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BETWEEN YOU AND US

Dear Reader,

SaiRam and greetings to all of you from Prasanti Nilayam. The last major festival of the year, *Mahashivaratri*, is over and the air is now filled with rumours on when Swami will go to *Brindavan*, His summer residence at Bangalore. Of course, nobody knows when that will happen until it happens! The prayers from the devotees of Bangalore intensify as each day passes without His coming. After all, they have been waiting for this event for one long year.

Meanwhile, there is a look of despondency that is setting into the faces of the residents of Prasanthi Nilayam. There will no longer be those beautiful darshans. They can no longer hear His beautiful voice. Nor can they revel in the company of devotees from distant lands who bring with them tales of the Lord's compassion and love. It is as though a thick rainforest that had thunder showers everyday is suddenly about to turn into a Sahara desert for the next two months.

This is the power of the Lord's physical form. The sweetness of the proximity is addictive. Ask the *Gopis* and they will tell you all about it. As one devotee put it: *His omnipresence is sweet. But His presence is much sweeter.*

That is true, but the Lord is a tough task master. He says, 'I am not *angaswarupa*, I am *atmaswarupa*', meaning 'I am not this body you see, I am the *Self* immanent in all. How can you limit me to only one form?'

So, it is time for the Parthi people to experience His Omnipresence; to see Him in all people they meet; to experience Him in all that they do; to feel His GRACE in all moments of the day.

Yes, that is the word: GRACE. So beautiful, soothing and assuring. That is our cover story this time. Read it, enjoy it and experience His Grace.

In Sai Service
SGH team

SANATHANA DHARMA

Embodiments of Love! The reconstruction of man is indeed the reconstruction of the world. Only when man becomes better can the world be bettered. Only when the individual becomes good can society be happy. Progress in externals like political, economic, and social spheres, is not enough. The mind of man has to be reformed. This cannot be affected through food only. Materialists who argued that human problems can be solved by ensuring food, clothing and shelter reached their climax when in the Twentieth Century the atom bomb was exploded. Man can reach fullness only when the three lines of progress—material, mental and spiritual—are all pursued with earnestness.

Sanathana Dharma enables one to attain this Fullness. Really speaking, very few have grasped the uniqueness and the importance of this Religion. Nowadays, many elders and political leaders are afraid to utter even the name "Religion" before the gatherings they address. They shape their lives in accordance with a new order, which has no religious slant whatsoever. In fact, they have not understood what religion really means. They do not attempt to discover the significance and the role of religion. Many talk from platforms on Hinduism and *Sanathana* Faith but very few of them have understood the genuine core. The *Sanathana Dharma* is the very basis of living. It deals with the total personality. It embraces all Faiths and has established worldwide influence. *Sanathana* means Eternal; only a Dharma which can win universal acceptance can be named *Sanathana*. The religions we know about are all derived from a person or prophet who is adored as the Ideal. Islam has Muhammad, Christianity has Jesus, Buddhism has the Buddha. But *Sanathana Dharma* is not derived from or through a person. It is the primal essence of all other faiths. It is the essence of all the messages prophets proclaimed. It is welcomed by all mankind, for it welcomes all mankind. It is therefore to be deplored that some Indians boast selfishly, "*Sanathana Dharma* is our religion."

Newton, a Westerner, discovered after a series of experiments, that the earth had the force of gravitation. But, we cannot conclude that the earth had no such force until Newton's discovery. So too, though the principles of *Sanathana Dharma* are inherent in human consciousness, and have their impact all over the world, the people of Bharat have long practised and experienced them and discovered their value and validity. They have earned invaluable Bliss there from. Just as atomic science developed in one country and later spread to other countries, the *Sanathana* Faith, developed in India, has spread to other countries. Even a material process like atomic science cannot be held down in one place; in the same manner, this spiritual science too spreads all over the wide world.

Sanathana Dharma is bound to overcome today's rampant materialism, for it can harmonise the secular and the spiritual into a single way of life. It can bring together into closer kinship both man and God. It is based on the Divine which is the reality of the self. So, it is not limited to one country, one individual, one period of time, or one sect. It has a variety of procedures, points of view, disciplines and guidelines, in accordance with the special features of the region, the age, and the environment. This Faith, though first explicit on *Bharat*, between the Himalayan range and the three seas, has become a world faith, through its innate divine strength.

CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI - PART 7

(Continued from the previous issue)

SAI: Anything that comes from the cow, a little milk, butter, cheese, is alright for the spiritual aspirant. There is no harm to the cow, and it is of benefit to take it. In *Dwapara Yuga*, before *Kali Yuga*, 5680 years back, milk came into favour. Eleven thousand years is the full length of the *Kali Yuga*.

Visitor: Does *Kali Yuga* still continue?

SAI: Yes.

A Visitor: What should be done for my leg? It is still swollen and hurts.

SAI: Do not move around and climb on the hills. Take rest.

Visitor: Oh. When I climbed to that tree on the hill, I did not realize.

SAI: You must take care of the body. Body is like a boat. Life is like a river. On this side is the world; on the other side is God. And so, to reach the other side, that is to reach God, you must maintain this boat carefully. You can keep the boat for any length of time in the water; there is no danger. But if the water comes into the boat, then there is danger. You can remain in the world for any number of years, but don't let the world take hold. Don't let the world take hold of the inside world. There is the example of the lotus. It stays deep down in the mud. It comes up to the light, and it can't stay without water because it would die. But it does not get mixed up either with the mud or the water. You have seen the lotus; even if the water comes it just goes off again. Now, when they talk of God, they always say 'the lotus eyes, the lotus feet' because of this inner significance.

SAI: (to a visitor): If you had fashionable earrings would you wear them?

Visitor: Oh, yes, (Sai moves hand and there appears a set of golden, jeweled earrings which he gives to the visitor).

SAI: See, they are fashionable, but the value is not high. (Sai now moves over to where the visitor is sitting and himself places the earrings on her ears. Much exclamation from the individuals in the group.)

A Visitor: (who is somewhat bald) Swami, can you grow hair?

SAI: (starts to make some comment, but the visitor interrupts).

Visitor: No. Just a joke, Swami.

Translator: Swami can do anything. Swami says that He gives the earrings to the lady to bring joy in her. The more joy the more the disease will go.

SAI: That is the medicine for her. Joy is the medicine.

Visitor: I wanted to go to the hill to see the Kalpataru Tree.

SAI: This is the Kalpataru Tree. Swami is the Kalpataru Tree. Swami is able to give anything you want. If you want anything, here is the Tree. This is the gold shop also, and the camera shop! (*Much merriment from the group.*)

A Visitor: Swami's gifts are beautiful, but what if one wants peace of mind?

SAI: Only thoughts of God and intense love for Him bring peace. As worldly thoughts diminish, thoughts of God increase. Normally, the mind is all the time desiring these worldly things. As the desires are cut out one by one, the peace becomes stronger. You weave the threads and there is the cloth. If the threads are removed, there is no longer cloth. When there are Godly thoughts, there is peace of mind. Swami cannot give peace of mind; one has to work for it. We do meditation, spiritual practices in this temporary body. Though this body is temporary, you have to use temporary things to realize the Truth.

Visitor: But I wanted to know about peace.

SAI: Yes. If the desires are cut off one by one, then there is peace. When the desires go one by one then there is die-mind. Then there is peace of mind. Swami cannot give peace of mind; you must work for it yourselves. First, stop the questioning and ask, 'who am I?'. This is my body, my mind, my intelligence. But who is this 'My'? Who is it that claims the ownership of that which is declared to be 'mine'? 'My' indicates ownership. That 'My' is the life. As long as the life is in the body, there is this connection between the 'my' and the intellect - 'my' body, 'my' house, 'my' land. But the moment you remove the life from the body, there is no 'my' or sense of possession. Life is God.

'Who am I?' The answer is 'I am God'. The body comes and goes, but the *Atma* is permanent. The body has birth and death, but the spirit does not have any of these. You reach the stage where you say, 'I am God', but even there, there is duality, 'God and I'. That is not the full Truth. When we breathe, the breath makes the sound of 'So-Hum', 'He am I'. There is still the body consciousness, the 'I'. But in deep sleep, the declaration of 'He' and 'I' falls away and only 'O' and 'M' remain, 'Om'; there is only the One.

Hislop: One understands this and has for some time, but when does intellectual comprehension change to reality?

SAI: It will become reality only when you practise it intensely. You read so much. You do not have to practise all that you read. Take one or two things to practise and then it will become a reality to you. When you go to the hospital, there are so many medicines. You do not have to take all the medicines; just the ones that are needed for your malady. You do not have to eat all the medicines. Whatever kind of spiritual practices you sincerely want to do, you just take that medicine; do not collect all the other things. Because too much of this book knowledge just leads to doubts and confusion. You get too many doubts asking 'what is this?' and 'what is that?', and you waste a lot of time in this conflict.

