Atma* is the nomenclature used for referring to the God within. But then, we can't have two types of God, can we, one within and one without? No, not possible, because God is only One. As Swami often reminds us, "Truth is only One but scholars refer to it in various names." The *Vedas* proclaim the oneness of the God within and without by declaring: *Ayam Atma Brahman*, meaning that *Atma* and *Brahman* mean one and same thing. Schrodinger the physicist, gave this statement a more precise and mathematical form via his second equation.

Let us try to understand the deeper

implications of this Cosmic Equivalence. Let us start with the outside for that is generally considered easier to understand. Right from ancient times, people in all societies and communities had no difficulty in believing that God pervades the Universe. It is difficult to understand the wonderful things we see around us, like the stars, the Sun, the Moon, the oceans, rivers, mountains, etc., without a Creator who first created them. The conviction becomes doubly reinforced when one sees the power in Nature [as say, during a typhoon, for example]. Gandhi put this fact beautifully when he said, "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything; I feel it though I cannot see it." Thus, it is not difficult to accept God without, even though we cannot exactly see Him with our eyes.

What about the God within? Here, practically everyone has problems. When we talk of within, we mean within our body. Since we are so much wedded to the concept that we are the body, we cannot easily conceive that there is an extraordinary, invisible force within us. Advances in science have heightened the scepticism. If a person is asked, "How come the heart pumps without any effort from us?" the reply would be, "It is hard-wired; that is why it pumps." "How comes the body knows time, like when milk teeth should fall, when hair should turn grey, etc?" Reply: "Oh, that's because there is a biological clock within. It is built into the DNA."

One can go on indefinitely in this manner. Swami sometimes asks: "Who painted the peacock? Who put a red beak on a green parrot?" Scientists can come up with mathematical non-linear equations that 'explain' such phenomena. Can everything be explained like this? Not really. Raise the matter of Consciousness, and immediately

scientists go on the defensive. Some will say, "Wait, in a few years science will give the complete answer." Others will say, "That is a grey area and I will not prefer to discuss that which I know nothing about," and so on. The fact of the matter is that God and His Power can be very well recognised within also, if one cares to look properly. This is what Krishna told Arjuna, and what Baba has told us any number of times, in much greater detail.

First of all, let us look at ourselves, our body that is, from a purely mundane angle. The baby that is born is tiny just a few kilos. In a few years it becomes quite big, and an adult can be anywhere between fifty to eighty kilos easily. Now what is the body made up of? Basically cells, no doubt of various different kinds. What are cells made up of? Molecules. What are molecules made up of? Atoms. How did these atoms get into the body? Via food. Where did food come from? From 'outside'. Thus, at the level of the atoms, we see there is really no essential difference between the outside and the inside; in fact, the outside has 'sneaked' into the inside, if one might say so! Incidentally it is of interest to know that the atoms on earth form a part of the collection of all the atoms in the Solar system; in turn, all these atoms came from a star that was the parent of our Sun! Thus, we all are remnants of a star that once blazed in the heavens! [We may not be movie stars but are stars in a real astrophysical sense!] God, it is said, is the force within the atom. In that case, since we are made up of a billion trillion atoms, God is very much within us.

This is not all. Each of us is something more than a bunch of mere inanimate atoms. We are alive; there is a life-force within us. This life force is called *Praana*, and technically one speaks of five types of life forces [*Pancha Praanas*]. Despite all its spectacular advances, science does



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not have even an elementary clue as to the nature of this life force. Perhaps it never will [unless it changes its present perspective]. There are so many manifestations of the Divine force within us; each and every one of them is derived from God. As Baba often reminds us, we chant the hymn *Aham Vaishvanaro* ....before a meal. What does this hymn mean? It means that the One digesting the food and distributing the nutrition to the organs [so that they may do their respective work] is God! Who is the One that moves the limbs? It is God, and as the presiding deity of the limbs, He has a special name *Angeerasa*. The mind is the most potent agency in the possession of man. All the advances in science and technology have been born in some mind or the other. Swami reminds us that the power of the mind reflects the power of God. In the *Gita*, Krishna says, "Among the senses, I am the Mind!" echoing the same sentiment. Added to all this, the Heart is the seat of God; that is why God is called *Hridayavasi* or One who dwells in the Heart. Baba has told us any number of times that the Heart is the Permanent Address of God.

Swami often tells us: "I am in you, with you, around you, below you, above you...." Devotees are thrilled to hear this but few care to understand how profound this declaration is. It is a statement with deep implications. An atheist may say there is no God, but he is alive because of the Divine forces operating within him. God is always within us as the *Atma*, as the mind, and as the various forces that animate the body.

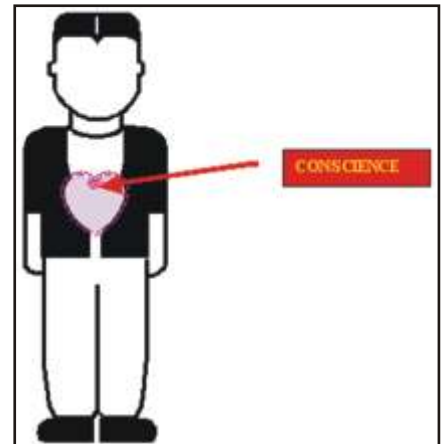
In short, gross matter is a manifestation of God in an inanimate form. Subtle matter [of which the mind is made] is a manifestation of God in a subtle form. Living beings are complex

manifestations of God made up of both gross and subtle matter, and having within them various aspects of God. Man is the most complex manifestation of God in Creation, having within him extra-ordinary powers and capabilities, all derived from God. However, all these manifestations of Divine Power are conditioned in one manner or the other, by the *Gunas*. To put it crisply, they all are BELOW the *Gunas*. The *Avatar*, is a special exception. Externally, the *Avatar* looks very much like any one of us. The *Avatar* has a body, the body grows, the body ages, and so on. Nevertheless, the *Avatar* is special because unlike us, He is NOT below the *Gunas*; rather, He is ABOVE the *Gunas*. This is a vital difference. More about *Gunas* in a later chapter.

This brings us to three important words that Swami often uses. They are: CONSCIOUS, CONSCIENCE, and CONSCIOUSNESS. Let us try to understand these and relate to what has been said so far.



We are CONSCIOUS of the world around us. This has been earlier referred to as Secondary Consciousness; it is the faculty that enables us to become aware of our EXTERNAL environment. We are CONSCIOUS thanks to our sense organs [*Karmendriyas*] and the organs of perception [*Jnanendriyas*]. A scientist would say we are conscious of the external world due to the combination of the sense organs working in conjunction with the brain. Different terminology, but essentially the same description.



Conscience is what guides us from within. It is the voice of God.

Beyond the CONSCIOUS and CONSCIENCE, lies CONSCIOUSNESS. We must be clear about these three, the THREE C'S as one might call them. Baba often refers to these three C's.

Let us establish the hierarchy. At the top is CONSCIOUSNESS. It is better to call it UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS [UC] or ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS [AC], which is the term used in *Vedanta*. UC/AC is nothing but

*Brahman*, *Atma*, etc. In other words, UC represents God. Conscience is nothing but an aspect of UC that is resident within, and guides us [that is why it sometimes referred to as the voice of God].

Conscience is thus that 'portion' of UC that 'relates' to a particular individual. Thus, sometimes, Conscience is also referred to as INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

UC or the *Atma*, is everything. All the power of the Universe springs from



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it. All the power of animation in the individual also springs from it. The enormous power of the mind also flows from the *Atma*. The life forces or the *Pancha Praana* are stimulated and energised by the *Atma*. An aspect of UC guides us acting as our [resident] Conscience. An aspect of UC animates us and helps us to become aware of the external world; that is, this is the aspect that makes us Conscious. Thus, as Swami often puts it, CONSCIOUSNESS [or Universal Consciousness if you prefer], CONSCIENCE, CONSCIOUS [meaning Secondary Consciousness] are all related and form a hierarchy. Incidentally, the *Vedas* declare:

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This essentially means that the Individual Consciousness and the Universal Consciousness are one and the same. An individual experiences this identity when he sees ONENESS everywhere. What is the meaning of seeing Oneness everywhere? It means that one must see Sai everywhere, in every thing, all the time. Baba has a special name for this kind of unified feeling. He calls it: CONSTANT INTEGRATED AWARENESS [CIA]. He also says: Awareness means TOTAL UNDERSTANDING. In practical terms it means that other than God, there is nothing else in the Universe. Everything is God stars, galaxies, planets, the Sun, the Moon, mountains, the sky, the clouds, water, fire, earth, the rivers, the oceans, the mountains, the trees, the animals, and so on. DOUBT: Are snakes also God? Of course yes, though most may not accept it. Swami says that ancients Indians swore by this philosophy of Oneness, and that is why they worshipped everything as God the five elements, the Sun, the Moon, the oceans, the rivers, plants, trees, animals of all sorts, yes, even snakes! They never harmed any species. They constantly asserted in

as many ways as possible, that EVERYTHING IS GOD, and that THERE IS ONLY GOD!

QUESTION: If a tiger is God, then why is it cruel?

ANSWER: The tiger is a part of Creation. Creation is a manifestation of God. The tiger is thus a manifestation of the Diversity that is projected from God. Externally, the tiger appears ferocious and even cruel. This is the dress that God dons when playing the 'role' of the tiger. Let us say there is a movie in which an actor is asked to play the role of a villain. The fact that the actor acts like a villain in the movie does not imply that the actor IS a villain; he is only acting like one. In the same way in Creation, God dons every role, both animate and inanimate. And He plays every role to perfection in fact, God must be given all the Oscars every year!

Let's get back to the tiger. It has beautiful stripes. That is one aspect of the beauty of God. The tiger is powerful that is a tiny manifestation of the power of God. The tigress loves its cubs and protects them fiercely these qualities are reflections of God's love and God's protection. Thus if one looks at the BASIS and not the superficial aspect, then one would certainly see God even in a tiger. But that does not mean that one should rush to pat a tiger on the back! As Ramakrishna Paramahansa only put it, "Tiger also is God but it is better to admire this God from a distance than go near it!" Incidentally, the so-called cruelty of the tiger arises from the fact that it is [like all of us are] below the *Gunas*. This business of above and below the *Gunas* would become clear later.

