



HEART TO HEART



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GURUPURNIMA 2004

COVER STORY

GURUPURNIMA 2004

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PRANAMS AT THE LOTUS FEET

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Between You and Us

Dear Readers,

SaiRam to one and all. Hope you had a wonderful Gurupurnima. As usual, Gurupurnima at Prasanthi Nilayam was really wonderful this year. From the 29th of June till 6th of July, it was one continuous song of Bliss. The dramas, the musicals, the talks by the elders and, of course, Bhagawan's nectarine message transported everyone present there to an altogether different world-a world of oneness, beauty and harmony. Read the cover story to catch all the action of Gurupurnima 2004.

In his talk during Gurupurnima this year, Shri Indulal Shah mentioned that it had been prophesied in ancient scriptures that only one fourth of the Glory of Sai will be perceptible to mankind. The rest of the work is in other planes beyond human comprehension. Well, leave the other planes for a moment. If one thinks of just this physical plane, this earth of ours, the amount of transformation that is being brought about is stupendous. A movement of unprecedented magnitude is making inroads, slowly but surely, into the barren hearts of men and reclaiming them with Love. The 'Walk for Values' held last month in Canada is just one example of this Power in action. Read the article 'Footprints of Love' to know all about this unique event.

This time, the feature 'Kindle your spirit' carries an inspiring poem by Swami Vivekananda, entitled 'Break all other idols'. This is not to be taken in the literal sense that idol worship is to be shunned but contains deeper meanings. Please ponder over them.

SaiRam and goodbye until the next issue!

In Sai Service
SGH team



Gurupurnima 2004



The Ashadi Ekadasi decoration

I know no other word than LOVE. I speak only of LOVE. I am moved by nothing but LOVE.

**-Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 2nd July, 2004
Sai Kulwanth Hall**

This was the emphatic message given by Bhagavan to the thousands who had assembled in the Sai Kulwanth hall on the morning of Gurupurnima, the 2nd of July. The last few days had been a feast of Love, with various dramas and musicals transporting the devotees into realms of ecstasy. Bhagavan's message was the icing on the cake.

The celebrations had begun on the 29th of June itself, with thousands of devotees pouring in from Maharashtra to celebrate Ashadi Ekadasi. For those of you who are wondering what this Ashadi is, here is some background to the festival. A few years ago, every state in India

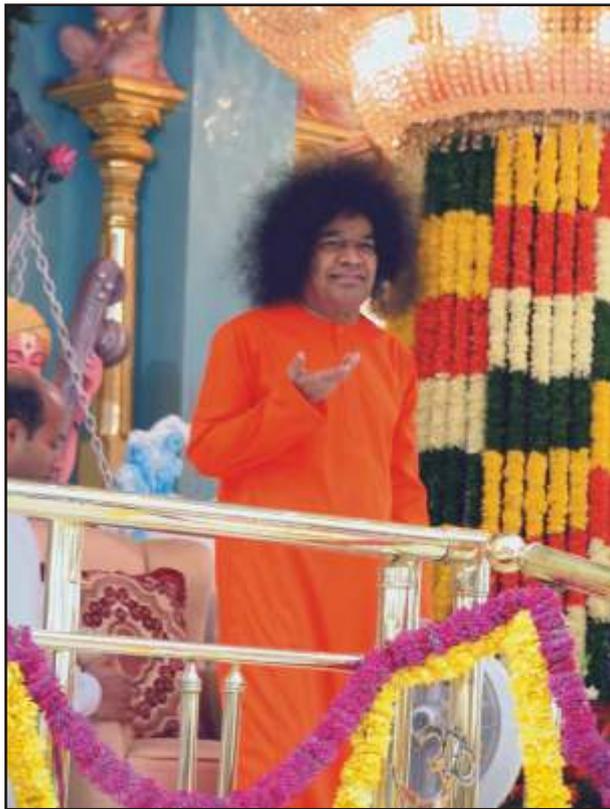
was asked to choose a specific festival to be celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam. While West Bengal chose 'Dassera' and Gujarat chose 'Bestu Varas', Maharashtra chose 'Ashadi Ekadasi'. The festival is connected with Lord Panduranga Vithal, another name for Lord Krishna, whose ancient temple is situated in the village of Pandharpur in Maharashtra. The beautiful idol of Lord Vithal has inspired the love and devotion of millions over the past few centuries and nurtured many a saint and sage. Every year on the Ashadi Ekadasi, a procession, which starts a few days earlier in villages of Dehu and Alandi, reaches Pandharpur and culminates with the