H: What does the supreme Spiritual Doctor say is the correct medicine for me?

SAI: Meditation. For, in meditation you first get sense control. And yoga will help you with the body and when the mind is steady, concentration will come automatically. When you get such concentration, then you get peace of mind.

End of Interview

(To be continued)

THE FEELING BEHIND....

Abdullah was sleeping in a corner of a mosque in Mecca, when he was awakened by the conversation of two angels above his head. They were preparing a list of the Blessed. One angel was telling the other that a certain Mahbub of Sikandar City deserved to be ranked first, even though he had not come on pilgrimage to the Holy City. Hearing this Abdullah went to Sikandar City and found that he was a cobbler, repairing the shoes of people. He was famished and poor. His earnings barely sufficed to keep flesh and bone together. He had, by severe sacrifice, piled up a few coppers during the course of years. One day, he spent the entire treasure to prepare a special dish which he proposed to place before his enceinte wife as a surprise gift. When he was proceeding home with the gift he heard the cry of a starving beggar who seemed to be in the throes of extreme hunger. Mahbub could not proceed any further. He gave the pot containing the costly delicacy to the man and sat by his side, enjoying the blossoming of satisfaction on his haggard face. That act gave him a place of honour in the register of the Blessed, a place which pilgrims to Mecca who had spent millions of dinars in charity could not secure. The Lord cares for the feeling behind the act, not the fanfare and the fuss.

AMAZING GRACE

*Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd !-John Newton*

Grace is a word pregnant with meaning. Every one wants it but most of us cannot define it though we intuitively know what it means, at least roughly. But all of us know one thing: The seeker of Grace is the devotee, and the one who confers it is the Lord. H2H takes you on an exploration to discover the meaning of this profound term...

Few realise that Grace is something we really cannot do without. Without Grace nothing is possible, while with it nothing is impossible. It is well known that life on earth is sustained entirely by the energy received from the Sun. Yet, not many are aware that all these miraculous phenomena happen by the use of only a tiny fraction of the energy received from the Sun. At this stage, we turn to Swami for further remarks:

*Out of the energy coming from the Sun, we use only a tiny fraction
We are yet to make use of the rest of the vast solar energy. If by harnessing a minute fraction of solar energy, mankind can accomplish so much at present, how much more can we achieve for humanity if the entire energy can be utilised for the benefit of man?*

This means that if a single ray of God is got, a great deal can be achieved. The ancient sages prayed to God to shower the rays of His Grace on mankind. Even if a fragment of God's Grace is secured, a great deal can be accomplished. But without Divine Grace, nothing can be accomplished.

The *Kurukshetra* war amply illustrates how without God's Grace, all enterprises are doomed - Arjuna made the right choice and prayed for Krishna's presence on his side, while Duryodhana opted for Krishna's armies. Krishna provided *Grace* while the armies of Krishna supplied mere military strength and we know whose side won.

Since Grace is all important, the question naturally arises as to how one may earn it. Swami has the answer:

Let the purity, which you are, get manifested; endeavour to express it in your activities; that is what pleases me and wins my GRACE....

Love all, adore all and serve all. That is the Sadhana of worship, to win purity and earn Grace.

The seeker of Grace must not be bothered about his/her personal problems, but focus instead on the problems of others with a view to offering help. That is the proper feeling of Universality. Thus the admonition is:

Weep for Dharma if you want His Grace, and not about your problems

All are entitled to Divine Grace. In fact, Swami goes out of the way to draw people to His physical presence to personally shower His Grace. As He says:

Many of you have problems of health or mental worry of some son or the other. They are mere baits by which you have been brought here, so that you may contact the Grace and strengthen your faith in the Divine. Problems and worries are really to be welcomed as they teach you the lessons of humility and reverence.

Some people complain that they do not receive God's Grace. This is not true. Swami assures us that:

My Grace is always with you; it is not something given or taken. It is always given

God does not deny anyone; it is only you who deny God!

Swami often says that during *Darshan*, He invariably showers His Divine Grace equally on one and all, without any discrimination. But whether or not people receive it, depends entirely upon them. He gives two analogies to explain this. Supposing it rains and a person wants to collect the rainwater; then the person must do something about it. He must take an empty vessel and place it in the rain so that the rain water may collect inside; the larger the vessel, the more is the water collected. If the person takes the vessel out into the rain but foolishly places it upside down so that the mouth of the vessel does not face the sky but the ground, then one cannot expect any water to be collected in the vessel. Naturally, such an act would be considered to be the height of stupidity and yet this is precisely the kind of mistake committed by many of us when we go *for Darshan*. We go from great distances spending a lot of money and yet during *Darshan*, our attention is not on Baba but on all the trivial things happening around. This is where Swami's second analogy comes in.

He says that suppose one has a short-wave radio receiver. Present in the room where the radio is, are electromagnetic waves originating from various radio stations in the world - London, Moscow, Beijing, or whatever. If one wants to hear a particular station, then one must do two things; firstly one must switch the radio on, and next one must tune the radio to the particular station one wants to hear. Coming to *Darshan* is like switching on the radio but merely turning the radio on is not enough; one must also tune it. In the same way, one must not merely come to *Darshan* but tune one's mind to Swami just before, during, and for a while at least, after the *Darshan*. The bigger the vessel, the more is the rainwater collected; the better the tuning, the clearer is the reception. In the same way, the larger the heart, the more is the Grace received.

Many are under the mistaken notion that only when the Lord answers specific requests of the devotee (favourably!) is Grace conferred. This is an erroneous view. We hardly ever realise how much Grace we are receiving from God all the time. Good health - where does it come from? Is not good health due to the Grace of God? And most of us enjoy good health without even praying for it! Do we ever give any thought to what a matchless blessing it is to have eyesight? Do we ever appreciate that this too is due to the Grace of God? Do we ever thank God for this blessing? Are we conscious of how helpless and crippled we would be without our limbs? We are truly blessed in numerous ways and yet we take all these for granted, scarcely ever appreciating that all these blessings also represent God's Grace.

How much Grace does one actually receive? Swami says that it depends entirely on the track record of the person.

Good deeds, good thoughts, good feelings and constant repetition of and reflection on the name of God and the Glory it seeks to express —these determine one's entitlement to Divine Grace. Swami amplifies with an analogy.

Sometimes, the Bank will give you overdrafts, so that you tide over temporary crisis. The extent of the overdraft is settled by the Manager with reference to your reliability and capabilities. It is the same with Anugraha, the Grace that God will confer on you when you have earned it

In other words, it all depends on one's "credit-worthiness"!

There is no limit to the Grace one can receive and the more one receives, the more one can achieve in life. In fact, with the Grace of God, the impossible becomes possible. Swami often quotes Tyagaraja who sang: "Is it at all possible for a monkey to leap across the ocean without God's Grace?" Swami adds that therefore it is that Tyagaraja also sang, "Oh Rama! With Your *Anugraha* (Grace), what can the *Nava Grahas* (the nine planets) do to me?" Astrology is based on the premise that the planetary positions affect one's future and destiny. But Tyagaraja says that with God's Grace, the effects of the planets can be totally nullified and over-ridden.

Whether we are aware of it or not, God's Grace is always with us. It is therefore our duty to be conscious of all the blessings bestowed on us and make use of them properly. Wealth is a particularly important example. People often think that they have become rich on account their shrewd investments, business acumen, wheeling and dealing, or whatever. Not true! If a person is wealthy, it is entirely because of God's Grace. The rich must be conscious of this; not only that but they must also realise that the wealth they possess has actually been given by God to be held in Trust for Him and is meant to be used for His work. Thus the wealth acquired must not be frittered away in gambling and other pleasure-seeking activities, but must be used for charitable causes. As Swami emphasises,

Do not get elated at the riches, status, authority, and intelligence, which have been given to you on trust, so that they may benefit others. They are all signs of His Grace, opportunities for service and symbols of responsibility.

If one wants the Lord's Grace in abundant measure, then one must ensure that ego is extinguished. Rainwater does not accumulate on a slope; it just flows away. Even so, the Grace of God does not descend in the hearts of the haughty and the vain; it dawns only in the hearts of the humble and the gentle. The Lord will not enter the heart tainted with egoism. Swami puts it this way:

Once you get the Grace of God, it is impossible for you to have egoism, for how can light and darkness exist together at the same time, in the same place? They cannot.

Swami says that God's Grace is the only thing worth winning or earning in life, and adds:

It is all you have ever to attain, it is your only goal, the only object, the only purpose; the consummation of your life is to earn His Grace.

To the devotees who throng to Prasanti Nilayam in tens of thousands, Swami cautions:

/ am advising you to garner and treasure all the Grace and the Bliss you can while you may, so that you can sustain yourselves by ruminating on the sweetness of the memories and the experience.