Let us wrap up this chapter.

- ◆ God is everywhere; He is within as well as without. He is present but in subtle form.
- ◆ If we look for Him, we will find

Him; otherwise not.

◆ Within, we call Him *Atma*; without, we call Him *Brahman*. Two names but same God. Therefore, *Atma = Brahman*.

◆ Wherever we turn, we are seeing or experiencing nothing but God.

◆ However, this Universal presence and manifestation of God is not very evident to us. This is because we have become conditioned to superficial existence. We see only the 'surface' and not beneath the 'surface'. On the surface, a mountain is a beautiful geographic formation formed due to upheavals of the earth's plates, continents colliding etc. But beneath the surface, the mountain is manifestation of God's majesty. And so on.

◆ The true seeker MUST not see the surface but always below the surface.

◆ Why? Because, looking at the surface can cause superficial feelings like desire, attachment, infatuation, hatred, jealousy, etc. All these promote the feeling of differentiation. Looking beneath the surface, on the other hand, promotes the feeling of unity; it enables one to see the underlying unity beneath the superficial diversity.

◆ Human birth has been specially conferred to see Unity and not diversity. Seeing diversity and being guided by it is the characteristic of animals and demons. Being in harmony with diversity is human and seeing unity beneath diversity is Divine.

◆ Man must perceive the Unity underlying diversity and thus discover his intrinsic Divine nature; it is for that purpose and purpose alone that the rare gift of human birth has been given.

### Additional notes on the above

◆ The concepts discussed here are not easily found elsewhere. The presentation may appear a bit long and certainly complex, but needs attention in as much as it relates to



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the core of Baba's teachings. A good grasp of the concepts herein would greatly help in understanding the essence of the teachings of Swami.

◆ The aim of this discussion may be summarised as follows. It is to convey that God pervades the outside world; He pervades also the inner world; and the God "outside" is the same as the God "inside" as is only to be expected.

◆ Stated as above, it might all seem obvious but the obvious is often not so obvious! Hence the need for such a chapter.

◆ The Omnipresence of God must be understood step by step. First we must realise that God exists always, in particular even when the physical Universe does not. Thus, He is truly beyond both Space and Time.

◆ Next we must appreciate that once He has created the Universe, He pervades it in various ways. Thus, God is present in the Universe and He is also beyond.

◆ God beyond the Universe is the 'Ultimate Ultimate' as one philosopher put it. This is the truly Formless God that the *Vedas* refer to as *Niraakara Brahman*.

◆ It is often said that God pervades the entire physical Universe and that there is no place where He is not. Indeed this is true.

◆ God pervades the physical Universe as the Immanent God and as the Transcendental or Causal God, if one might say so. These terms need explanation.

◆ In Swami's language, at the Causal level He is the Source of everything in the Universe, while at the Immanent level He is the Force behind the actions performed by the entities in Creation. For example, in a human, the Heart is the Source while

the powers of the Mind and the body together represent the Divine Force. It is preferable to use the term Energy instead of Power, and so we shall use the term Divine Energy in place of Divine Force, most of the time.

◆ So, the two things to focus on are the Divine Cause or Source, and Divine Force/Power or Divine Energy.

◆ These two entities in Creation namely, Cause and Energy are referred to by various pairs of names. These include:

*Siva, Shakti,  
Paramatma, Prakriti,  
Shankar, Bhavani*

and so on. In Western philosophy, the terms Spirit and Matter are more common. We shall generally use the terms Consciousness and Energy for this pair.

◆ The next thing we must note is that Consciousness and Energy [or Divine Consciousness and Divine Energy, if one wants to be more fussy] are present everywhere in the Universe, including in so-called empty space.

◆ We may find it difficult to accept the idea of energy being present in empty space. But even science admits of it. For example, in space there are vast stretches of emptiness. But light energy from distant stars travels through this emptiness in all directions. Since light is energy, we see that energy can exist even in empty space.

◆ OK, so we agree that Consciousness and Energy pervade everywhere. Incidentally, one may recall here what Gandhi once said. He remarked: "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it though I cannot see it!"

◆ Arising out of the above, we next note that these two entities namely, Consciousness and Energy are present in the human also. The former is the Cause, while the latter is the effect. Especially where humans are concerned, Consciousness is often referred to using the term *Atma*, and Baba has pointed out several times that the power of every single organ of the human body flows from the *Atma*.

◆ This Divine Energy that manifests in a living human body has a special name: *Praana*. Thus, if the eyes are able to see, it is due to this life-force called *Praana Shakti*. Motor activity, digestion, blood circulation, etc., all happen on account of *Praana Shakti*. In short, both Consciousness and Energy are present in the human body, as they ought to be.

◆ At this point, it is necessary to make a reference to scientist's definition of a living being. Many years ago, Academician Oparin of Russia said that a being may be said to be living if it performs the following functions:

It must show metabolism, i.e., it must be able to take in energy in a higher form and give out as waste, energy in a lower form.

It must show growth and decay.

It must be able to reproduce.

◆ Now an automobile takes in energy in a higher form and rejects energy waste. It does not grow but it certainly degrades. And it does not reproduce. Therefore, it does not fit into the definition. Arguing in this manner, one could convince oneself that everything from bacteria upwards indeed fulfils Oparin's criteria.

◆ But there is one important ingredient missing in Oparin's

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definition, and that is a living being is AWARE that it exists! Oparin left out Awareness or Consciousness because the scientific community is very allergic to using those words. They have no framework within physical science for accepting concepts like consciousness, that is why!

◆ Awareness exists in living beings for the simple reason that everything HAS come out of Divine Consciousness in the first place. Take a rat; it knows it is alive, and when it sees a cat, it flees because it wants to protect its life.

◆ In other words, while science may dodge the idea of Consciousness, in Spirituality, we must accord it the first place. Everything flows from Consciousness or the *Atma*.

◆ This Consciousness [which, remember, is the same thing as the *Atma*] is all important. It is there BEFORE Creation and also during Creation. In fact, it is the backdrop against which all the evolutionary processes in Creation take place.

◆ In schools we are taught: First there were no planets. Then planets formed. Then life appeared on earth, and after that the evolution of species took place, culminating in the appearance of man on earth. We need to fill in on all the missing details in the above simple picture.

◆ There are two ways of looking at this. One is as follows: God gross matter, gross matter plants, plants animals, animals man, man God. This cycle has already been referred to in the Guide Book. We now consider another point of view.

◆ Remember the DNA? It is supposed to have two strands [intertwined in an extraordinary fashion]. In the case of evolution, there are three stands [like in some

muscular proteins]. These are: 1) The strand of evolution of gross matter from the original Cosmic soup that existed at the moment of Creation. 2) The emergence of life from inanimate matter and the subsequent evolution of living species. 3) The evolution of Consciousness in man. All these three processes take place against the backdrop of the two entities referred to earlier, namely, Universal Consciousness and Divine Energy. These two provide the basic support and framework for all these evolutionary processes.

◆ For every aspect of evolution mentioned above, Consciousness [or Siva, etc.] is the CAUSE while Energy [or *Shakthi* is the DRIVING FORCE. [If it is any help, one may use this analogy: In a car, petrol is the cause, and the engine is the force!].

◆ Now what is the meaning of evolution of Consciousness in a human being? This is an important question and needs attention. This is where three words used by Baba come into focus. They are: CONSCIOUS, CONSCIENCE, and CONSCIOUSNESS [which really means UNIVERSAL or ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS].

◆ Let us start with the first word namely, CONSCIOUS. What does it mean? It means to be aware. Of what? Of the external world. All of us are aware or conscious of the external world [through of course the senses].

◆ Animals too have this capacity of being conscious of the external world, and in some respects their sense of awareness is superior to that of humans. However, thanks to his brain, man can do incredibly well. Man's immense scientific knowledge is a tribute to this ability.

◆ But man's capacity for Awareness does not stop with the external

world. He can cognise the Internal world too, and this is far more important in the scheme of Creation, than becoming aware of just the external world.

◆ When man becomes aware of the Inner Being and responds to it, we say that man is following his CONSCIENCE. Thus, following one's Conscience represents a higher kind of Awareness; it implies climbing up the ladder of Consciousness.

◆ Man will follow his Conscience when he recognises it to be the Voice of God. If he thinks a bit further, he would realise that God resides in others also. When this realisation sinks in deeply, he would become aware of what is perhaps the most important thing to be known in Creation, and that is: THERE IS ONLY GOD, NOTHING BUT GOD, AND HE PERVADES EVERYTHING HERE AS WELL AS BEYOND, AS THE SUPREME UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS. This is the highest state of Awareness.

◆ The Awareness ladder is what was referred to earlier as the third strand of evolution, and going up this ladder is equivalent to evolving to higher and higher state of Awareness or Consciousness.

◆ Seen in this light, one can see that from inanimate matter through plants and animals, God is preparing living beings to go higher and higher up. When the human stage is reached, humans must take off and not fall down like a lead balloon!

◆ If one becomes God-conscious, then there is a take-off. If instead one sinks to the level of a beast or a demon though sporting a human form, then it means the "flight is going to end in a disaster"!



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◆ The sum and substance of this discussion is simply to convey:

*God is Omnipresent, i.e., Everywhere.  
He is both within and without.  
The God inside is no different from the God outside.*

◆ And so the final score is: The Indweller, whom many just refer to as the Soul, whom others speak of as the *Atma* and so on in different terms, is no different from the Cosmic God who pervades the Universe and is often referred to as Brahman. Hence *Atma = Brahman*! In other words, or rather in Swami's words,

*There is only one God, and He is Omnipresent!*

## Some Stuff for the Adventurous!

◆ What follows is a technical amplification of some of the concepts explained above. This amplification is intended to help the reader to understand some of the intricate concepts, that Baba touches upon in some of His Discourses. It is to be stressed that reading this portion is not absolutely essential. But those who are intellectually curious may find it useful.