darshan of Lord Vithal. And upon seeing the beautiful form of their beloved Lord, the devotees break into a rapturous dance and song to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums.

However, for the devotees of Swami, especially from Maharashtra, the festival comes with a big difference: instead of being content with an idol, they have the great boon of performing before Lord Vithal Himself! They sing "Parthi is our Pandharpur! Sai is none other than our Vithal!"

That in short, is the background of Ashadi in Parthi. Ashadi is celebrated

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Sai Vithala

With two events : a Bal Vikas rally in the morning and a drama in the evening. While the rally is performed by the children from Mumbai, the evening drama is performed by a particular district form Maharashtra. The rallies, centering on Bhagavan's teachings, are presented beautifully through dance and drama. The evening drama is on well known saints of Maharashtra, who were mainly householders and yet were able to attain the highest state of bliss.

On the morning of 29th June, the Sai Kulwanth hall was decorated beautifully with flowers and banners depicting Swami's teachings. The dias where Swami sits had a backdrop of Lord Vithal carrying on his shoulders, across the sea, two of his devotees- Tukaram, the lover of the form of God and Jnandev the worshipper of the Formless God! Both were dear to the Lord!

Around eight in the morning Bhagavan arrived into the Kulwanth

hall. As a melodious song welcoming him was being rendered, He went up to the stage and granted darshan to the tens of thousands who assembled there. He then raised both His hands and blessed them. There was a thunderous applause as an expression of gratitude for this Divine Assurance. As the applause subsided one could hear the sound of cymbals and drums at a distance. Soon, a group of men dressed in the traditional Maharashtrian attire came jumping, dancing and shouting 'Jai Sai Vithala!'. One

of the men approached Bhagavan and reverentially offered flowers at His lotus feet. He tried to tell something to Swami, but his heart was too full for any words to be uttered. The tears in his eyes conveyed all that he wanted to say!

Next there was a dance drama entitled 'The Supreme Verdict' by the Bal Vikas children of Mumbai. The main characters are Swaroop and Sarvesh. Swaroop believes in the worship of a God with form while Sarvesh believes in a formless God.

Both are good friends but each believes his path to be the supreme. One day, as they are involved in an argument, they suddenly come face to face with Yama, the God of death who pronounces both of them guilty, under the Divine Penal Code, of improper worship of God! They are puzzled and beg the Lord of death to revise his sentence.

Yama asks them to appeal in a Divine Court that consists of Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya and Sankaracharya as the judges and a jury consisting of Kabir, Guru Nank, St Francis, Tyagaraja and the likes. Madhavcharya was the proponent of Dualism, Ramanuja of qualified monism and Shankara of monism.

The trial begins and both Swaroop and Sarvesh argue for their cases vehemently. Both are dismissed. The eminent members of the Jury then come one by one and express their experience of Divinity: God is both formless and with form! One has to use the form(outside) to experience the formless(inside)! (Even Sankaracharya, the great proponent of non-dualism composed a number of devotional songs on various forms of Divinity).

The Judges then give the Supreme Verdict, the words of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on how to experience Divinity:

Embodiments of Love!

Though you declare that you are in search of God, the fact is that you are not doing it. The one who searches for himself in the outer world is a fool.

The moment you recognise that 'I am I', then and there itself Reality is expressed. Therefore it is most essential for everyman to turn inward and know his true nature.

The procession



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The Supreme Verdict

You all say 'Sai Baba, Sai Baba'... The fact is I am not (merely) Sai Baba. I am You and You are me!