An important remark must be added at this stage. Many think that only things favourable can be considered as signs of Grace and that things unfavourable are signs of punishment. This is a wrong interpretation. Good and bad, favourable and unfavourable are OUR interpretations; with God, everything is good and favourable. "How can that be?" one might wonder. Swami has explained that. He says that God is like a doctor. When a person is sick, the doctor administers medicines which are often bitter; but they are meant to cure the patient. In the same way, when so-called misfortune visits us, it is part of the treatment and meant for our good, although we might not recognise it as such. In other words, both the so-called good and the so-called bad must be welcomed equally as signs of Grace. In this context, Swami observes:

In order to escape being tossed about on the waves of joy and grief, one should cultivate unconcern, an attitude of welcoming either, as a sign of Grace. Ramakrishna said that if you must avoid the sticky fluid in the jack-fruit from contacting your fingers when you peel it, you have to apply a few drops of oil on them. So too, said he, "If you do not want the World and its reactions to stick to you, have a few drops of unconcern applied on your mind."

It was mentioned earlier that Grace is sought by the devotee and conferred by the Lord. Does this not smack of Dualism? What happens to the concept of Grace in *Advaitam*? This very question was posed once to Vivekananda by his disciple. Vivekananda's answer was follows:

But when we get there [to the stage of Advaita], who will be merciful, and to whom, where there is no law of causation? There the worshipper and the object of worship, the meditator and the object of meditation, the knower and the known, all become one - call that Brahman if you will. It is all one uniform homogeneous entity.

The concept Grace ceases to exist in that final stage when everything merges into one universal homogeneity. There is neither the Lord nor the devotee. Only Grace!

But for almost all of us, that stage is still very far off! So let us pray for His Grace by recalling a song that Swami wrote in the 1950s:

*Without Thy Grace can a man be Man
And win the goal he longs to reach?*

*A pundit decked in titles (he may be)
Able to foil all his foes;*

*A poet spinning lines (he may be)
Most musical to the ear;*

*A lone recluse in a cave (he may be)
Able to starve a year;*

*A pious simple soul (he may be)
Counting fast his beads;*

*A wondrous twisting Yogi (he may be)
Breathing right and left;*

*An aged stooping stump (he may be)
Dipped in every ghat;*

*A bearded painted priest (he may be)
Bedecked from top to toe;*

*An ascetic living on air (he may be)
Wandering, without care;*

*A pilgrim come to Parthi (he may be)
Singing Thy glory there;*

*Without Thy Grace, can man be Man,
And reach the Goal he needs must reach?*

GODFATHER EINSTEIN AND BABA THE AVATAR

PART II

-Mark R. Abrams, Vermont, USA

In August 1989 Bhagavan invited our group of twenty-one Americans for an interview. I resolved that, with His Grace, I would leave it knowing more about my connection to Einstein.

During the interview Baba gave everyone private time, answered questions on all aspects of personal life, and blessed Marsha's and my entry into advanced studies in psychology. He materialized a diamond pendent for her, and a red, white and blue-on-gold pendent for my daughter Nilima. I was sitting next to Baba in the same position as in 1978 and was filled to overflowing.

Again, I had an opportunity to pose my question about the meaning of my relationship to Einstein. I took the opportunity, and Swami revealed some personal information that I will ponder for some time to come. (After the Interview, one of those present said that the thought occurred to him that the spirit of Einstein might have also been present as a participant.)

Einstein's Regret

Swami then went on to say the following to the group:

"Einstein is a body. That body is dead. He was a very good man. Einstein was very patient. Peace, Peace, Peace. He was always thinking of Bhagavan."

Swami, in an apparent reference to Einstein's pain that his work laid the foundation for nuclear weapons, said *"Einstein made 'gunpowder' and felt bad at the end (of, his life), —he said: I have made a mistake, this was a mistake."*

Swami: *"What is a scientist! Science is the study of creation. Spirituality is studying the Creator."*

[Swami draws a circle with His finger on the wall:] "*Man as scientist works from senses down. Man as Spirit works from senses up.*" [Points to top of circle] "*See, science is only a 'C,' (tracing one half of a circle) but Spirit is full circle. It is the difference between this and that.*"

Swami concluded by saying: "*If science were more spiritual, it would know more. Science is no love. Science tries to get the exact truth but has no goal; it is random. Always in the laboratory. There is no love in science. Study Spirit! Spirit has a goal. Know yourself and you know everything.*"

Einstein on 'God And Man'

Following are some of Albert Einstein's thoughts on what he considered to be most important in life: *closeness to God and love of humanity*. We can readily see how they correspond to the modes of consciousness, and attitudes of open-heartedness, *sadhana* and service Swami strives to teach us.

These thoughts of Einstein's and the exploration of the spiritual implications of his work to follow, illustrate how in some ways he can be seen as having helped usher in the Golden Age of Sai. I perhaps continuing to serve as an ongoing instrument in its fulfillment as well.

"That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

"The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and sense in which he has attained to liberation from the self."

"A human being is a part of the whole, called by us the 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty... the striving for such an achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security."

"I am happy because I want nothing from anyone. I do not care for money. I do not crave praise."

"I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon. I want to know His thoughts, the rest are details."

"The principal art of the teacher is to awaken the joy in creation; and knowledge."

"The ideals which have lighted me on my way and time after time given me new courage to face life cheerfully have been Truth, Goodness, and Beauty."

(This corresponds to the Vedantic dictum to which Bhagavan Baba frequently refers that the characteristics of Divinity are Sathyam, Sivam, and Sundaram; i.e., Truth, Goodness and Beauty. These ancient Sanskrit words also form the title of Prof. Kasturi's biography of the Avatar.)

"The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the source of all true science."

"The feeling from which true scientific research draws its spiritual sustenance"... "is a sort of intoxicating joy and amazement at the beauty and grandeur of this World... I maintain that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incitement to scientific research."

Einstein on the 'limits of reason'

"Pure logical thinking cannot yield us any knowledge of the empirical world; all knowledge of reality starts from experience and ends in it. Propositions arrived at by pure logical means are completely empty."

"Since, however, sense perception only gives information of this external world indirectly, we can only grasp the latter by speculative means."

"I arrived at none of my major theories through rational thought."

This last statement is so profound in its implications that it bears comment. It clearly points to the limitations of the Western worship of the logical, rational mind as the sine qua non of existence. It points up the fact that the greatest Western scientist in four hundred years, after reaching traditional science's outer limits could gain the insight he craved only by transcending the mode of thinking that brought him to those limits. Only then, through the faculty of "*nonrational Intuition or openness*" could he accurately perceive some of the underlying reality of the universe.

What about the Future?

To Einstein's sadness, a major response to his discoveries about relativity has been fear about the future of the planet itself.

A question arises: *Does a means exist to view or make use of Einstein's insights in a positive way—one that will truly be a "blessing to mankind, and not a curse?"*

I am not a physicist or mathematician; but I offer several thoughts about this question.

I believe that not only can the example of Einstein's life stand as a blessing to humankind, but that one of the most profound expressions of his work can serve as well: the formula $E = mc^2$ (energy equals mass into the velocity of light squared).

We are accustomed to think of this formula in primarily negative terms—the unleashing of the atom's destructive potential. Paradoxically, I feel that it embodies something of a most heartening spiritual nature as well.

$E = mc^2$ mathematically expresses the unity to which Swamiji frequently refers, through its having scientifically established that matter and energy—the tangible and the invisible—are *wholly equivalent and interchangeable i e.*, that mass is simply concentrated energy; and that energy is mass minus form.

MATTER, ENERGY AND SPIRIT

Bhagavan Baba places great emphasis on teaching us that the whole of existence, matter, energy and spirit, is One, stemming from the Supreme, Indivisible, Absolute. He asserts that what we

dualistically think of as 'Matter versus Spirit' are in reality "two sides of the same coin", inseparable from their source in Divine Consciousness.

In all of His communications Swami invites us to reduce our fascination for the world of matter and to get rid of the illusion that *only* what can be perceived by the senses is real and valuable. He asks us to develop awareness of, and reliance upon, the *Atma*- our invisible, Indwelling Divinity.

Baba's teachings help us realize the truth that *matter*, much less the energy from which it is derived, could not have been originally created from matter: that matter being congealed energy, is "nothing but gravitationally trapped light" and itself derived from consciousness. This Consciousness is Spirit—*Divine Thought*—which is quite invisible in and of itself, but is in fact the bedrock of existence and the source from which the Mayic illusion of duality springs.

If we consider Spirit to be the highest manifestation of energy, I think Einstein's formula can stand as a source of confirmation of the reality of Spirit to a predominantly materialistic world which doubts the existence of a Loving Intelligence.