◆ In the above, two terms were used: Consciousness and Divine Energy. It must be remembered that these are not really separate from each other, and are dealt with as separate mainly for operational convenience. They are inseparable like the two sides of a coin. In what follows, we shall ignore the two sides and just focus on the coin as a whole. In other words, we shall henceforth use only the term Consciousness exclusively.

◆ The basic question is: What are the different aspects of Consciousness, if any, that manifest in the micro- as well as the macrocosm of Creation? In this context, we shall consider

*The three Akasas or spaces or worlds,  
The three states of existence of an individual,  
The inter-relations between the above.*

Let us start with the macro. Now, for every effect, there must be a cause. If the physical Universe is the effect, then there must be a cause for Universe. Obviously, that Cause is God. Swami sometimes uses the terms Ishwara or Brahma to refer to the Causal aspect of God.

◆ God/Ishwara/Brahma operates in His own world. This world/space/Akasa is called *Chidakasa*, and it is an absolutely super-subtle world.

◆ From the Cause, we turn to the Effect or the physical Universe. The associated space or world is called *Bhutakasa*.

◆ Is there anything between the *Chidakasa* and the *Bhutakasa*? Indeed there is, and it is the subtle world entitled *Chittakasa*. Now why does this intermediate space/Akasa exist, and what precisely is its role?

◆ Consider the following example. There is an artist and one day he paints a picture. Here the artist is the cause and the painting is the effect. But before he actually paints, the artist must get an idea or a concept. Thus, in this case, thought is the stage intermediate between cause and effect. Philosophers maintain that so it is in the case of Creation also. Just as for a human thought occurs in the human mind, the thought of Creation occurs in the Cosmic Mind. *Chittakasa* is the space associated with the Cosmic Mind.

◆ At this stage, the following table would be useful.

Cause	Chidakasa
Thought	Chittakasa
Effect	Bhutakasa

◆ We also note that just Ishwara is the Presiding Deity of *Chidakasa*, the

Cause	Chidakasa	Ishwara	Super-subtle
Thought	Chittakasa	Hiranyagarbha	Subtle
Effect	Bhutakasa	Virata	Gross

other two spaces also have their own Presiding Deities. The details are as below:

◆ Swami has given a very simple and elegant way of picturing these three worlds/spaces/Universes, call them what you will. The basic idea is the following. For each space, there is a microcosm. These are: The individual Heart for *Chidakasa*, the individual Mind for *Chittakasa*, and the individual gross body for *Bhutakasa*. Starting from the microcosm, one arrives at the macrocosm simply by putting together all the individual units. In other words:

The super-subtle world is just the aggregate of all the individual Hearts. Likewise, the subtle world is just the aggregate of all the individual minds and the gross universe is just the aggregate of all the bodies. Swami in fact writes equations like:

Heart X Infinity = Cosmic Heart.  
Mind X Infinity = Cosmic Mind.  
Body X Infinity = Gross Universe.

This establishes a clear one-to-one correspondence between the micro- and the macrocosm. A bit more of fine print has to be added.

We have already seen that there are presiding deities associated with macro worlds/spaces. There are

Ishwara	Prajna
HiranyaGarbha	Taijasa
Virata	Vaishwanara

similarly, deities associated with the microcosm also. The correspondence is as below.

◆ QUESTION: Are the three deities *Vaishwanara*, *Taijasa* and *Prajna* really different from *Virata*, *Hiranyagarbha*

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and *Ishwara*? Not really, and it is all a matter of nomenclature. The macro aspect is called by one name and the corresponding micro by another, that is all. To put it differently:

*Virata* is the “universal” aspect of *Vaishwanara*.

*Hiranyagarbha* is the “universal” aspect of *Tajasa*.

*Ishwara* is the “universal” aspect of *Prajna*.

◆ What the above implies is the intimate connection between the micro and the macro. The micro would always reflect the macro and what is not found in the micro cannot be found in the macro. This should call to mind the observations that Swami often makes: 1) You are God. All the powers that God has are latent in you also. 2) What cannot be found in man cannot be found anywhere in the Universe.

◆ By way of wrapping up all this, attention must now be called to the three states of existence of an individual namely, the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state. Besides, there is also the question: WHO AM I? These two issues would now be considered.

◆ First, the issue of the three states. The waking state is characterised by a complete awareness of what is going on around the individual. In the dream state, since one is asleep, the senses are at rest; however, the mind is active, and is responsible for the dreams that one has. In the deep-sleep state, even the mind is at rest. The above is a clinical description of the three states. We must now link all this to details of awareness or Consciousness.

◆ In the waking state, one is fully conscious of the external world. In the dream state, this external awareness is muted. In the deep-sleep state, this external awareness [called elsewhere as

secondary consciousness] is totally dormant. However, something else is active, and that is what is called the Primary Consciousness, which is always active.

◆ Since the above is likely to be a bit confusing, the ideas are restated in a different set of words. 1) Primary Consciousness is always there, meaning that it is operative in the deep-sleep state, in the dream-state and in the waking state as well. 2) However, in ordinary people, this Primary Consciousness gets eclipsed in the dream and waking states; it makes itself felt only in the deep-sleep state. 3) We know that Primary Consciousness is operative in the deep-sleep state, for it is that which makes the Self aware of deep sleep and experience the refreshing effects thereof. 4) Secondary Awareness or Consciousness is a derivative of Primary Consciousness, and operates fully in the waking state and partially in the dream state.

◆ And now we come to an important point. See figure 2.

This figure tells us something about what may be called the “i” consciousness and the “I” Consciousness. The former is the awareness of the lower self or the

body and the mind, while the latter is the Consciousness associated with the “I” or the Heart. Let us start from the deep sleep state. In this state the body and the mind are dormant, and the Heart alone is awake. Therefore, it is “I” Consciousness alone that prevails. This is what has been referred to earlier as Primary Consciousness. As one wakes from deep sleep passing through the intermediate dream state, one finally reaches the full waking state. Here our external consciousness [or secondary consciousness or external awareness] dominates. That is the “i” consciousness associated with the lower self prevails over the Higher Consciousness associated with the “I” or Primary Consciousness. This is one way of saying that when we are fully awake, our ego easily dominates and eclipses our True Self. Conversely, when we go to sleep, our ego is partly eclipsed in the dream state and becomes dormant in the deep sleep state. The “I” Consciousness now prevails at last, and experiences the Bliss of deep sleep.

◆ Please note that deep sleep is by no means a very spiritual experience! It merely helps in recognising the transition from the causal to gross and the reverse transition from the

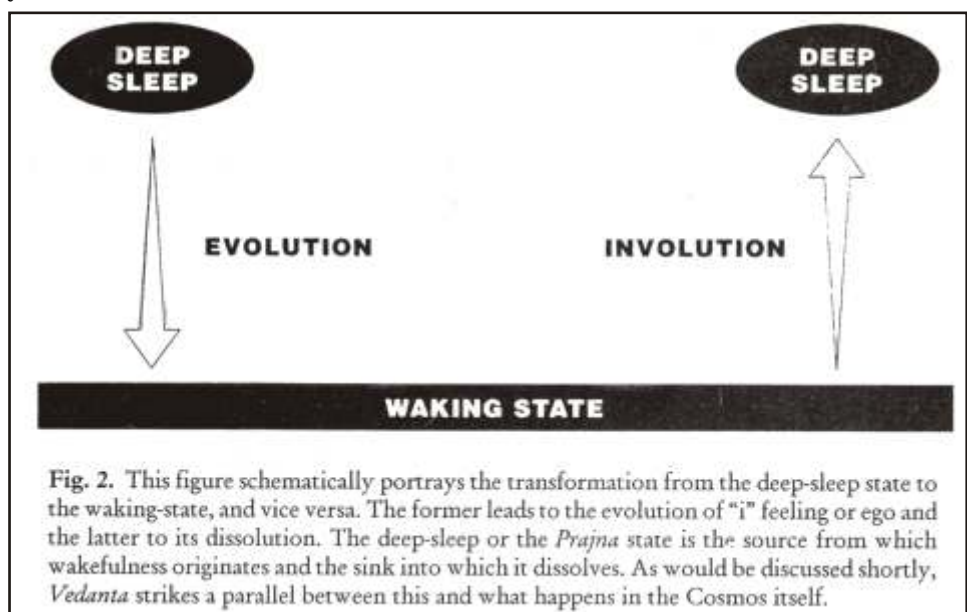


Fig. 2. This figure schematically portrays the transformation from the deep-sleep state to the waking-state, and vice versa. The former leads to the evolution of “i” feeling or ego and the latter to its dissolution. The deep-sleep or the *Prajna* state is the source from which wakefulness originates and the sink into which it dissolves. As would be discussed shortly, *Vedanta* strikes a parallel between this and what happens in the Cosmos itself.

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gross to the causal. It is this analysis that led ancient Indians to understand the deep connection between the states of an individual and the states through which the Universe itself goes through at birth and at dissolution.

◆ We turn finally to the question: WHO AM I? Normally a question of this type brings a reply like, "I am Smith." Swami says that Smith is the name given to the body by parents but man is not just the body. Then who exactly is man?

◆ We now recall statements that Baba often makes in this context. He says:

You are not the one you think you are.  
You think you are the body but you are NOT the body.

You are not the one others think you are. Others judge you by your Mind but you are NOT the Mind.

Who then are you? You are the one you really you are! And who is that? You are You.

Swami says, "You should say 'I am I!'"

◆ This "I" is the primordial entity that always exists, i.e., it is nothing but the *Atma*. In other words, although for worldly purposes I may be X or Y or Z, in the spiritual sense, all are the same, all are the *Atma*! That is the Reality.

◆ To summarise: The individual has three states of existence.

With the body, he experiences the gross. This he does in the waking state.

With the Mind, he experiences the subtle. This he does in the dream state.