What a wonderful drama it was! Swami was very touched! He went down the dias and posed for photographs with the kids. He gave them bundles of wafers with his hand. The children were crying inconsolably out of sheer happiness. If one thinks of it, it is really astounding. How many of us had that sublime feeling of bliss at such an early age in our life?

In the evening, there was a drama entitled Khwaja Moinuddun Chisti, Garib-un Nawaz. Chisti was a Sufi saint from Persia who came, upon a Divine command, to Ajmer in India. He lived there for a number of years preaching the message of Love and Brotherhood. It was a well-enacted musical presentation that was enjoyed by everyone.

On almost every evening from the 30th of June till the 6th of July there were cultural programmes by the different states of India and a few overseas centres. Though the detailed description of these programmes is out of the scope of this article, one thing that could be said of them was that all of them brought home to the audience different aspects of

Bhagavan's message in a most articulate way. One had to commend the efforts and the creativity of the teachers involved in these projects. Swami would get involved in these dramas so much, just like a child. Where there were scenes of sadness, His face would become small and in scenes depicting some happy moment or a moment of deep devotion, for instance that of the Gopis for

to the students were a number of physically handicapped boys who could not walk. Swami kept gazing at them lovingly. After a while, He signaled with His hand for something. Soon the sevadal were bringing specially made tricycles and making the boys sit on them. Each of the boy, would fold his hands and express gratitude to Bhagavan who blessed him with His Abhaya Hasta, the upraised palm. As they were departing from the hall taking their precious gifts and Swami's Divine Assurance, Swami, the Divine mother was still not satisfied. He sent one of His students to fetch some beautiful shawls to be given to those less fortunate brothers. Love always gives, gives and gives!



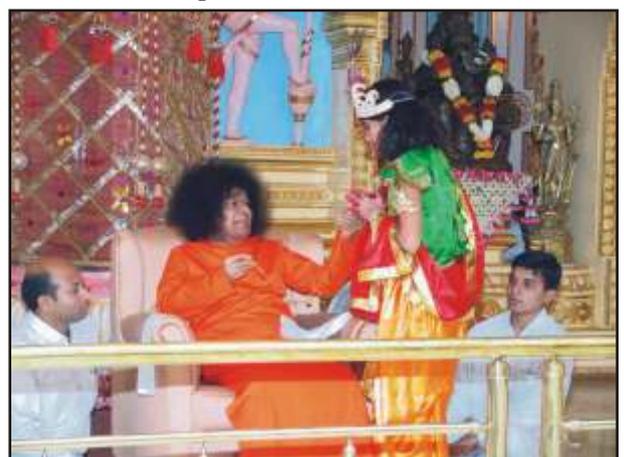
With the drama boys

Krishna, tears of joy would well up in His eyes. At the end of each presentation, Bhagavan would make the children happy by speaking to them, posing for photographs, creating a pendant here, a chain there and patting them on their backs!

Swami then blessed two elders to address the devotees-Sri Indulal Shah, formerly the International chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations and Mr. Goldstien, the chairman of Prasanthi Council. Both the speakers spoke on one central theme: the invisible Power of Swami. Sri Shah quoted from a number of ancient scriptures which prophesied about the Sai Avatar. Only one fourth of the work done by the Avatar is comprehensible to Humans. The rest of it is beyond their comprehension and goes on in other planes. The time was fast

Came the 2nd of July, the day of Gurupurnima. At around 7 am, Bhagavan came into the Kulwanth Hall like a first ray of sunshine and lit up the hearts of his devotees. The students began the session with their melodious songs in praise of the JagathGuru, Sai. Next

A gift of love for a little one



Gurupurnima 2004

coming when the whole world will be at His feet. Mr. Goldstien too reminded the gathering that one should not get carried away by the apparent physical limitations of Baba. Baba is much more than the visible form. All the organizational work that is being carried out is just a grain of sand on a vast beach compared to the actual work of Transformation that He is effecting in millions of hearts.

Swami then delivered His Divine Gurupurnima message. It was one continuous song of Love:

Embodiments of Love!