If all things are composed of energy, then it stands to reason that they should be subject to the effects of energy; if matter can release energy then energy should influence matter. We can see this principle in operation at all levels on the hierarchy between the grossest matter to the subtlest energy, or Divine Thought. Energy as energy cannot be seen. It can only be known through its impact upon matter. Electricity, or the energy produced in a car engine cannot be seen, yet we would be lost without their effects.

At a subtler level, the human mind is a form of energy whose work manifests in both positive and negative ways. Negatively, it is well established that the mind can contribute to such mental and psychosomatic illnesses as depression, or high blood pressure and ulcers.

Benign influence is apparent in the mind's healing response to such non-materialistic interventions as therapeutic conversation, or the presence of compassion or love. How much more so the profound, demonstrable effects of cosmic or spiritual energy upon matter, (from invisible to "visible") in terms of the transformation of human thinking and functioning? Though one cannot generally see spiritual energy (in the form of God's intentionality or Grace) many of us have seen and benefited from its effects in our own lives and those of countless others through the boundless Grace of our beloved Sai.

To expand: Starting with denser forms of energy, we might consider Einstein's discovery $E = mc^2$ as a metaphorical "two-sided coin", with one side dark, the other light.

We are quite familiar with the "dark side"—nuclear fission. The concept of a "light" side could be considered along the following lines of thought.

On the "dark" side, it seems that by tracing *matter*, visible and tangible, to its most extreme potentiality, we observe that it transmutes into energy, having a *destructive* effect upon other matter (nuclear fission).

If we do the reverse, and trace *energy*, diffuse and invisible, back through its various forms; from radiation, combustion, electricity, and human thought, we come to its ultimate state, Divine Thought, which we know can exert a most *constructive* influence upon matter.

BABA'S PRESENCE

Einstein's formula accomplishes two things: It teaches the fundamental truth that "All" is in fact "One", and that the various forms of this One can be used either for our annihilation or for our highest good, depending on the consciousness with which it is used.

Paradoxically, $E = mc^2$ provides both the means to destroy the world, and scientific validation of a liberating truth that everything is interconnected and stems from one source. (The threat of the former perhaps also motivating us to seek the latter). *That Source, Reality which Einstein laboured to discover, has come among us in the form of Bhagavan Baba.*

While the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, granted Albert Einstein rare insight into some of the workings of His creation, and though Einstein revolutionized science and our perception of reality, like any of us, he was not fully able to grasp all aspects of his favourite subject of study.

Like Spinoza, Einstein asserted his belief in an impersonal God saying, "I can't believe in a God who gets involved in the affairs of men." Ironically, though he helped in preparing us for the Presence by demonstrating the essential unity of all creation, like Moses, Albert Einstein glimpsed but did not enter the Promised Land: he died never knowing that the Eternal Principle he sought had actually come among us.

Interestingly, and consistent with many aspects of both physics and spirituality, an element of paradox exists regarding this question. As those who have come into the orbit of Sri Sathya Sai Baba can well attest, the Creator is infinitely multi-faceted and unpredictable; at one moment seemingly detached and remote "from the affairs of men" while at another (if not simultaneously) intimately involved with them, down to the minutest details of their lives...

Baba's Presence here among us, perhaps the greatest expression of His love, and far transcending our limits knowledge, represents the perfect synthesis of energy and matter, time and space. To gaze upon Him is in fact to see energy and matter combined in their most mysterious and perfect form.

When we consider the fact the Baba has given us His personal assurance that the world will not end in nuclear annihilation, we can know that we are beyond the shadow of the fearful implications of $E = mc^2$ and in the light of His Divine Presence, which beckon us to realize that energy, as Light, Love—God—is our only Reality. Firmly rooted in this truth, we can confidently proceed with our individual roles in Swami's transformation of the present era into a Golden Age of Divine Consciousness, utterly permeated by His Love.

May Sai bless us with the faith and skill to traverse this world, always remembering who He declares we are: *A true synthesis of matter and Diving Energy.*

"The world was created by the word of God so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear."

—Saint Paul

—Mark Abrams, U.S.A

(The first part of this article on Einstein and Baba appeared in our March, 2005 issue).

THE COSMIC FORM

By Acharya Vinobaji

Vinobaji (1895-1982) was a spiritual visionary of India, whose spirituality had a pragmatic stance with intense concern for the deprived. He was a brilliant scholar who could knowledge accessible to ordinary people. He was Gandhiji's ardent follower, who could retain originality in thinking.

There is a chapter called Viswaroopa Sandarshana Yoga in the Bhagawath Githa. In the chapter is found a beautiful and entrancing description of the Divine Cosmic form. Though all this is true, I am not particularly drawn to this Vishvarupa, the cosmic form. I am quite satisfied with a small image. I have learned to enjoy the sweetness of the small and common but beautiful image before me. The Lord is not cut up into little parts. It does not seem to me that the form of the Lord that we can see is only a part of Him and that the rest is left out; but I see that the Lord who pervades this vast universe is present in His fullness in the little image, in the grain of sand. There is no question of greater or less. The sweetness of the ocean of nectar is found in every drop of it. I have got a tiny little drop of Amrita (nectar of immortality); I feel that I should enjoy forever the sweetness of that drop. I chose the example of Amrita, and not of milk or water, on purpose. A cup of milk is just as sweet as a pitcher of it; but though the taste is the same, the nutritive power is different. But there is no difference between a drop of Amrita and a cup of it. Not only the sweetness but the nourishment is the same in the sea of nectar and in a drop of it. If we drink one drop of it, we gain the fullness of Amritatva, immortality.

In the same way, the same beauty and holiness that there is in the cosmic form of the Lord is also present in the little image. If I am not able to recognise wheat when I am shown a handful of it, of what use is it to put before me a sackful! If I do not recognise Him in the little models before me, how can I recognise Him in all His vastness? Does size make any difference? To understand the small form is to understand the big. Hence, I feel no desire that the Lord should show to me His cosmic form. Nor have I, like Arjuna, the right to ask for it. Moreover, it is not as if what is seen by me is only a part of the cosmic form. If someone brought a part torn off from a picture we cannot imagine from it the whole picture. But the Lord is not made up of parts in this way; one of Him cannot be cut off from the rest. Even in a little image, the whole of that infinite Supreme is contained. What is the difference between a small photograph and a big one? Everything that is found in the big one is found in the small too. The small one is not a portion, a fragment of the big. A letter means the same whether it is written big or it is written small. This is the meaning behind image-worship.

Many people have opposed image-worship. Foreigners, and even thinkers of our own country, have found fault with it. But the more I think of it, the more I realise its beauty. What is the meaning of it? Image-worship is the Vidya, the art of experiencing the whole universe in a little object. Is it wrong to learn the Vidya which helps us to see the whole world in a little village? This is not mere imagination; it is a matter of direct experience. What there is in the cosmic form, all of it is contained in a little image, in a grain of sand. In that lump of clay is everything - the mango, the banana, wheat, gold, copper, and silver. All the world is in that grain of sand. Just as an actor in a small troupe appears again and again on the stage taking different roles, the Lord appears in the universe. Like a playwright who writes his own play and himself takes all the parts in it, the Lord produces a play without end, and Himself acts playing the parts of countless characters on His stage. If we understand one chapter in this infinite drama, we shall understand them all.

The basis of image-worship is the same as that of metaphors and similes in poetry. When we see a circle or a sphere we are filled with joy, for there is an order, a shapeliness in it. This shapeliness is a divine quality. The Lord's creation is beautiful in all its parts and relations. There is perfect harmony in it. The sphere is an image of the

shapeliness of the Lord. But even so is the twisted tree in the undergrowth of the forest. There is in it the freedom of the Lord. This tree knows no bondage. Who can bind the Lord? The Lord who is beyond all bonds is in that contorted, unshapely tree. A tall straight column reminds us of the Lord. In the highly wrought ornamented pillar we see the Lord who has painted the sky with stars. In a well-trimmed garden we see the restraint of the Lord and in the primeval forest we see His grandeur and freedom. In both we find joy. Are we then mad? No, there is joy in both, because there is in each a quality of the Lord. The power in the smooth Salagram is also in the rough Linga taken from the Narmada. Hence, if I do not see the form of the Lord in all its majesty, it does not matter.