With the Heart [the Cause], he experiences the super-subtle Causal state. This he does in the deep-sleep state,

Hence, one must not merely see the world. One must not merely analyse the world. One must experience the world with one's Heart!

◆ One last and important point. God exists BEYOND Creation. Is there any state of existence that enables one to connect with this Absolute State of God? Yes there is, and that is often called the Transcendental State or Turiya State. This is the state where one experiences Pure Oneness. Such experiences are extremely rare and have been discussed in the Message of the Lord. It has been given to a rare few to spend their entire lives in this state! Blessed indeed were they!

◆ To sum up, Primary Consciousness is the only Reality:

Consciousness + Waking = Waking State!

Consciousness + Dream = Dream State.

Consciousness + Deep Sleep = Deep Sleep State.

Consciousness All By Itself = The Fourth State, The State Of Beyond, The Turiya State!

◆ Baba says:

Man can cognise the working of the world by understanding the nature of gross body, the Subtle body, the Causal body and the Super Causal body. What is true must exist in the waking, the dream, and deep sleep states. Truth is that which is unchanging at all times, the past, the present, and the future.

*Reality thus has three main parts. They are empirical reality, that we experience in the waking state, the illusory reality that we experience in the dream state, and Absolute Reality, that we experience when we know who exactly we are.*

◆ The following incident should be of interest.

A devotee of Baba once had an unusual experience. At the time the devotee had this experience, he was living in a big city in India. He was high up on the social ladder, and also held an important position in the local wing of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Swami paid a visit to the city where this devotee was living at that time and naturally, the devotee had many occasions to interact with Bhagavan. One day, Swami was in the company of a small group that included this particular devotee. Suddenly, Baba turned towards him and asked, "Who are you?" Everyone was quite surprised, because Swami knew very well who this devotee was. As for the devotee himself, needless to say he was quite dumbfounded. Baba then restarted the general conversation, and after a while He once again asked this devotee, "Who are you?" The devotee could not make head or tail of the question and therefore remained totally silent. The others around were equally perplexed; Swami knew very well who this person was; why then was He asking the question again? Yes, there must be some deep reason behind, but what was that reason? No one knew nor could guess. General conversation started again, and a little later, Swami asked the question "Who are you?" for the third time! On this occasion, one of those present tried to tell Swami who this person was but Baba promptly shut him up.

That night when he was alone, the devotee thought deeply about the incident. After much pondering he caught on to what Baba was telling him. Many years earlier, when he was a young man, he once casually asked the family *Guru*, more out of respect than any genuine interest, for some spiritual advice. The *Guru* asked, "Do you have a good photo of yourself?" The young man was quite puzzled by the question but politely responded, "Yes, I have." The *Guru* then said, "Keep that photo by your bedside.



# Atma = Brahman

Every night, before you go to sleep, take a good look at the photo and tell yourself, "That is not me, that is not me, that is not me..." The young man was completely foxed. Was the *Guru* out of his mind? Politely he said, "But Guruji, the person in the photo is me!" "No, it is not you!"

"What do you mean it is not me? Then who am I?" The *Guru* smiled and said, "Ah! That is what you should find out!"

The devotee realised that Baba was telling him to embark seriously on the path of Self-enquiry! When Swami

repeatedly asked the question, "Who are you?" He was not trying to find out the physical identity; rather, He was giving a broad hint that the time had come for the devotee concerned to seriously introspect to discover his true nature!



## God, Deities and You

In this article I wish to respond to a letter we have recently received from a devotee. It is all about deities and the God who is supposed to rule over them. The devotee's problem is basically the following: It is said there is only one God. But there is also talk of deities, description that particular deities deal with particular issues/departments, that prayers for worldly needs do not necessarily reach God, etc. The writer wants to know if all this means that certain prayers of his to Swami get delivered to deities instead of to Swami, and that his request does not receive attention from Swami but rather from some lesser deity? What precisely is the protocol followed in the Upper World? Why can't Swami personally handle these matters, and why does He need assistants? The devotee ends his letter with the query: "I have been under the impression Sai handles everything and now this new found info complicates my understanding regarding prayers and their answers!"

This is an interesting letter. Many people have similar doubts, and in fact, long ago when I had not made an in-depth study of Swami's teachings, I too struggled with all kinds of doubts of a similar nature. Let us examine our devotee's difficulty in some detail. I would like to start by considering what the statement that there is only One God means. Swami makes this point even more explicitly. He says: "There is only God and nothing but God." That shall be our starting point.

The first thing that logically follows from the above is that if there is only God and nothing but God then clearly there cannot be any deities! At this point, I can hear the listener say, "But listen, authorities greater than you have talked about deities. Are you telling me they all are fools?"

Good point and I shall take that up next.

If we go back in history we would find that in pre-historic times, people in all communities without exception, were overawed by the forces of Nature. I mean, who wouldn't be? The power of a typhoon is not to be sneered at. As Swami sometimes reminds us, "Has man made a fan that can blow wind more powerfully than a cyclone?" So, these ancients intuitively recognised that there was a power superior to them and started not only giving names to the deities they thought were responsible for these forces of Nature but also propitiating these "Spirits" as they often were referred to. In fact, they devised various ways to propitiate these deities. Thus, in this manner, the Greeks had a god for rain, a god for fire, and so on; so

did the ancient Hindus. Indeed, tribes everywhere from Africa to America did the same. I mean there was hardly any place where they did not worship deities representing the forces of Nature in ancient times. The names might have been different and the procedures of worship might have varied, but all without exception did acknowledge in their own respective ways the existence of superior powers to which they all bowed. That is point number one.

Let me now move on to point number two. Many societies were content to rest matters there. That is, they were quite happy to keep themselves busy propitiating the deities and asking for all kinds of favours from them. But the more intensive seekers in ancient India decided to probe further and concluded, in the first instance, that

# God, Deities and You

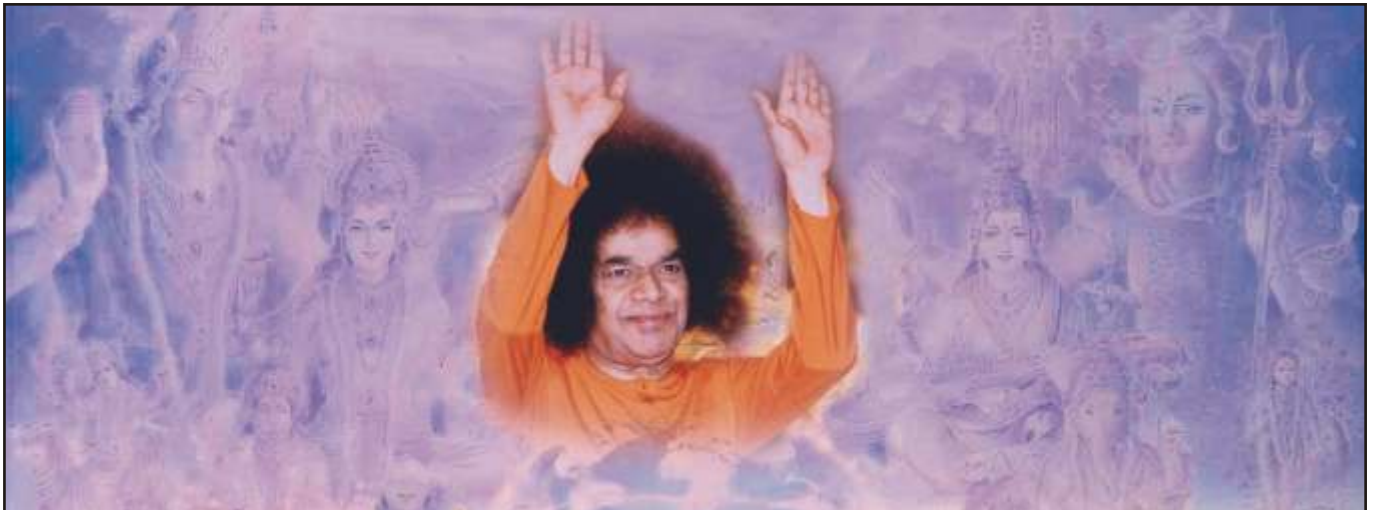
there must be an overlord for these deities. The deities were like Viceroys, and there must be a Rex or a King who ruled over them. Thus it is that they convinced themselves about a Power superior to the deities. That power was called God.

Now arose an issue. Whom to worship? Some said, "Worship the deities for particular favours, and worship the God who ruled them when the deities were unable to deliver the goods." Thus in ancient India, many started worshipping *Varuna* the God of Rain when the

may have things they want to do like withdrawing some money, getting some foreign currency cashed, making new deposits and so forth. For every such activity, there is an assigned person and a counter for conducting the transaction; yet the VIP customer gets all his jobs done simply by sitting with the Manager. In the same way, these profound thinkers in ancient India came to the important conclusion that indeed all the favours one wants can be granted directly by God and that there was no need to separately take these issues up with the deities.

the street vendor she is a customer, and so on. One lady, but playing many roles. In the same way, God plays many roles. Actually there is no such thing as a separate deity; it is God Himself who plays that role. When we pray to a deity we are in fact praying to God but without understanding that it is really God who is functioning as what we imagine to be a deity. On such occasions, God functions within certain parameters that are normally associated with deities.

Let me give an example. A farmer



monsoon failed but prayed to the God who ruled *Varuna* when they wanted progeny or cure from illness and things like that. This is like going to different counters in a bank when one needs different kinds of service.

At this stage, some thinkers said, "Hey wait a minute. Let's examine this business in some more detail." They did and came up with an answer that is best illustrated by using the Bank analogy I just mentioned. In fact, this analogy can be seen in action all the time here in Prashantinilayam. Just go to, say, the main office of the State Bank of India during the working hours. You will find that many customers are seated with the Manager. Often, these are people from overseas who have big deposits in the Bank. They

Doubts will not cease and some may protest saying, "Mister, is this not short-circuiting the structure inherent in Creation? If deities exist, it means that God created them. And having created them, God also presumably gave them jobs to do. What then is the big deal in bypassing them? Is this showing respect to God?"