You cannot find anything more sacred than love in the world. Today, you will find worldly and physical

love everywhere. But it is difficult to find love suffused with Atmic bliss. Love is not merely that which exists between two individuals at the physical level. True love is that which exists between two hearts. This Divine Love permeates the entire universe.

Whatever I speak, it is only Love. I do not know any other word. When someone converses with Me lovingly, My joy knows no bounds. If people employ empty rhetoric without love to praise me, I am not at all pleased. You call me 'Sai' with love, I will readily respond saying 'Oyi'. Any amount of prayer devoid of Love cannot move me.

There is nothing that can liberate you

as easily as Pure and Selfless Love. On this auspicious Gurupurnima day, Love is the most precious gift I give unto you! All other gifts are useless devoid of Love.

That summed it up all. What we do with this beautiful gift of Love shall determine our destiny. Meera sang, 'Payoji maine Naamratan', I received the jewel of the Lord's name. We too have received the 'Premratan', the jewel of His Love. The treasure of His Love. Share it and it multiplies. Hoard it and it diminishes. The decision is ours!

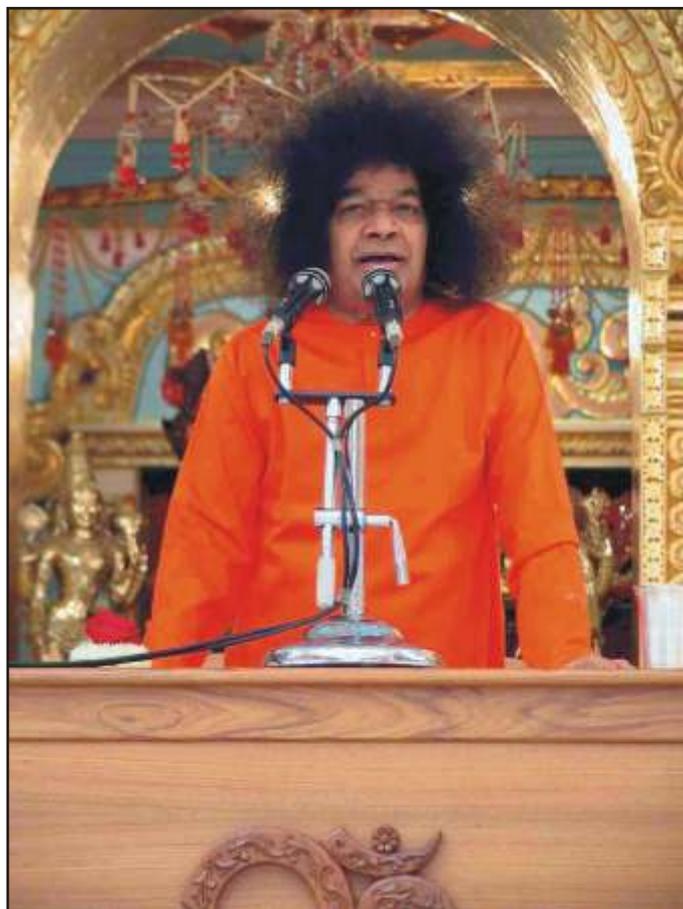
Jai Sai Ram!



Tricycles for the less privileged



Sending shawls to His children



The Gurupurnima Discourse

Samskara



The process of “Samskara “ (or refinement) is not confined to specific things; it is applicable to every object in the universe. No object can be enjoyed by man without its going through a process of transformation. For example, take the case of paddy. The paddy that is grown and harvested cannot be consumed as such. It has to be converted into rice. In the process of transformation, the original paddy has considerably increased in value as rice. The transformation process thus makes an object more useful and valuable. Take another example, that of cotton. Cotton in its primary form has very little utility. But when it is spun into thread and made into cloth, it becomes usable by man. There is a wide gap between the value of cotton and that of the cloth into which it is converted. The same rule applies to gold. There is a big difference between the value of the ore that is extracted from a mine and the gold that is got from the ore after processing.