It is because the Lord is present in every object through a distinct quality, that we find joy in it, we feel at one with it. This joy is not without a cause. Why do we feel joy? We are somehow related to it, and hence the joy. The mother's heart dances at the sight of her child, because she knows the kinship. The Lord in me is also in the object. To strengthen this kinship is to increase joy. There is no other means for joy. Begin to establish the link of love everywhere, and then watch the miracles happen. You will see then in every grain and every drop the Lord who pervades the boundless universe. When we have the power to see this, what else do we need? For this, however, it is essential to discipline and train the senses. When the desire for enjoyment goes and the holy outlook of love is gained, then we shall see God alone in all objects. This idea is described beautifully in the Upanishads. What is the colour of the Atman? What can we say about this? The Rishi says with love, "yathaa ayam indragopah." The Atman is like this scarlet silk-soft insect the Indragopa. When one looks at the Indragopa, what joy there is! What is the source of this joy? That which exists in me, exists in the Indragopa too. If there is no kinship between us, how could there be joy? The beautiful Atman within me is within the Indragopa too. Why do we find joy in comparison? Why do we use similes? Why do we find joy in them? We use similes because things are alike, and we find joy in the likeness. If the things compared have nothing in common, where is the joy in it? If someone says that salt is like pepper, we should think him mad. But if someone says that the stars are like flowers, we see the likeness and enjoy it. When we say, "Salt is like pepper," we do not experience the likeness, but to one whose vision has become wide enough to see the same Lord in the salt and in the pepper, the question, "What is salt like?" and the answer, "It is like pepper," will bring an experience of joy. The warp and the woof of all the objects in the world is the Lord's form. To see it, where is the need for the vision of the cosmic form?

(Extracted from Talks on the Githa by Vinobaji)

**THE DIVINE STORY OF
SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI - Part 4
(continued from the previous issue)**

MRS PATEL: Only now am I able to understand what you said. Tiny fingers may light the lamp but the lamp can illumine a whole mountain! How nicely a small one like you could explain a Truth as vast as the very ocean! Come on, have this; take this *Prasaadam*! All of you also have *Prasaadam*. When you eat, I shall take it that the Lord Himself has partaken of the offering Oh God, what else can I say?!

SCENE 3

Young Sai is standing before a Mosque, surrounded by his friends. He is explaining the Hindu scriptures to them.

YOUNG SAI: *Parithraanaya Saadhunaam, Vinashaya Dushkrutam, Dharma Smapstaapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge*. For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the re-establishment of *Dharma*, I incarnate from Age to Age. That is what the *Bhagavad Gita* says.

MUSLIM BOY: That is OK. But do you know what the *Quoran* says?

YOUNG SAI: *Quoran*, *Gita*, and the Bible - what difference does it make? They all say the same thing.

ANOTHER MUSLIM BOY: You are saying all sorts of things. We don't understand what they mean.

YOUNG SAI: I shall explain. For establishing *Dharma* or Righteousness, God Almighty incarnates in every Age. You may call Him Ram or Rahim, Christ or Krishna, it does not matter. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD FOR ALL!

Meanwhile, worship goes on inside the Mosque.

YOUNG SAI: God is the same for all of us; we worship the same God. There are so many fruits like bananas, mangoes and so on. They have different shapes and colours, but are they not all sweet? In the same way, though people may follow different religions, they are all one.

The worship over, the Muslims emerge from the Mosque. One of them shouts at Young Sai.

ELDER/MUSLIM: Hey you! Stop! Children, if you listen to this fellow, you would all get spoilt. Come on, move and get going!

ANOTHER ELDER: [to children gathered there] Go away!

SCENE 4

Young Sai and His friends are now gathered before a Hindu Temple where worship is going on inside. Meanwhile, a young boy is looking at a paper spinning wheel that Sai is holding in His hand.

YOUNG SAI: [to the boy] What is it that you are looking at?

A BOY: At this spinning wheel. ... Looks nice.

YOUNG SAI: Do you know what this is? It is the Divine Wheel of Lord Vishnu. Do you know how it rotates?

BOY: No, please tell us.

YOUNG SAI: Simple. When the wind blows, it rotates! When the wind blows, the leaves flutter, ripples are produced on the water in the lake, and this wheel also rotates. This power called wind has no feelings of difference; it does not care whether it is a leaf, or water or a wheel. It penetrates everywhere and produces motion.

BOY: Why are you telling us all this?

YOUNG SAI: Because you wanted to know how the wheel rotates – that is why! Wind power does not differentiate. In the same way, Divine Power penetrates everywhere. Allah, Christ, Krishna, - these are just different names for that same Divine Power that is in every one of us. We are all boys but we have different names; one is Rama, another is Rahim, and a third one is David. Religions also are like that. We all belong to the same caste, the caste of humanity. The blades in this wheel are like the religions. The force that moves them is God. And the one holding the wheel is the devotee of God!

Meanwhile, an elderly Hindu comes there.

AN ELDER: [to Sai] Enough of this discourse! (To others) Let's go.

By way of a reply, Young Sai begins chanting from the *Quoran*. This irritates the elder.

ELDER: [Mockingly imitates the *Quoran* recitation.] You are reciting the *Quoran*. Do you know the meaning?

YOUNG SAI: Yes, I know. The meaning is: **God is only ONE!**

ANOTHER MAN: [to Sai] Oh, you have come again! We don't need you discourses in this sacred temple. [to others near him] He is a small boy but tries to talk about big things!

YET ANOTHER ELDER: He should not be allowed to come to this temple.

ANOTHER MAN: There is no use in all this tall talk.

YOUNG SAI: [to the first elder who challenged Him] Whether you like it or not, whether you get angry or not, did I not make you recite the *Quoran*? God is the same for all! Everything is God! God is everywhere!

MAN: Go home!

Sai leaves chanting the *Quoran*.

ANOTHER MAN: Give him some room, and he will go beyond limits!

YET ANOTHER MAN: Yes!

SCENE 5

Patel's house. The father has heard reports about Young Sai talking philosophy near places of worship and causing annoyance to village elders.

PATEL: [to Sai] Come here you fellow!You have become a big problem for me! Caste, religion, and culture cannot be changed by one person. It is not your job to talk about religion and such things. Everyone tells me you are mad. I care for you like my very eyes but you? You are acting too big for your age. You are a just small boy; yet, I am not able to drive sense into you. I don't know who can do it.

MRS.PATEL: Did you not say he is a small boy? Why then are you getting so upset? These people may be old in age but they are short on wisdom. Our boy is tender as a leaf; yet, he is doing what the elders ought to be. They should be ashamed of themselves, instead of objecting to what he is doing.

PATEL: Mothers can never see the faults of their children. What may seem good to us may not appear so to others. If we get a bad name because of him, I cannot bear it.

MRS. PATEL: Please listen. This child is a gift of God. Perhaps it is God's will that one day in the future, this boy will do enormous good to the world. Therefore, as long as there are good people around us, no harm will come to our dear child. He won't get us a bad name.

PATEL: Let us see what he will do in the future.

MRS. PATEL: Don't worry, I'll take care of that. (To son) Look my dear son. You should always listen to me and obey me. You should not bring a bad name to your father.

YOUNG SAI: Mother, I did not do anything wrong. I merely said that all are equal in the eyes of God - that's all!

MRS. PATEL(to husband): Did you hear? This is the lesson that he taught!

A crowd of villagers march to Patel's house. They are all angry and upset by what Young Sai is doing. One of them knocks on the door of Patel's house.

MAN: Mr. Patel!

PATEL: Who is that? [Opens the door.]

PATEL: [Asks the crowd] Why have you all come?

MAN (MUSLIM): Mr. Patel, this is not good. Your boy comes to the Masjid and chants Hindu *Mantras*. It is wrong and you must warn him. In the Masjid one must say *Allah Ho Akbar*, and not invoke the name of Rama.

ANOTHER MAN (HINDU): Mr. Patel! Is it right to chant the *Quoran* in Rama's temple? Where the *Gita* is to be recited, is it meaningful to discuss the *Quoran*?

YET ANOTHER MAN (MUSLIM): Brother Patel, you are welcome to study your *Bhagavad Gita*. Likewise, we would like to study the *Quoran* in the Mosque. There is no need to take the *Gita* to the Mosque and the *Quoran* to the Temple!

A PERSON IN THE GROUP: Everyone has his own beliefs and religion. This boy is small and yet to be educated. You should warn him not to talk about religious matters. It is neither good for him nor for you!

PATEL: Hold on! Let's not get lost in debates about his preaching, talking big for his age and such matters. This boy is young, and does not know about caste and religion. For some unknown reason, he is overwhelmed by devotion for God in this tender age. He is making all our children chant the name of God. Can there be a greater good fortune?

A MAN: Are you suggesting that your son's so-called devotion is good?

PATEL: Who can say it is bad? The question of devotion being good or bad does not arise. He is talking about God and saying that God is the same for all. Instead of condemning him, we should all be happy and proud that God has blessed this boy with such wisdom at such an early age.

A MUSLIM: Mr. Patel, it is enough if you instruct you son not to chant *Mantras* in our Masjid; I will be satisfied with that.

ANOTHER MAN: It is not proper for you to defend your son like this. A Hindu is a Hindu, and our tradition and culture are ours.

PATEL: You should not look at all this purely from a worldly point of view. The mistake is ours, and not his. It is only with an inner view that we can understand the Truth that all religions are basically the same. Blades of grass should not criticise the mighty Banyan tree!