A good point, and so let us examine further. Here I shall lean upon an illustration given by Swami. Let us say there is a lady. She is married, has children, and looks after the house. Now to her husband, this lady is the wife. To her children, this lady is the mother. To the father of her husband, this lady is the daughter-in-law. To the servant, she is the boss, to

wants rain, and so he prays to *Varuna*, the Rain God. If he is deserving, there might even be rain. The farmer also wants a son. However, he cannot say, "Hey *Varuna*, why don't you be considerate and grant me a son?" If he did that, he would be told: **WRONG COUNTER!** Just like in bank.

So what is the lesson? Simple. Treat God as the Almighty, and you can place before Him ALL your wants. If you imagine that there are deities, then you have to go this deity for this and that deity for that. But forget deities and remember only God; then there is single-window clearance as they say. I hope our listener friend understands. The Lord makes this very clear in the *Gita*, in Chapter 9, for example. He says:

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# God, Deities and You

*O Arjuna, I give heat; I send forth rain as well as withhold rain; I am Death as well as Immortality; I am Being as well as non-Being*

*Those steeped in Vedic rituals worship Me with sacrifices and pray for Heaven; on death they would reach the world of the gods or Devas and share celestial pleasures with them.*

*The pleasures of the Heavens they certainly enjoy but merit exhausted, they return forthwith to the world of the mortals. Chained thus they are to the recurring cycle of births and deaths.*

*Kaunteya, even those devotees who endowed with faith worship the minor gods worship none other than Me though not by the proper method.*

*Indeed I am the Receiver and the Enjoyer of all offerings made. But not recognising me in entirety, they slip back to the mortal world.*

*Those who worship the gods go to the gods. Those who worship the manes go to the manes. Those who adore the spirits go to the spirits. But those who worship Me come to Me!*

Well, that is what the Lord says and that really forms the bottom line. Incidentally, the *Brahmaarpanam Sloka* that we all chant is nothing but a reiteration of the statement I started with, namely that everything is God and nothing but God.

I now wish to take up another important aspect of the remarks made by our listener friend, namely asking God for this and that. There are many views on the subject, with some saying we can ask God for anything as long it is not bad while others saying no we should not burden God. What is the correct viewpoint?

The answer is clear. Swami says that if we must ask, it is better to ask God than to beg others. However, having

said that, I must also point out that God would prefer that we did not ply Him with requests. Here allow me to recall a story narrated to me by late Dr. Fanibanda. He told me this many, many years ago, one night when both of us were seated in the Warden's Office in Brindavan a Summer Course was in progress then. Dr. Fanibanda's story made a deep impression on me and I have never forgotten it. This is what he said.

It appears that many years ago, Swami was showering a lot of attention on a particular devotee. I mean lots of Interviews, gifts, *vibhuti*, rings, watches and what have you. There was another devotee who was doing a lot for Swami but hardly got any attention. And this other devotee who was apparently ignored neither felt bad nor complained. However, others who were watching all this from the ringside simply could not keep quiet and one fine day, one person blurted out, "Swami, You are giving so much attention to A but what about B? He is doing so much more and he seems to receive hardly any attention from You. How are we to understand this? In what way does Divine Grace work?" Swami smiled and replied, "That is simple. A is all the time telling Me about what he has done and I promptly reward him for that all accounts immediately settled. B is not cashing his cheques and therefore earns My Grace. In a house there is a lady and also a servant. The servant does some work and gets paid. The lady does much more household work. But is the man of the house giving his wife a salary like he does to the servant? No, instead he gives her his love, provides security and takes care of all her wants. That is precisely the way the God operates!"

Well I suppose that story would make you think! Let me now briefly refer to the various types of devotees who come to the Lord. The Lord Himself has categorised them in the *Gita*, and

I am sure you are all aware of it. At the bottom of the totem pole are those who want this and that, then come those who are suffering misery and want that removed, still higher are those who seek Knowledge and at the top are those who want nothing, absolutely nothing. Instead, their prayer is like that of St. Francis, which, by the way, we had published in one of our earlier issues a great prayer. I think the Lord would prefer we go to Him with that kind of prayer.

Which brings me to yet another story and with that I shall sign off. This happened some years ago. A devotee had been given an Interview, and in the Inner Chamber where Swami engulfs the devotee with incomparable and Infinite Love, Swami told the devotee, "Ask for anything you want." The devotee replied, "Swami I want nothing." Swami then said, "I know, but ask nevertheless. There surely must be something you want." Again and again Swami urged the devotee to ask and again and again the devotee insisted that Swami had already given everything and that he did not want anything more. Finally, giving in to Swami the devotee said, "Swami I shall ask for one thing." "What is that?" "Swami, I want everyone to be happy and to receive Your Grace." Swami was overjoyed and said, "You know, that is the best prayer one can ever make to ask nothing for oneself and the very best for others!"

On that wonderful message of Swami, let me conclude, inviting you once more to write to us with your comments. By the way, I wonder if you have noticed that your questions make our work more purposeful, focussed and also very interesting for us. So, keep writing for we do welcome your response.

Jai Sai Ram. G.Venkataraman





# Don't Quit!



When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,  
When the road you are trudging seems all-uphill,  
When the funds are low and the debts' are high,  
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you a bit.  
Rest, if you must - but don't you quit!

Life is a queer with its twists and turns,  
As every one of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about,  
When he might have won had he stuck it out,  
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow-  
You might succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out-  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt-  
And you can never tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems afar,  
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit  
It's when things get worse that you mustn't quit!



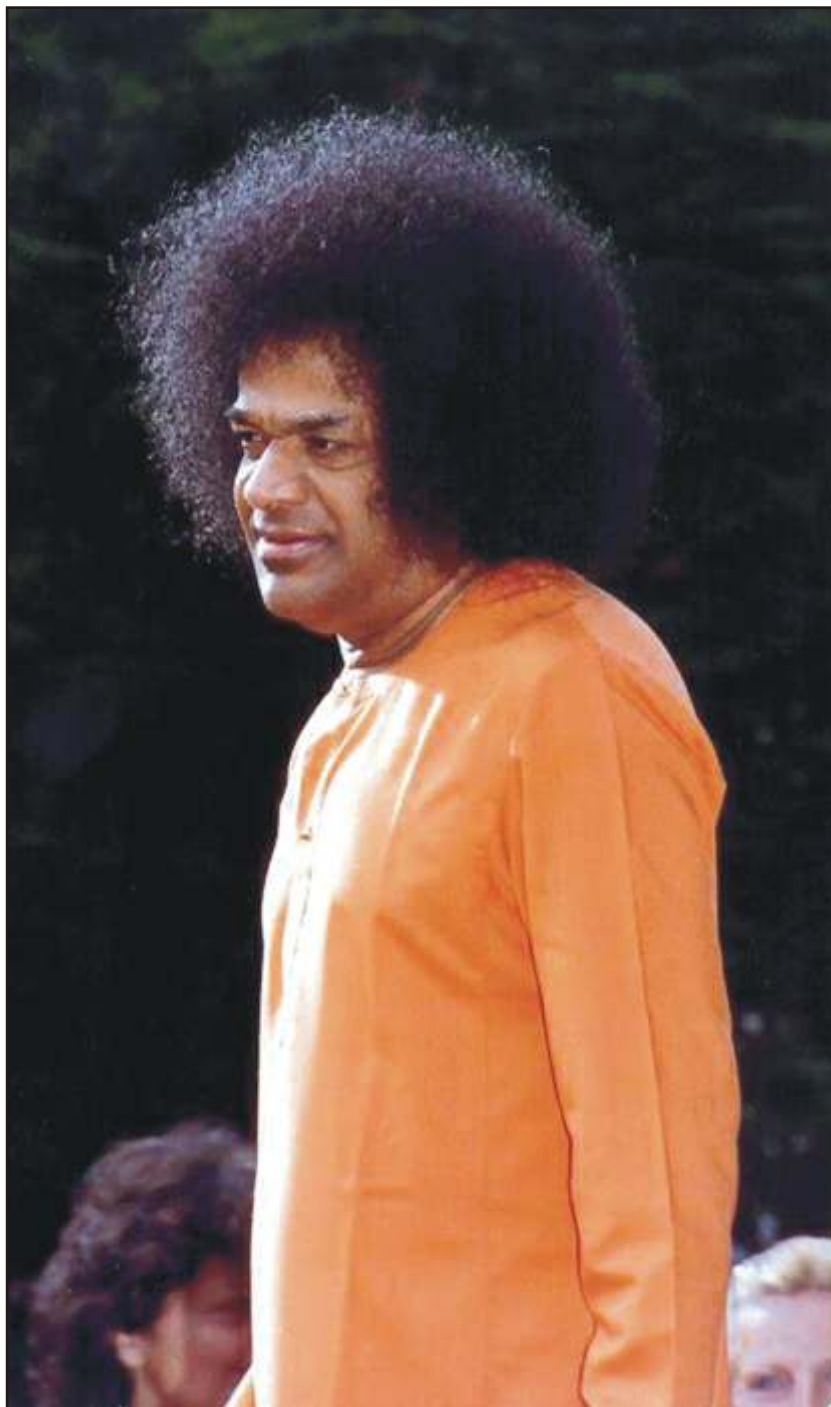
# Practicing Medicine with Sai

Charles Bollmann, M.D.

**R**aised a Catholic, I entered the seminary to become a priest at an early age. After two years, I realized it was not for me. I then spent my junior and senior years at a Catholic high school in New Jersey, attended Villanova University in Pennsylvania, and then attended the University of Medicine, in New Jersey, for my medical degree. Residency training and a busy medical practice kept me busy for several years, but I was always on the "spiritual path." I simply did not have time to pursue it; there was so much to learn.