It is clear from these examples that all objects in the world, unless they go through various processes of transformation, cannot acquire much value. If that is the case with regard to ordinary objects, how much more is it necessary for man, who is more important than all of them, to go through this transformation? Man is the most precious object in creation. Men are more valuable than all the things in the world. It is man who imparts value to all objects. Today we are failing to give proper value to man.

What is the reason? It is because man is attracted towards the visible objects of the world experienced by the senses and is unaware of the Spirit (Atma) within him. The powers man is endowed with are limited. By appropriate practice he can make good use of them. But by involving himself in sensuous pleasures, man is losing his powers. The main reason for the loss of the powers given to man is his lack of sense control. This accounts for the premature onset of old age among many people.

Concerning Gunas

Dear Reader,

Continuing our series on *Getting Spiritually Better*, we now present Part 15 which deals with *Gunas*. *Gunas* are tendencies encoded into us, especially from earlier births. They tend to tie us down in many ways to the phenomenal world. Unless we rise above the *Gunas* or at least try very hard to, there is no hope of becoming one with God, which is the true goal for all Spiritual aspirants. What are these *Gunas*, and how do we manage them? That is what you will learn about if you read what follows.

SGHTEAM

The word *Guna* basically means tendency. The *Guna* of a person provides an index of the personality of that person. *Gunas* are not restricted to humans alone; in fact, they are intrinsic to Creation and come in all sorts of shades and varieties. Without *Gunas*, it is not possible to have the diversity one sees in Nature.

To understand the role of *Gunas* in Creation, let us first start with God. The Lord in His Pristine Form is, so to say, 'structureless', i.e., without structure. There is just an Infinite Oneness. But when He projects Himself as the Cosmos or Nature, God injects the element of differentiation so that there is diversity. This diversity is needed because the different entities have to perform different functions and play different roles, of course according to His Grand Master Plan.

This sort of thing has actually happened to all of us. Each and every one of us began as a single cell. This cell divided to become two identical cells. Two cells then became four and so on it went. During this period, the cells were all identical; no difference. However, at some stage, due to a mechanism not yet understood, differentiation set in. The new cells were of different types. This was Divinely ordained, because the human body requires different types

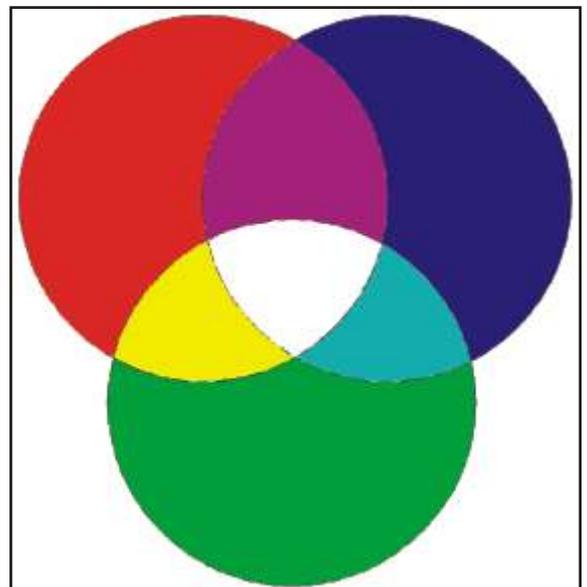
of cells for the various organs such as the eye, the stomach, the liver, the brain, and so on. In other words, differentiation is an integral part of Nature/Creation, and *Gunas* provide the basic chemistry for this differentiation to occur.

The word *Guna* essentially means characteristics. Entities differ in physical characteristics, behavioural characteristics, and in attitudes. There are three basic *Gunas*, and the bewildering variety that one observes in Nature is simply the result of a mixture of these three basic *Gunas*. An analogy might help in understanding this fact. In colour TV, we see millions of colours on the screen. Surprising as it might sound, this wide range of colours arises basically from a mixture of three basic colours in appropriate proportions. The basic colours are: Red (R), Green (G), and Blue (B). In the TV industry, one says that colours arise from suitable mixtures of R, G, B. In the same way, there are three basic *Gunas*. They are: *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattva*. Roughly speaking, the three *Gunas* are associated with the following characteristics: *Tamas* with inertia, *Rajas* with activity, and *Sattva* with calmness.