A MAN: Look Mr. Patel, we are not interested in your arguments. If your son recites once again the *Quoran* in our temple, we will ex-communicate you and your family. Take care!

The villagers leave after giving the warning. Mrs. Patel now joins her husband.

MRS. PATEL: [To Young Sai] Son, did you hear what they said? We don't want the temple, or the Masjid or the Church. From now on, you should never go there again!

PATEL: Did you see what happened? You described this boy as a gift of God. This boy's knowledge and wisdom are not comprehensible to these people. The fault is not his but that of society.....Son, did you hear what they said? Did you hear? ...From now on, don't go that side, don't go that side,don't go... (collapses).

Mrs Patel is shocked.

MRS. PATEL: Please, please sit down; take it easy!Son, hurry and get some water!
.....What happened to you?!

Patel breathes his last.

To be continued

GITA FOR CHILDREN - PART 6

(Continued from the previous issue)

35. 'Arjuna, just look at Me. I am the Lord and Master of the Three Worlds. Verily, I have no duties to perform. And yet, donning a human form, I am engaged in service to humanity all the time. Don't you see? Right now, I am driving your chariot? Is this really My job?'

36. 'Why do I serve when I really don't have to? To set an example Arjuna, to set an example. My Life is My Message! And My policy is to Love All and Serve All!! Got it?'

37. 'Supposing I did not do what I am doing. Do you know what would happen? People would start saying, "Look, God in human Form is not bothered about action. May be that is what God wants of us too!" Imagine what would happen to the world if people start abandoning their duties. It is to prevent this disaster that I perform duties, though in reality I have none to perform.'

38. 'Inaction is bad and laziness is rust and dust. It is to teach that lesson that I always keep Myself busy doing something or the other, of course always for the benefit of others. I never do anything that would bring advantage to Me personally. Selfless Love is My Guiding Principle, every second of My life.'

39. 'So, Arjuna, I hope after all this lengthy explanation, you have understood that the Paths of Action and of Wisdom are not two disjointed options; just that they represent two different starting points for reaching the same goal. Some start from Action and then progress to Wisdom while others attain Wisdom and then go into Action, that is all. Either way, the circle is complete.'

40. 'You will notice of course that many things are common to the ideal followers of the two Paths; they both are totally free from ego. The man following the Path of Action sees God as different from himself, at least to start with. He lives entirely for God and sacrifices his ego so that he may win the Love of God. The man on the Path of Wisdom identifies himself totally with God and since ego has no place in God, he automatically becomes devoid of ego. So both types of devotees of the Lord get rid of ego, each in his own style. Once ego is got rid of, one becomes one with God. And that, if you remember is the goal to be attained.'

41. 'So you see the important thing is to get rid of ego, and as I just told you, it can be done by two different methods. Hence both Paths lead to the same goal. However, if you ask Me which of these two paths is better suited to you, I would unhesitatingly pick the Path of Action or *Karma Yoga* as it is called. In fact, *Karma Yoga* is the preferred choice for 99.99999....% of humanity!'

42. Arjuna silently digests all this and then slowly asks, 'Krishna, what You say is very clear no doubt but there is one thing I still do not understand. Why is it that people are driven to sin even though they know it is wrong? What is amazing is that sometimes people seem to commit sin even against their will! It seems there is some stronger force. What is that?'

43. Krishna replies, 'The short answer to your question is that the force you are talking about is the force exerted by the internal enemies. Take, for example, a man addicted to drinking. To start with he

did not know the taste of alcohol. One fine day, the enemy called desire tempted this man saying, “Listen, you don’t know what you are missing! Give this a try!!” The man falls for this evil advice and soon finds that he is hooked. Later he realises that his health is being ruined and that death would soon catch up with him but still he is not able to give up drinking. These internal enemies are very powerful and that is why they should not be given even a toehold in the first place.’

44. ‘Arjuna, desire is man’s mortal enemy. It is like a raging fire, a huge unstoppable conflagration. Desire sneaks in by devious means and later hides in the senses and the Mind. Once it gets in, it can smother even Wisdom; that is how even very Wise men have been dragged to ruin. You must therefore slay this evil dragon called desire, well before it gets hold of you!’

45. ‘You might think that what I am asking you to do is difficult but do not worry. Just trust in Me and throw desire into the Fire of Knowledge for it to be totally destroyed. People perform all sorts of *Yajna* at great expense; no need for that. Just burn away your bad qualities, starting with desire – that is more than enough. Do it as an act of Love for Me; if you do, then be assured that I shall help you, all the way to success. Of this you can be sure!’

To be continued

A FRIEND FROM UGANDA

Ugandan Minister Meets Sri Sathya Sai Baba to Express Gratitude for Providing 80 Bore wells for the Rural Poor in Uganda

Honourable Maria Mutagamba, Minister of State for Water, Uganda, travelled from Kampala to Ananthapur district in Andhra Pradesh to know first hand and learn from the Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply project.

Hon. Mutagamba, who is also the Chairperson of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW), was on a study visit to India from 12 to 15 February 2005, sponsored by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). UN-HABITAT and the Asian Development Bank jointly conducted an independent evaluation of Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply project last year. The evaluation report commended this unique project of its kind which is supplying safe water to more than a million poor in 731 villages in the second most arid district in the country.

During her visit to Ananthapur, the Ugandan Minister stopped over in Prasanthi Nilayam to pay her respects to Sri Sathya Sai Baba and to express the gratitude of the people of Uganda for the contribution of 80 Bore Wells by Sri Sathya Sai Organization during the 80th year of the advent of Bhagavan Baba. These Bore Wells will provide safe drinking water supply to thousands of poor in the eastern arid regions of the country. Work on this project has already begun. The project is estimated to cost more than US\$500,000.

It would be recalled that Uganda was chosen by Bhagavan Baba to be the first country to be blessed during His maiden (and until now the only) visit outside India in 1968. Soon after Bhagavan's visit, Sri Sathya Sai Organization became operational in Uganda.

KUTTAN THE LAME

There are dogs who swim and dogs who hunt
And dogs which crouch thro' snowy peaks;
There are some who yelp a pigmy grunt
And some whose barks are tiny squeaks.

Some guide the blind, some, sledges drag
And some like Leika are shot through space;
There are dogs of whom their masters brag
And long legged ones that race.

But, of all the dogs that wag the tail
The purest, the best, is Kuttan, the lame.
Of all the dogs that follow the trail
The saintliest one is Kuttan! The same!

No pedigree dog; he was limping, cold,
Wet from the rain, with a cough on his chest
When he came to Bikkati, a pup of gold.
His manners were good, his habits, best.

He served the village as if duty bound
From dusk to dawn, from dawn to dark;
He growled and prowled like a hefty hound;
The village slept to the music of his bark.

Tw'as April sixty-one, twenty second day,
Bikkatti rose, full happy and gay,
For Baba was coming, He was on the way;
Tw'as no longer a question of 'may'.

The valleys deep in ecstasy did thrill;
The road was sad, its hair pinned so;
'Sai Raam! Sai Raam' repeated each hill
as the wayside trees did bend so low.

Believe me, it was Kuttan's gladdest day!
He ran, he leaped, without reason pranced;
He whined, he wailed, he barked jai
When Baba came, he knew his God; he danced.

His lotus Feet he saw; he took his stance
And fell as humans do, mumbling a hymn;
He smelt those fragrant Feet, O, Lucky Chance!
Baba smiling waved His Hand; and,...called Him?

Soon as Baba left us lonely, we gave to all

The feast that He had touched;
Kuttan's ear had caught the Call;
He gulped the sacred meal and lurched.

Half blind with tears, he sniffed the air
He reached the Holy Dias and kept
His head on His Footstool there!
He breathed his last!.....the village wept!

We rolled him in the silky sheet
Which Baba's soles had pressed;
We dug his grave near the sanctified seat
And showered the flowers by Baba blessed.

We are proud of our brother, proud of the way
This Bikkatti Kuttan spent his day.
Dear Kuttan the Lame, he taught us the way
To live and – how to get away.

-Prof N Kasturi

NEVER ENDING LOVE OF OUR BHAGAWAN

The world is tormented by the havoc created by the Tsunami tidal waves. Homes and lives were blown away within minutes. A vacuum with uncertainty sets in our hearts as we switch on the television everyday to see new stories unfold. Hearts bleed as we watch those orphaned children and the grieving parents. Our hearts call, God where are you, where are you?

Calamities come and go. Disasters come and go. He comforts the tormented souls. He consoles the souls that have seen the sorrow, with his love. **His love is never ending!**

As I entered Puttaparthi with my family after the recent calamity, He replaced all those thoughts with His loving presence. As we enter the *mandir*, He fills us with His tranquil presence, even with His brief appearances at the *Darshans*.