Finally, I felt I was enough of an expert in medicine to get back to what I was really interested in - metaphysics. I started studying all types of spiritual knowledge and paths, from Scientology to Eastern philosophy. I read *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda, books by Ram Dass and Carlos Castaneda, as well as others by Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi. I knew I had to go to India but did not know where to go. While visiting a bookstore in Del Mar, California, I found a small section of metaphysical books. For two hours, while my wife was shopping, I went over every book in the section, but found nothing of interest. When my wife returned, I refused to leave until

I found the right book. Immediately, I turned around and there, not even two feet away from me, was Sai Baba's picture looking directly at me. The book was *The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist* by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss.



After reading it, I knew I had to go to India.

And so, like all devotees who had come under the spell of Swami,

Dr.. Bollman went to India, and of course saw Swami. This was way back in 1977. During this trip, He also met many devotees, including doctors. Let us hear more about that from Bollman's article.

During this trip, I met several doctors and asked them if they had witnessed any miracles. Dr. Rajeswari, the obstetrician-gynecologist who was the head of the Bangalore hospital, told me the following story. A patient others was scheduled for a hysterectomy for fibroid tumors. On the doctor's rounds the morning of the surgery, the patient told her that Swami had come during the night, ripped out a fleshy mass of tissue, and told her she did not need surgery. Dr. Rajeswari was skeptical, but when she pulled back the sheet to examine the patient, there was a healed scar present that had not been there the day before. On further examination, the tumor had completely disappeared and the uterus was back to normal.

In January 1978, shortly after Dr.. Bollman returned to phoenix in Arizona, his wife gave birth to a daughter. At that time, a patient named terry came to Dr.. Bollman. Over now to Dr.. Bollman.

# Practicing Medicine with Sai

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Terry's first pregnancy had progressed normally until about six weeks before her due date. As her obstetrician, I was surprised to get a call from the hospital that she was in labor. The delivery was uneventful, and the baby, while premature, was doing well. On returning to my office, the post-partum nurse called and informed me Terry's blood pressure was markedly elevated. While making rounds the next morning, I realized Terry's laboratory findings were extremely abnormal. In essence, all of the liver-function tests were elevated. For a healthy female of 26 years, this was extremely unusual.

Terry, developed a postpartum hemorrhage. The diagnosis of a rare disorder, acute yellow atrophy of the liver in pregnancy, was made. This is a condition in which the liver is almost completely replaced by fat cells and is unable to function. The cause is unknown, and the condition is extremely rare. Since no one can live without a liver, Terry's condition rapidly deteriorated. Another postpartum hemorrhage developed, and I was required to perform a hysterectomy to control the bleeding.

Despite my efforts and those of 10 other specialists in various fields, we continued to lose ground. Terry developed a hemorrhage from the stomach and gastrointestinal (GI) tract, renal failure, and a stress ulcer. She went into congestive heart failure and, finally, coma. During all this she remained in a coma. I asked Sai Baba to help her and me to get through this, and I gave her Vibhuti.

Life now became very difficult for Dr. Bollman. Terry's serious illness was affecting his work and his family life as well, and he did not know what to do, until he realized that Swami alone could get him out of difficulty. This is what he says.

I asked Swami to help me. I drew the curtain around the bed and began to talk to the comatose Terry. I explained that the situation could not continue as it was, and that it was interfering with my life, my other patients, and my new-born child. I explained that she had a lot to live for, with her husband and their new baby. I then returned to my office to see patients. Within an hour, the intensive-care nurse called and excitedly told me that Terry had awakened from the coma. Two days later, she left the intensive-care unit and, within one week, she returned home with her baby. Six weeks later, her liver function was entirely normal. I know that the results would have been different had Swami not had His hand in the matter. This was my first assurance that Swami would always be there to guide me in caring for my patients, and this has lasted throughout my medical career.

Dr. Bollman now began to make regular visits to Puttaparthi, and had many experiences, including wonderful interviews. As a fellow gynecologist, he had many professional contacts with late Dr. Rajeswari, and also often listened to her amazing experiences. More about that now.

During the times I visited with Dr. Rajeswari at the hospital, she told many stories about Swami. The most amazing story Dr. Rajeswari shared with me was her experience of being brought back from the dead. She had not been feeling well for several days, suffering from chest pain and dizziness. She informed Swami, and He told her He would take care of her. However, He told her to make sure that she saw a doctor to get her hypertension under control. Being a busy physician, she failed to take Swami's advice. She suffered a fatal heart attack. When she arrived at the small hospital emergency room, the

EKG showed ventricular fibrillation, an extreme condition where the heart is not functioning, requiring electroshock therapy to bring it back to its normal rhythm. She emphasized that it was not ventricular tachycardia, a condition that sometimes spontaneously reverses, but ventricular fibrillation. As they did not have the personnel or the equipment where she was being treated, they tried to transfer her to a larger hospital. However, her heart stopped. They later told her that she had died on the way to the other hospital. During that time, she was unconscious and has no memory of what happened. When she awoke in the hospital, the entire room was orange. Everywhere she looked she saw orange. She said to the nurse, "I have been in many hospitals all over the world, but I have never seen a hospital room that was orange." The nurse replied, "Are you crazy, woman? There is no orange here." She said she later checked the EKG for herself and confirmed the presence of ventricular fibrillation.

Swami brings people to him, only when there is an inner yearning. We have heard Dr. Bollman tell us that he always had a spiritual yearning from the time he was young. Once he came to Swami, the transformation began. This is what Dr. Bollman says about it.

One of the many things Swami has taught me is that the solution to every problem is absorption in God-consciousness. It has saved me many times, and I am sure will continue to do so. I have found that whenever I am confronted with any problem, I take a deep breath and think of God.

The Spiritual transformation of the Sai devotee does not stand aloof. Rather, it helps him or her to convert karma into true karma yoga, a process that reveals how in the ultimate analysis, it is always God who is the doer. By way of



# Practicing Medicine with Sai

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illustrating this point, Dr. Bollman now talks about one of his difficult cases.

Once I had to do a hysterectomy on a short, very obese patient (more than 300 pounds) who had extremely heavy bleeding, so much so that she needed blood transfusions on two different occasions in the last year. While hysterectomy was recommended, no other surgeon seemed willing to do it because of the technical difficulty involved in surgery for a patient of that size. Her very enlarged uterus, which could not move up or down, would make the surgery much more difficult. It was a surgical and anesthetic nightmare.

When I saw her for the first time, she had just bled down to a hemoglobin of 6gms (normal is 12-14) and had just been seen in the emergency room. She was finally convinced she needed something done. After stopping the bleeding with hormones and treating her with medications to improve her blood count prior to surgery, I scheduled her for surgery. The surgery was the nightmare I thought it would be. It was almost impossible to see anything due to the amount of intra-abdominal fat and the enlarged and fixed uterus. She hemorrhaged from the uterine artery and lost a great deal of blood, which required multiple transfusions. Needless to say, I asked Swami for help before, during, and after surgery. I began to wonder

where He was. Actually, I knew He was there but was wondering what He was doing.

After we finished the operation, we were far behind in our transfusions and fluid replacement. However, the IV had infiltrated, and all attempts at IVs and arterial lines by many anesthesiologists failed, again because of her extreme weight. I found myself in the intensive care unit with a patient who had no urine output, was very pale, and obviously blood-depleted. I had no way to give her blood or fluids. Her pulse rate was extremely high, and her blood pressure very low. Every physician we called for help seemed to be busy with his or her own problems. The general surgeon I usually call was at her mother's funeral! We could not even turn the patient from side to side in the bed, because she filled the entire bed and could not be turned.

What to do? I began saying the Gayatri mantra on my japamala. I realized I was not the doer, only the witness. I wondered if the patient would die. When I was about halfway through my japamala, my spouse called me and asked if I had tried vibhuti. She volunteered to bring some. I was very surprised to realize that she had thought of the vibhuti and I had not. While saying the Gayatri, and on hearing about the vibhuti, I realized what Sai is to my life. HE IS MY LIFE. Not only my life, but it seems I have trained my

family the same way.

I continued to say the Gayatri. Suddenly, the anesthesiologist got an arterial line in after about 180 sticks in the neck. We gave the patient blood and fluids, and she slowly responded. She left the hospital just the other day in good condition.

Swami lays great emphasis on Kshama or forbearance and Daya or Compassion. True devotees try hard to acquire these virtues so that they would become really dear to Sai. Kshama and Daya not merely adorn but actually help, as Dr. Bollman tells us.

Over the years, since I have been with Swami, I have learned to be more patient and more compassionate; I have left behind the prejudice I was raised with. I do not judge, and this has helped my patients open up to me.

I have learned to handle problem patients, or patients with problems that are not physical. Previously, I would find that depressed patients would also leave me depressed, as they dumped all their problems on me. Now, merely by silently repeating my mantra while I am sitting and listening to them, I find that their problems seem to disappear. I am able to remain calm, and they leave with some of their burden lifted. And I am doing nothing but silently repeating Om Sai Ram.



## 'Find the virtue' puzzle

**E**ach sentence below conceals within itself a virtue like love, sincerity, sacrifice, etc. which is spelt out in consecutive letters in the sentence.

For example, in the sentence - Of your benevolence and blessings, let me have my fill, **O** venerable one! (4)

As you can see, 'love' is there but hidden. All the 14 sentences below similarly have noble virtues hidden in them in two or more words, and all you have to do is search these noble values out. The number of letters in the word are indicated next to the sentence.

Try this out and you will know how spiritual and how smart you are.

1. Like the compass, I only look towards one direction, that is, God. (10)
2. After arathi, as Baba rose up from the sofa, I Thankfully bowed in reverence. (5)
3. Isn't it insane and inhuman to exploit ruthlessly a fellow human being? (5)
4. My friend's hippie attitude is OK as long as he is kind and loving. (10)
5. Listening on the tape ace singer Ravi's devotional melodies, I lost myself. (5)
6. One particular bhajan of Ganesha rings in my ears all the time. (8)
7. Mr. Chari typifies an affluent person dedicated to the Lord's work forsaking all riches. (7)
8. All vices are perilous, there is no greater or lesser vice. (7)
9. Talking sweetly and not placing the phone stylishly is phone etiquette. (7)
10. Mr. Alfred Tole ran ceaselessly 10 miles celebrating his orphanage's tenth anniversary. (9)
11. The disciple's implicit yes to whatever the master said, pleased the master. (10)
12. The signs could change in our zodiac, our agenda to experience God, however, will never change. (7)

(Look for the puzzle solutions in page number 26 )

## Glory of God

Dear Reader,

Remember we used to carry a feature entitled GLORY OF GOD? Why don't you help us to continue it with your own contributions?