All the diversity one sees in nature is the result of mixtures of these. All kinds of mixtures can be conceived, and every possible mixture represents one type of composite *Guna*. [NOTE: Usually when one talks of the *Guna* of a person, one is referring to his 'composite' nature.]

At the very beginning of Creation, the three basic *Gunas* were in 'balance'. At this stage, there was no differentiation yet; differentiation was still latent. Imbalance is what triggered off the appearance of diversity in Nature. This imbalance occurred due to Divine Will, and the wheels of Creation were set in motion.

Gunas are like the three primary colours



Concerning Gunas

There is a feeling that *Gunas* are *per se* undesirable and 'bad'. This is not a correct view. *Gunas* have been built into Nature by God Himself; how then can they be bad? This kind of confusion arises because seekers are asked to 'rise above the *Gunas*', 'go beyond the *Gunas*,' etc. Yes, seekers must achieve these goals but that does not mean one must jump to conclusions about *Gunas*. Let us try to understand why *Gunas* are there in the first place, and how we must handle them in order to register spiritual progress.

To proceed with this analysis, we must address the issue of *Gunas* at the level of the body, and the mind separately. [*Gunas* manifest and operate essentially only at these two levels. The Heart which is the seat of God, is deemed to be above the *Gunas*.] Let us start with the body. The body needs rest, needs to be active at other times, and be stable at still other times. Sleep gives rest to the body. Sleep is built into every living being by God; it is a must. Sleep is associated with *Tamas*, and in this sense, *Tamas* cannot be frowned upon. Likewise, the body requires activity; otherwise, it would just atrophy. Thus, in the sense under discussion, *Rajas* also cannot be condemned. And there are times, when one is not asleep, one is not active, but awake though still. This is a required discipline, and is associated with *Sattva*.

Next let us go to tendencies. People exhibit all kinds of tendencies. Tendencies vary from person to person. Indeed, even in a given person, the tendency exhibited at a particular moment may depend very much upon the circumstance prevailing. Even so, every person can be type-cast as gentle, violent, aggressive, pliable, etc., etc. The tendency of a person reflects the person's [composite] *Guna*. Once the *Guna* is known, one can more or less predict how the person would

actually behave under various circumstances. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna gives a detailed elaboration of different behavioural patterns. He describes, for example, how a *Sattvik* person would worship, how a *Rajasik* person would worship, and how a *Tamasik* person would worship, and so on. To illustrate with a modern example, a *Tamasik* person would produce music that is loud, noisy, and appealing to baser instincts [a rock band in a smoky den would be a good example!]. A *Rajasik* person would produce music that is lively, invigorating, exciting, and evoking romantic emotions [Indian film music of the fifties and sixties was essentially of this type!]. A *Sattvik* musician would produce music that is sweet, sublime, blissful, and inducing Divine Feelings in the listener [many good examples in Western classical music]. It is very illuminating to go through Krishna's analysis of behaviour based on the *Gunas*.

Why are *Gunas* so important? The answer is simple. We must shape our personality such that it helps in the Spiritual path. One cannot, for example, be of *Tamasik* disposition and hope to progress rapidly towards God. What it means is that no matter with characteristics we are born, we MUST SHAPE our being into the right mould. Before we get down to the question of the right mould, a few words about the 'characteristics with which we are born'.

When a person is born, the physical characteristics of the person are controlled by the genes. In turn, this implies that many characteristics are directly inherited from the parents and in some cases from more distant ancestors too. In short, the genes decide physiology. What decides behaviour? Is that also inherited from parents? The answer is NO. Genes are not responsible for behaviour. [Of course, modern science seems to say that some segments of the DNA do favour certain types of tendencies

like, violence etc. But this does not appear to be a fully settled issue.] For example, in a family, all the children do take after the parents in appearance but their behaviour can be widely different. Sometimes, there is such difference even between so-called identical twins. What then controls the behaviour? Sociologists would no doubt say that the environment in which the person is brought up would have a lot of say in the matter. True. But what about the 'genes' of behaviour? Where from do they come?