Whenever I feel empty, I sit there and contemplate "Swami, are you still within me, do I have to come all the way to Puttaparthi to see you, please answer me, where are you?" Within the next few minutes Swami answers with His heavenly love deep within me. If at all I had to express my feeling, I have to get up and dance in joy. How do you write about it? How do you relate this to another person? Tears of joy and bliss roll down and all I can do is to hold Swami's legs tight in my heart and don't let Him go. He is my father, mother, teacher, friend and everything else in this world.

In *Darshan*, Swami takes a short route avoiding the men's side. My heart jumps to question mode. Why, my Lord? What have I done, why do you ignore me? Soon after *Darshans* He comes out in

His car smiling away and waving in my direction saying “Why despair my son, I am right here?” He appears again and again to our heart’s content. **His love is never ending!**

My Maya within still makes me to stumble and fall. Doubts keep coming. I ask “Are all those conversations with you within me true? Swami, Do you talk to people from their within?” As the sun goes down I see a small gathering in front of Block N-5. I see Prof. Anil Kumar at the centre with an interpreter talking to the devotees from the Latin American countries. As I join the gathering, the question put forward to Anil Kumar was about internal conversation with Swami. There you go: Anil Kumar answers, “When your mind and senses are quite active you need direct touch/communication with Swami. As time passes, your mind quietens down and you are in communion with Swami. Swami becomes your indweller and talks to you all the time”.

I bump in to an ardent Bhajans organiser from Sydney Mr. Sundar Siva, at Puttaparthi.

He takes me to *Chaithanya Jyothi* where an exhibition was being inaugurated. One of the events was ‘live bhajan singing’. The bhajans were organised by the devotees from the Latin American countries. I too joined the band of singers for the next three consecutive days. Being used to singing with the Indian devotees, this was a great experience for me: to play God’s music with a group from the other end of the world. The Spanish guitars, flutes and tambourines filled the hall with beautiful music. Their heavenly singing would touch anybody as they sang with lots and lots of love.

My heart just melted thinking of Swami’s grace and love that had reached these people who live thousands of miles away from the Indian subcontinent. **His love is never ending!**

I see Swami alight from the car at the Mandir. I see Him limp slightly. My mind ponders, Swami why don’t you get well, why do you have to go through all the agony? My mind was sympathising with a struggling human being. The indweller directs my compassion towards all other struggling humans on this planet. For that moment He removes the thought of God from me and makes me think of the humans around. **His love is never ending!**

On our way from Bangalore to Puttaparthi, I see the road being renovated. I recalled the banner I saw in Bangalore exhibiting Swami’s 80th Birthday Celebrations that said “80 years of love”. I asked Swami, You have been here for 80 long years, thousands of people have come through this road to see You and why is the road being widened only now? My father answered, ‘I did not come here to repair all the roads my dear, I came to repair the hearts and minds of the people and that’s My mission.’

I glanced at the driver who he was still complaining of the slow progress in the repair works. I could only smile thinking of my Swami’s loving reply.

The day has come to leave. I must return to my worldly duties with my family.

The morning bajans are over and I see our fourteen-year-old daughter walking towards me with watery eyes. Swami’s all pervading love and bliss had touched her too. I thought: how lucky she is! It is her first ever visit to India at the age of fourteen and she is touched by God. I had to wait for 48 years to get a glimpse of the Lord.

He is all knowing, all seeing and knows the Grand Design of Things.
The time had to come for everything.

As I type this He says, 'You only talk about time. For Me, everything is timeless!'

His love is never ending.

T.Jeyapalan

OPPORTUNITIES TO LOVE

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and spun the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown. He jumped out of the car, grabbed the kid who was standing there and pushed him against a parked car shouting, "What do you think you are doing, boy?". Building up a head of steam he went on, "That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?".

"Please sir, please. I'm sorry, I didn't know what else to do," pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop..."

Tears were dripping down the boy's chin as he pointed around the parked car. "It's my brother, sir," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up." Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair, sir? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be okay. "Thank you and may God bless you, sir," the grateful child said to him. The man then watched the little boy push his brother toward their home.

It was a long walk back to his Jaguar...a long slow walk. He never did repair the side door. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention.

From the Internet

YOGIHEART
Revelations from an Ashram Regular

We're sitting in the canteen, I ask the man about his spiritual progress over the many years he has been coming to the ashram.

"Oh, it's nothing," he jokes, "You just transform your whole life, that's all. You become .yogi-like. It's a rather audacious thing to do."

His voice shifts into a mock sarcasm, as if the worldly part of him is reacting to his answer.

"What! You're moving to an ashram? Oh ... And you've decided to dedicate your whole life to an ideal? Hmm,... interesting!

"Oh, and you're making your whole life God-based? ... Swell, but isn't that sort of, um... abstract?

"And you're giving up material comforts and even detaching from your family and friends? Uh-huh.... Do they know about it yet?

"You're what? *Reprogramming* your mind? Actually learning to control every thought? That's quite a rewiring job!

"And, oh ... you're not going to get disturbed about anything any more? ... Terrific!

"This new life of yours sure sounds, well... um ... extreme,... and gratifying, I guess."

The mocking voice leaves and he shifts back into his more settled ashram self and continues his response to my question.

"This is what I think actually happens here at *Prasanthi Nilayam*—if you're open to it...

"You gradually learn to love here, to really *love*!

"First, it's all-out love of Swami, and then, at Swami's insistence, you try to go beyond even that—and after awhile it begins to work.

"It's as though each and every action in your life and each contact with others becomes an act of devotion.

"This level of loving makes everything, *everything* else secondary.

"Your ego fades and becomes much less of a force in your life.

"Worldly 'things' don't matter as much to you any more. You don't worry any more.

"You're not emotionally tossed and tumbled by the bumps and disasters of the outer world; they happen, but it no longer throws you off balance.

"Even your body becomes less insistent. Doctor visits are fewer. Food becomes fuel, rather than a life ruling habit. Shelter becomes, well, just a roof over your head instead of something connected to the ego.

"You're happy literally every moment of the day.

"You hope for nothing. "You need nothing.

"You want nothing.

"You ask for nothing.

"You get to a point where you have no plan or program but to do the work that is sent your way—and do it as well as you can because you're doing it not for yourself but for Divinity's sake—which means for the greater good of everyone in the world.

"You harm nothing or no one.

"Judging becomes less and less frequent, until you forget to do it due to lack of interest.
 "You're never angry or agitated. Arguing and demanding become things of the past In fact, all your ego trips gradually diminish until they're just temporary 'illnesses' that you endure and laugh at.
 "You smile inside at the too 'serious' and sober people. "You're always cheerful!"
 The man becomes quiet for a moment and then adds, "All this really happens, Jack! When I think about it I'm so grateful I get tears in my eyes."
 Quietly he says, "If you write up any of this for publication, please make it anonymous."
 I agree, and I thank him for being so open-hearted.

-Jack Hawley

PRASANTHI DIARY CHRONICLES OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

FEB 18th, 2005: CARNATIC AND HINDUSTANI VOCAL PROGRAM AND A SITAR RECITAL BY THE MUSIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

The end of the academic year is a pleasant time in Prashanti Nilayam. It is the time when the music college students present to the dear Lord what they have learnt during the year. A final exam, if you will, with Swami as the examiner. So while a formal program is planned they still expect a few surprises, as Swami usually picks a student or two to play for Him.

The first was a Carnatic recital by a team of student singers - *Rama Rama Rama Sita Rama Eni Ro*. This was followed by the famous *Jagadodarana Adisida Yasoda*. After this song, another student of Hindustani music rendered the song *Wo Kala Eka Bansuri Wala Suda Bisaragaya Mori Re*. Two more songs followed and then Bhagavan signalled to one of the boys seated behind. He came forward and Swami asked him and another boy to play the Sitar. For the next 15 minutes we had an enchanting Sitar recital by these 2 boys. This was again followed by two more Carnatic songs (Vocal) - *Innu Dayabarade Dasana Mele* and *Mokshamu Galada Bhuvilo* before *Arathi* was taken. (

FEB 19th: A MRIDANGAM CONCERT IN SAI KULWANT HALL

Padmabushan Umayalpuram Sivaraman, a *mridangam* maestro, was blessed by Bhagavan to give a scintillating recital in Sai Kulwant Hall. He was given vocal accompaniment by Sri Acharya R. Krishnamurthy, Principal of the Music College and Sri Ajit Prasad, a student of the College. It was a sight to see Bhagavan clapping His hands for the emotional finish of the song 'Devadi Deva' in Sunada Vinodini Raga. The scholarly rendering of the Purva Kalyani Raga Kriti 'Parama Pavana Rama' drew ovation from the devotees for the brisk *Swarakalpana*; the enchanting 'Tani Avartam' of Umayalpuram Sivaraman was also very well received. At the end Bhagavan materialised a gold bracelet for the *mridangam* artiste Sivaraman and also gave silk dhotis to all the artistes.