Here is what you could do. You could, if you live photographically beautiful. And beauty is God!

Or else, you could write a few words about some wonder of Nature. For example, there are so many wonderful things taking place inside the human body. If you wish, you may draw attention to such matters.

Nature too is packed with wonders wherever you turn. For example, we all know that ice, which is solid water, has lower density than liquid water; that is why ice floats on water. In this respect, ice is quite unique since most solids are more dense than the corresponding liquid. But do you

know that there is a deep reason why God made ice lighter than water? So that it could float. Now why on earth did God want that? Because once ice floats on sea, it prevents the water below from freezing. How is that? Because ice is a poor conductor of heat [and that is why Eskimos use ice for building their igloos!] OK, ice floats and has poor heat conductivity. So what? Ah, that is where God's compassion comes into the picture. You see, because of the poor thermal conductivity, the water in the lower levels of the Arctic Ocean and the Southern Ocean does not freeze. As a result, fish are able to survive.

You see the world is full of wonders. If you know about some of these, why don't you share it with the rest of the Sai family?

Give it a try!

SGH TEAM

# The Divine Essence of Veena

The establishment of the Sai Mirpuri College of Music has added a new dimension to the Ashram life. Verily music is the highest form of devotion, through which God is most easily obtained. The musician not only redeems his own life through his music, but also carries the listeners along with him to divine ecstasy. Indian classical music is very devout and God-centered and generates in one and all *Bhakthi Bhava* or divine love consciousness.

So it is no wonder that the occasions when the students of the Music College play for the Lord are most enjoyable and pleasing. The students not only play on formal occasions like *Thyagaraja Aradhana* or on special festival days, but also enthrall the Lord on a lazy afternoon with an impromptu concert in Sai Kulwant Hall. On Wednesday, March 10, 2004, the students of the Music College presented a veena concert that provided immense pleasure to the Lord and all the devotees present.

Playing as they did at the end of the academic year, it was also an occasion for them to fully present to the Lord, who is also the Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning to which the Music College is affiliated, what they had imbibed during the academic year and earn His approval and Grace.

The *Veena*, a musical instrument from South India, has played a leading role in the development of Indian music. *Carnatic* music (as South Indian Classical music is called) regards the *veena* as God's gift to humanity. The belief is that the *veena* music takes us to cosmic consciousness. The *veena nada* or sound kindles the fire in

the *kundalini* that lies curled up in the *mooladhara chakra*, the lowest of the six nerve centers that lie along the spinal column. The vibration set in motion by the body heat and the life breath gathers momentum as it travels up the spinal column, eventually releasing immense powers of concentration and meditation leading to cosmic consciousness. This is known as *Nadopasana*, and is considered to be the easiest path to salvation.

The students started their concert with *Vatapi Ganapathim Bhaje ham*, a piece in *Hamsadwani* composed by Dikshithar, a famous poet sage of South India. In India all

auspicious tasks are begun with an invocation to Lord Ganapathi, the Lord who removes all obstacles along the path and ensures success.

It is only through ceaseless practice that a *Vainika* or *veena* player acquires mastery over this musical instrument. This practice enables him to acquire a clear intellect, a steady mind, and control over the senses, a sweet voice and absolute freedom from fear of any kind. Swami also has on occasions extolled the qualities of a *veena* player. Thus the study of the *veena* is itself *sadhana*.

The second song played was *Endaro Mahanubhavulu*. It is said that a great musician Shatkala Govinda Marar from Kerala once approached Sri Thyagaraja and sang in front of him. The composition was sung in six speeds. Thyagaraja appreciating the genius

of this musician composed this musical piece, *Endaro Mahanubhavulu*, in his honor.

The *veena* itself is considered to be divine. The *veena dandi* or



Reviewing the planned offering



Six veenas play in unison



# The Divine Essence of Veena

the stem represents Shiva, the seven strings represent His consort Paravathi, the dragon head- Vishnu, the bridge represents Lakshmi, the metal cone Saraswati, and the resonator represents the creator Brahma. In recognition of these Gods being represented in one instrument, the students next played *Brahmam Okate*, God is one, in *Bhoopalam*. This was followed by a composition called *Marubalkakunnavevera* in *Sri Ranjani*.

The veena finger technique is dynamic and is capable of producing a wide range of sounds. Relatively easier to learn, it still takes two decades to become a successful veena player. But the students of the Music College, seem to make very rapid progress in a fraction of the time, even in just a year or two, entirely due to His Grace.

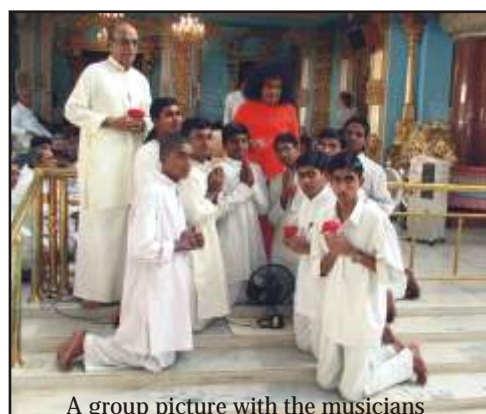
The virtuosity of the veena was brought forth in full by the next piece *Ninnu Vina Namadendu* (in *Namarasa Kannada*), a piece eminently suitable for instrumental music. This had everyone in Sai Kulwant Hall in raptures.



The short concert concluded with the instrumental rendition of the *Vedic* hymn the *Mantra Pushpam*. This *Mantra Pushpam* expounds the truth that from the *Atma*, the Self, first emerged the sky. From the sky came air; from the air emerged fire; from the fire, the water; and from the water emerged the earth. Thus the source of the all the 5 elements (i.e. the material creation) is the one single *Atma*.

Similarly, whatever may be the system of music, whatever may be the theories, technicalities, skill and traditions of a particular system of music, still all systems of music emanate from Him. Music thus is a divine art and brings about *Divya Ananda* or happiness in everyone's heart and peace in everyone's mind, and makes everyone feel near to God.

Swami, we are very grateful to You for establishing the College of Music. The devotion and dedication of these students elevates our devotion also and establishes You firmly in our hearts and minds and makes us feel very close to You.



## 'Find the virtue' puzzle solutions

1. Like the **compass**, I **only** look towards one direction, that is, God.
2. After arathi, as Baba rose up from the **sofa**, I **thankfully** bowed in reverence.
3. Isn't it insane and inhuman to exploit ruthlessly a fellow human being?
4. My **friend's hippie** attitude is OK as long as he is kind and loving.
5. Listening on the **tape ace** singer Ravi's devotional melodies, I lost myself.
6. One particular bhajan of **Ganesh** **rings** in my ears all the time.
7. Mr. **Chari** typifies an affluent person dedicated to the Lord's work forsaking all riches.
8. All vices are perilous, there is no greater or **lesser vice**.
9. Talking sweetly and not placing the **phone** **stylishly** is phone etiquette.
10. Mr. Alfred **Tole** **ran** ceaselessly 10 miles celebrating his orphanage's tenth anniversary.
11. The disciple's **implicit** yes to whatever the master said, pleased the master.
12. The signs could change in our **zodiac**, **our agenda** to experience God, however, will never change.

# Dousing Fires of Grief

Reduced to ashes



Muslims, was razed to the ground by fires. 139 houses got gutted. 200 and odd families became homeless overnight. Everything, except the clothes they were wearing, was burnt to ashes. 'What will happen to us? Where do we go?'

Burnt belongings



ever ready to serve their Master, by serving their fellowmen. This suffering in Nandyal could not escape their discerning eyes. They had read about their plight in the newspaper. They swung into action. The local Satya Sai Samithi at Nandyal was contacted and a survey of the extent of the disaster was done the next day. Immediate temporary relief had to be provided.

Who will come to our rescue



blankets and medicines.....which would last at least a few days, till they settled back in their work and earned their wages....

The 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2004. Disaster struck the city of Nandyal, Andhra Pradesh, India. A colony of not so well to do section of the society, with predominantly

Is there someone who cared for us?, the victims wondered.

Yes, there was someone: the Sai Student. Students of Swami who passed out of the institute,

They decided upon their course of action: They would erect temporary huts for each of the 200 families. They would provide them with clothes, utensils, eatables,



Lord responded by giving them not only His blessings, but



and housed by the local samithi people, who too wanted to participate in this act of service. The next morning, they began this massive work of erecting around 250 huts. Taking the name of the Lord on their lips, they went about their work tirelessly and by evening it was a different place. The temporary sheds were ready.

Blankets for the Victims



photograph and vibhuthi. One Muslim woman saw the photo of Swami and told them "This man had come here last night. He raised his hands as if to bless and walked away". The students were not surprised. They knew their Swami was with them always, everywhere....this was just a confirmation of their faith. It was not they who doused the fires of grief of this unfortunate group of people. It was the shower of His grace that did the job through them.