Swami says that our behavioural genes are determined by our own past lives. Suppose, for example, a person is enjoying human birth for the first time, having spent previous lives in lower forms [like animals, insects, etc.] Then animal tendencies are likely to dominate in such a person. [Hislop says that Swami told him that Sai Geetha the pet elephant of Baba will be born a human for the first time in her next birth. Having had Divine proximity in this birth, having shown love to God, and having been blessed by God on numerous occasions, her next birth as human is more than likely to be a noble one.] Past tendencies are referred to as *Vasanas*. These *Vasanas* will control our behaviour in this birth. In other words, our *Guna* in this birth would be determined primarily by the *Vasanas* we have inherited from the past. They would of course be further shaped by the environment we get exposed to. But the basic direction of the trajectory would be determined by the inherited *Vasanas*.

OK. Does this mean that man is a helpless prisoner of his *Gunas*? He will be reduced to that, unless he takes conscious steps to unbind himself. And he MUST! This is the main point of this chapter. No matter what handicap we are born with [by way of *Vasanas*, that is], we must, guided by the teachings of the Lord,

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shape our *Gunas* in such a manner that we progress towards God. This important objective is lost sight of by 99 % of the devotees, because they don't bother about *Gunas*, how they originate, how they shape us, and how strongly they influence our future.

Agreed we must shape our behaviour so that we have the right destiny. What really should one do? First of all, let us be clear that when we talk of controlling the *Gunas*, we mean primarily in relation to the effect they have on the mind. Next, let us take note of the hierarchy. At the bottom of the totem pole is *Tamas*. The mind should definitely be free of *Tamas* of this, there cannot be any doubt. *Tamas* is simply not good for anyone, particularly a seeker. *Tamas* implies sloth. What is the best way of fighting sloth? Obviously, activity. In other words, *Tamas* has to be fought with *Rajas*. But *Rajas* too can and does create problems. It promotes aggression, greed, jealousy, excessive desires, uncontrolled ambition, a lust for power, etc. Thus, while *Rajas* might be a useful weapon for vanquishing *Tamas*, it must be sparingly used and abandoned immediately after the job is done. How to keep *Rajas* in check? This is where *Sattva* comes into the picture.

Does it mean that one has arrived when *Sattva* has been reached? Not quite! Why is that? Baba has answered that one. He says that all *Gunas* bind; *Tamas* is like a copper chain; *Rajas* is like a silver chain; and *Sattva* is like a golden chain. *Sattva*, a chain? How can it be? Does it not imply being good, devoted to God, abiding by the scriptural injunctions and all that? Yes of course, but if one is not careful, *Sattva* also can bind! How? This is the common doubt of most devotees. The point needs some examination.

It is easy to understand how *Tamas* and *Rajas* bind. Basically, they keep

one trapped in animal and demonic qualities, and that clearly is not desirable; one must rise above these that is easy to understand. What about *Sattva*? A *Sattvik* person is human; he is good, kind, considerate, etc., all of which are very good plus points. Nevertheless, he has his limitations. Basically, he is still in a DUAL world. He sees certain things as good and others as bad. He veers towards the good and avoids the bad, which is OK as far as it goes. But he is not free from a certain amount of selfishness. He would tend to pray more often for his near and dear, than for the whole of humanity. He would feel joy when his kith and kin meet with success, and feel pain when there is tragedy in the family. There is nothing intrinsically evil about having such feelings, but in the journey towards God, one must rise to the higher level of giving up body attachments. A *Sattvik* person is not necessarily above Body Consciousness, no matter how soft, nice and good he is. That is why it is said that even *Sattva Guna* binds.

What then is expected? One must rise above even the *Sattva*! A person who achieves this is called a *Gunatheetha*. Krishna strongly recommends this as a goal. What are the characteristics of a *Gunatheetha*? Krishna has clearly explained. Firstly, a *Gunatheetha* is unaffected by the events of the world. He does not swing to joy at one moment and plunge into sorrow the next. Thus, he is the very embodiment of equanimity. This extra-ordinary virtue enables the *Gunatheetha* to look upon saints and sinners alike. He is totally indifferent to the pairs of opposites.