FEB 20th: TWELFTH HIGH SCHOOL CLASS FAREWELL PROGRAM

This evening the graduating High School Class presented their farewell program to express their gratitude to the Lord for His benevolence to them during their twelve years of stay at His Lotus Feet by presenting a program entitled, "Maa Jeevitame Mee Sandeshamu" - "Our Life is Your Message".

These programs are usually fast paced and involve a variety of different items to ensure that all the students have a part to play. In the opening skit, three eminent social persons from different walks of life are asked in a TV interview for the events that helped shape them into what they are today. Being alumni of the Sri Sathya Sai School, they recount events that bring to light Swami's teachings that helped them evolve to such useful members of society. Other items included a number of songs that express the students' love for the Lord and of course a first hand narration of their experiences of Swami's love and protection for them over the years. The grand finale was another small skit to bring out the main purpose of life of realizing the divine through the portrayal of the King Janaka drama wherein on waking up he questions if this is a dream or that is a dream. A sage finally explains to the king the truth of the self. At conclusion, Swami blessed all the students with the coveted group photo.

FEB 24th, MORNING: SRI ANIL GOKAK TAKES OVER AS THE NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

In a grand ceremony in the Institute auditorium, we were witness to a moving program, the installation of a new vice-chancellor, Sri Anil Gokak, after the retirement of Sri S.V. Giri.

Swami was welcomed by both the vice -chancellors at the door and received with full honours and led to an elaborately decorated stage.

In a moving speech Sri Giri outlined the major efforts of the Institute during his tenure and also expressed his profound sense of gratitude to Bhagavan for His guidance. Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a Ph.D. student, outlined the achievements of the Institute during the six year tenure of Sri S.V. Giri. Sri Anil Gokak in his talk sought Bhagavan's guidance and encouragement and gave a word that he would do his best to translate the objectives of the Institute into reality. Swami in His divine discourse said that in future 'educare' would assume increasing importance and this Institute would be a leader in propagating the goals of educare.

Swami also blessed the Vice-Chancellor Sri S.V. Giri by adorning his wrist with a bracelet. He also blessed Mrs. Giri with a similar bracelet and a necklace. It was a moment of great joy for all.

FEB 24th, EVENING: 'TYAGENAIKE AMRUTHATHWAMANASUHU' A DRAMA BY THE FIRST YEAR POST GRADUATE CLASS OF THE INSTITUTE

This drama portrays the transformation of a young and talented painter who thinks his interests are best served by going abroad. One day he sees a beggar who sacrifices the bread given to him for a hungry, destitute child and goes hungry himself. Further tales from mythology of Karna, a noble character from the Mahabharatha, who gave away his gold tooth (the only valuable thing he then had) on his death-bed to a Brahmin in need; and the sacrifice of his life by nineteen year old Khudiram Bose to win freedom for the country makes the transformation complete. The highest form of sacrifice of giving up the evil tendencies of the mind was also illustrated by the life of Bharatha, the brother of Lord Rama.

Inspired by these lives, the painter paints a masterpiece on 'Sacrifice' which wins him a handsome award. He donates the money to build a destitute home and thus exemplifies the Vedic dictate 'Tyagenaike Amruthathwamanashuhu', i.e. other than sacrifice there is no way to liberation.

MARCH 3rd: TRIBAL DANCES BY THE TODAS, KOTAS AND BADAGAS OF THE NILGIRI HILLS

For a couple of days the curiosity of the entire devotee crowd was whetted by the sight of turbaned men and women sitting in a group in Sai Kulwant Hall. Swami in His rounds always paid special attention to them, either blessing them or having a word with their leaders. Soon the mystery was cleared. They were Swami's special devotees - tribals living deep in the forests of the Nilgiri Hills - who had come to pay homage to Him through dance on the occasion of His 80th birthday. The Todas dance in a circular form wearing their traditional garment of a shawl, known as a *put-kuli*, of a thick white cotton cloth with red and blue strips and accompanied by a simple flute called the 'baguri'. The Kotas, the only artisan community in the Nilgiri Hills, depict their customs, rituals and folk tradition through their dance. Their dress involves multi coloured shirt, silk turban with coloured strings and with one and half feet tail left on the back. The Badagas have unique cultural traits and their song and dance depict their folklore, tradition and ritual practices. Their unique dance with circular hand and leg gestures meaningfully follow the rhythm of their music and songs. Though their dance was simple in movement and rhythm, their deep devotion and feeling for the Lord won everyone's hearts.

MARCH 3rd: A DANCE PROGRAM BY THE GRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE SSSIHL

It all started on March 2nd. A student from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, who had trained in classical dance forms from the 3rd standard onwards, asked Swami's permission to do a dance to bring to life through movements and gestures the emotions expressed by the songs being sung by the boys. After the first song, Swami asked another boy also to join him and dance in tandem. With a lot of enthusiasm the dances were synchronised impromptu in the divine presence.

The following day, the dance boys had come better prepared. A group of 5 students now performed classical dances to lend meaning through hand and finger movements and body postures to the emotional and devotional feelings expressed in songs. The boys performed with a lot of gusto in spite of the oppressive heat and were soon bathed in sweat. Swami enjoyed their presentation and appreciated their palpable desire to please Him.

At the conclusion of their presentation, Swami called one of the boys waiting on Him and told him something. The boy disappeared and came out of the interview room a few minutes later with a tray full of glasses of cool and refreshing pineapple juice for these 5 boys. Truly Swami's love is that of a thousand mothers!

MARCH 4th: MUSIC COLLEGE ORCHESTRA PLAYING HINDUSTANI MUSIC

The Music College students put up an enthralling and wonderful program in the divine presence. The music was based on the theme, Raga Anandadhwani, and composed by Pt. Dipak Choudhary.

The students performed ragas which depicts the seasons. The various ragas performed were: Sudha Sarang (Summer), Miyan ki Malhar (Monsoon), Bahar-Vasant (Spring), and Shri for Winter. A song in raag Bageshri and a beautiful melody based on raga Manj Khamaj (which is an expression of welcome) was also performed.

The whole program was well co-ordinated by Sri Prabir Bhattacharya, visiting Professor for Sitar and Sri Jayanto Sarcar, Tabla Professor. They were ably accompanied by students playing a full range of different

instruments - 4 students on the *tabla*, 4 students on the Vocal, 4 students on the *sitar*, 2 students on the *mridangam*, and 1 student on the key-board.

MARCH 8th and 9th: MAHASIVARATHRI CELEBRATIONS

The Mahasivarathri celebrations, as in yesteryears, saw huge crowds congregate to Prashanti Nilayam. Sai Kulwant Hall was full to overflowing on the 8th morning itself with the devotees also seated along the pathway in front of East Block. In the morning Swami asked Sri Anil Kumar to speak. He was followed by Dr. Narendra Reddy from the USA and then by Mr. G.K. Raman from Chennai. Then to delighted gasps from the audience, Swami lovingly consented to bless everyone with His divine discourse in the morning itself.

After Swami's arrival in the afternoon, both the Vice Chancellors - Sri S.V Giri and Sri Anil Gokak spoke to the audience. Then Swami gave His second discourse for the day. The details of these Divine discourses are available online at www.srisathyasai.org.in and are not reproduced here.

The Global Akhanda Bhajan began at 5:15 PM. The students held sway till 7:00 PM when the mikes were switched off. After that, a half-hour slot throughout the night was provided for all the different interest groups ranging from the staff of the different institutions to seva dals from the different states and groups from India and abroad. The *bhajans* were done with gusto as Swami was expected during the night, similar to last year. A *prasadam* of *pulihora* (tamarind rice) and *laddus* was served to all at the conclusion of the Akhanda Bhajan in the morning of the 9th, after Swami's arrival. In the evening of the 9th, Swami gave yet another discourse, in which He extolled the devotees of yesteryears who had won His grace through their karmas.

MARCH 16th: SWAMI'S STUDENT BAGS FIRST RANK IN 'GATE'

On the evening of March 16th, a function was arranged to felicitate the students who had successfully completed the All-India competitive examination called GATE (Graduate Aptitude Test for Engineering). This competitive entrance examination is administered by all the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science, the country's premiere institutes for higher education and research, to identify the best students for admission to their post-graduate courses.

About 20 students had cleared the examination, the highest by the Institute to date. **The most noteworthy feature was that one of the students, Sri E. Nareshkumar, secured the first rank in this country wide examination.** Swami created a gold bracelet for Him, which He tied lovingly around the student's wrist. Swami gave watches to all the students and also lovingly draped a silk *angavastram* around their shoulders to honour them.

In a speech, the Vice-Chancellor explained the competitive nature of the examination to place this achievement in the proper perspective. The 2 students who spoke attributed their success to their teachers and parents and of course, Bhagavan's love and guidance. Swami in His divine discourse stressed that character is end of education and all students must develop character along with their education.