All the necessary items were procured. A letter was sent to Swami informing Him of their plan of action and seeking His blessings. And the compassionate

Armed with the Lord's blessings, six students and 32 sevadal from Puttaparthi rushed to Nandyal. They were received

In the evening when the grateful families occupied the huts, the group went to each hut and gave them rice, clothes, utensils, blankets and Swami's



# Dousing Fires of Grief

Giving them Swami's prasadam

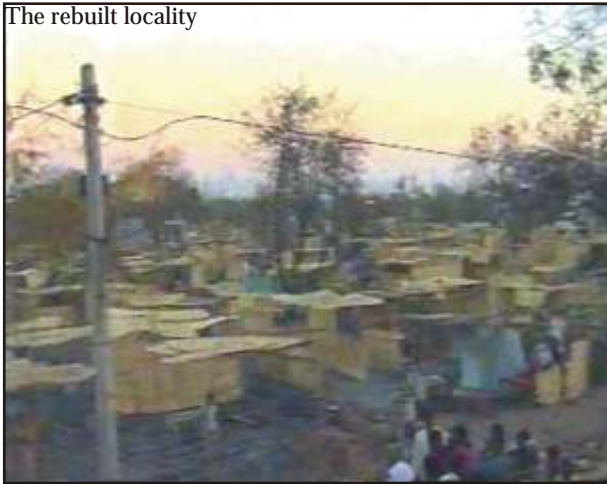


Nagarsankeertan

Brand new utensils



The rebuilt locality



The lady who saw Swami



Coming Next..... In H2H!

A special feature on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. Also to be continued in the next issue is the article on Plato and Swami, part 1 of which appeared in this issue.





## Garlands of Love

**I**n the earlier days, our dear Lord used to accept garlands from devotees....To say that He looked beautiful with them would be an understatement.....The garlands looked beautiful when put around Him. But alas, He no longer accepts garlands....He says: Why offer god a garland made of flowers that wither away? Give me the flowers of your Hearts, fresh and pure for eternity!

Here are some of those marvelous photographs of sweet Lord with garlands!



# News from Sri Sathya Sai International Center

**T**he Sri Sathya Sai International Centre in Delhi began the New Year with a lecture on 3rd January, by the Dalai Lama. Lt. Gen. Dr. M. L. Chibber, Director of



the Centre welcomed the Guest of Honour and Dr. Karan Singh, eminent philosopher-statesman, who presided over the function. The auditorium was packed to capacity, even though it was one of the coldest days of this winter. His Holiness the Dalai Lama spoke for 45 minutes, after which Dr. Karan Singh, delivered his presidential remarks.

The Dalai Lama opened with the remark that the key to peace lies in non-violence and tolerance, which is a 7000-year-old tradition in India. We can have peace only if we are able to bring about an attitude of respect for religions, faiths and belief systems other than our own. There is an interesting fact to be noted about the great world religions. At the level of philosophy there might be apparent differences among them; but at the level of practice there is no difference.

When we study the ethics or the

practice advocated by the various faiths, there is not much difference. They all believe in certain core human values like Truth, Non-violence, Compassion, Love and Peace. One of the important values is Truth. Truth lies in perceiving Reality as it is. Reality can be experienced in its fullness, only if one harbours positive emotions and not negative emotions.

It would not be correct to say that we should have no emotions. A person without emotions is a person without feeling. He is apt to be dry, distant, cold, friendless, negative and vicious. The important thing is not to harbour negative emotions.

Negative emotions are emotions that are immature, narrow and cloudy. For example, attachment and hatred are two such negative emotions. When a person sees the world through the prism of attachment, he would conclude that whatever he does is 100% right. And when he sees someone else through the prism of hate, he would conclude that whatever the other person does is 100% wrong. Nothing in Nature is 100% right or wrong. Such a perception is merely a mental projection, that distorts our appreciation of Reality, creating more problems.

Positive emotions are mature emotions because here emotion is combined with intelligence. The application of intelligence leads to analysis and investigation. Analysis leads to conviction. The disciplining of emotion leads to a holistic vision of Reality. Everything is interconnected. If one fails to see the interconnectedness and interdependence, then it is a distorted vision. Examples of positive emotions are faith and Compassion, which can be imbibed only through a training of emotions.

Knowledge leads to conviction.

Conviction leads to determination. Determination leads to familiarization. Familiarization leads to change of emotion. The main attempt must be to have a clear vision so that we can see Reality as it truly is. Only then can we solve the problems of life.

Cultivation of positive and noble emotions leads one towards Compassion, Contentment, Forgiveness and Self-discipline, in turn producing a calmness of Mind. When there are no ripples in the Mind, it remains clear in its vision of Reality. It sees a problem as it really is and is able to solve it easily. Problems would then be unable to disturb Peace of Mind. But if the Mind is weak, if it is assailed by fear and doubt or too much of unbridled emotion, it would find it difficult to face the arduous problems of life.

Life is bound to be full of problems. Even if there are no other problems, one's own body suffers from the problems of illness, decay and death. If problems are an integral part of our existence, we have to be fully prepared to face these with calmness, placidity and fortitude.

In this process of nurturing your inner self, it helps if you continue to remain in the spiritual and religious tradition in which you have been born. I am happy to see that Sathya Sai Baba has said that his mission is not to convert people to other traditions. He would like a Buddhist to be a better Buddhist, a Muslim to be a better Muslim and a Hindu to be a better Hindu.

One should be serious and sincere towards one's own faith. This generates a calm atmosphere both in the individual and the society. Our inner experiences reach a deeper dimension.

Quite often, I get the feeling that I am reciting verses that were taught to me by my mother and teacher in my



# News from Sri Sathya Sai International Center

childhood. On certain days, it seems to me that I am reciting the verses by rote and not with my full heart and soul in it. The recitation then becomes something of a burden. But later I realize that such daily practice, although it appears to be monotonous and repetitive, it silently and effortlessly builds my inner resources and strength and help me to become a true follower of the Buddha.

In this audience there is a plurality of faiths. This reality has to be accepted. India has always believed in ahimsa in terms of acceptance of other faiths. Gandhiji is a great example of inter-religious harmony. He was a staunch Hindu, but he had a deep respect for other faiths.

Buddha was also a true Indian in this sense. He studied the faiths prevalent in India in his time and practised a number of Hindu paths. After his enlightenment, he taught the four noble truths. Buddha's philosophy of interdependence is his unique contribution to world philosophy. The concept of interdependence is equally true in the fields of economy, politics, defence and so on. This gives a wider, holistic picture of any problem and brings us closer to reality.

Buddha believed in the human value of truth. He exhorted his followers to follow the truth. When he enunciated the four noble truths, he also analyzed the cause of suffering. His conclusion was that all suffering was due to ignorance. He accepted the practice of Samadhi. He also innovated the vipassana system, which can be a very effective method for reducing attachment. He had great respect for the other traditions.

This ideal of religious tolerance is still alive in India at the village level. There the followers of different faiths have lived together in peace and harmony for the last several

centuries. Multi-culturalism and religious tolerance is practised in their daily lives.

It is only in recent times that some politicians have created problems due to their low level of awareness. They have too much attachment, which leads to a narrowness of vision and a kind of shortsightedness. It is important that these few people are not allowed to destroy the rich 7000-year-old tradition of tolerance and harmony. We can all live together and work together at individual and community levels.

In his presidential address, Dr. Karan described the Dalai Lama as a unique combination of a natural sense of humour, compassion, wisdom, and an infectious childlike laugh. He demonstrated by his living example that Spirituality did not necessarily mean a prissy, acidic outlook on life. On the other hand, Spiritually-advanced souls were full of Ananda, which often bubbled over into their conversation.

The Dalai Lama was also the epitome of Compassion. Compassion was the essence of Buddhism. He had deep insight into the nature of the world and man. He had nurtured Tibetan Diaspora all over the world and helped them to organize themselves into dynamic communities.

But apart from being the apostle of Tibetan Buddhism, he had taken the Message of Love, Compassion and Peace to the people of the world. He could be described as a great Warrior of Peace. His services to the world community had been recognized through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Today the world was divided and split apart by fanaticism, hatred and war. Against these demonic forces, we were sorely in need of a

countervailing coalition for Peace, led by personalities like Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the Dalai Lama.

In order to strengthen the forces of Peace, it was necessary to first accept the fundamental fact that no religion could claim a monopoly on Truth. Nor could we wage wars, crusades and religious conflicts in the twenty-first century, in order to compel others to adopt our point of view. Today, war meant a nuclear conflict, which could easily result in the disappearance of humanity from the face of the globe. We find ourselves in an imperfect world and we have perforce to learn the art of living together in peace and harmony.

India had always nurtured religious harmony through the ages. Our seers

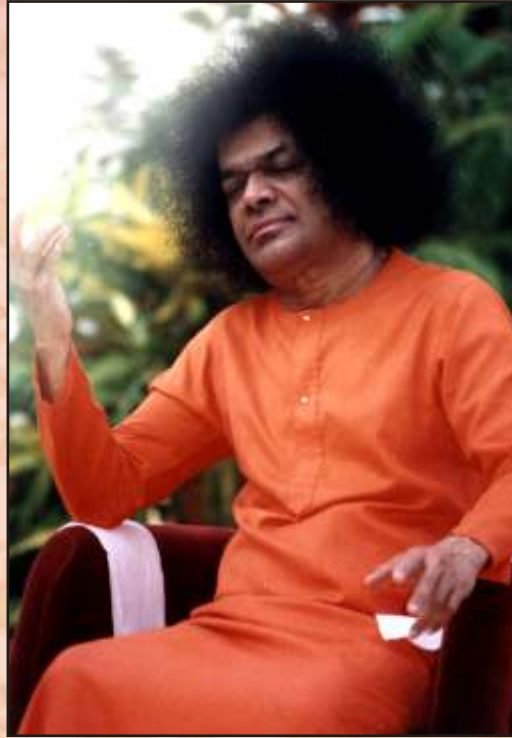


had declared long ago that Truth was One and the sages simply called it by different names. We needed to remember these insights that had served this country through the millennia of its existence.

Describing the discourse of the Dalai Lama as illuminating, Dr. Karan Singh expressed his happiness at the large presence of young people in the audience. With so much of misinformation around, it was refreshing to drink from a healing spring of knowledge, insight and wisdom.







*There's none in the world who has been able to see Me. They are seeing every thing and they are trying to understand everything, but they are not making the slightest attempt to understand what is divinity, which is present within them. When we talk of God we should know that God has no birth. Birth is only for the body. A body which is born has to die but God is above birth and death. He has no beginning, no middle and no end. He is neither born nor can He be destroyed. He is present everywhere in the form of Atma.*

– Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



**LOVE ALL SERVE ALL**