Is this not being insensitive? How can a person not feel affected when say there is a great natural disaster like an earthquake in which tens of thousands have perished? No, the *Gunatheetha* is NOT insensitive, but he does not roll over the floor crying, weeping and tearing his hair. Instead,

he is calm, cool, and collected, and moved by compassion, organises relief. He is not overwhelmed by the disaster but rises to the occasion. Incidentally, it should be obvious that only a *Gunatheetha* can be the ideal leader. This is because he refuses to be swept by emotion. At the same time, he is not a dry and soulless robot. He is full of Divine feelings of compassion, forbearance, selfless love, and sacrifice.

A *Gunatheetha* is also what may be called a Witness [what Swami refers to as *Saakshi Bhootam*]. He sees the happenings of the world and is not affected by them, be they 'good' or be they 'bad'. For him, there is neither good nor bad. He is in a state where he is above the dual, i.e., all pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, success and failure, praise and calumny, gold and dust, etc. What on earth does such a 'strange' person feel about what's going on around him? He simply says: "Everything is God. God has assumed innumerable forms and is playing with Himself. At one time He appears to cry; how can the One who is eternally Blissful ever cry? It is just play acting, that's all. Everything is just one big Cosmic Drama. This body of mine is one puppet in this drama of God. Is a movie real? Is there real sorrow and real pleasure in a movie? It is all make believe. The only thing real in this Cosmic Drama is the Supreme Actor who appears in all roles."

The *Gunatheetha* is an ideal person. *Avatars* are the perfect examples of *Gunatheetha*. In the *Rama Avatar*, the Lord stages a little drama so that this lesson about being in the world and still not getting affected by it is taught to humanity. It happens like this.

Young Rama [about fourteen years old] goes on a pilgrimage to various holy places. When He comes back, He is in a very sulky mood. He appears to have become totally

Concerning Gunas

disenchanted with the world. He behaves 'strangely', exhibiting all the oscillating moods common amongst adolescents. This is of course play acting by the Lord, as a part of His Drama. Sage Vasishta is sent for, and he seeks to 'advise' Rama. The advice is not really meant for Rama. It is given so that it would become a manual for all times to be used by parents and elders while dealing with adolescents. Vasishta says:

Steady in the state of fullness that shines when all desires are given up, and peaceful in the state of freedom in life, act playfully in the world, O Rama!

Inwardly free from all desires, dispassionate and detached, but outwardly active in all directions, act playfully in the world, O Rama!

Outwardly full of zeal in action but free from any zeal at heart, active in appearance but inwardly peaceful, work playfully in the world, O Rama!

Quite unattached at heart but for all appearance acting as if with attachment, inwardly cool but outwardly full of fervour, act playfully in the world, O Rama!

Basically, Vasishta describes the characteristics of a perfect human being, a role that Rama had actually come to play. In the *Gita*, Krishna too describes such a person in many places. Krishna does not mention though that He Himself is the best example of a perfect person God very rarely advertises Himself. [To boast, is a human tendency.] And now, we have the living example of the Sai *Avatar*. To us, He appears to be in the thick of things, swayed by moods, etc. Such a perception is inevitable when it is worldly in outlook. In actual reality, the *Avatar* is always apart from the world [although this may not be quite evident]. He is the Embodiment of *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*, that is, of Being, Awareness, Bliss. That is why Swami sometimes says:

BABA = Being + Awareness + Bliss + Ananda!

To get back to the theme of this Part,

☛ *Gunas* are a part of Creation. Without *Gunas*, differentiation is not possible.

☛ *Gunas* at the physical or gross level are OK. There is nothing wrong with them; nor need they be shunned.

☛ But *Gunas* at the mental level must be handled with care, because they control behaviour.

☛ We inherit *Gunas* from our past lives. The *Gunas* of the past get encoded as *Vasanas* and come with us into the world when we are born. However, that does not mean we have to live with them.

☛ We must not be subservient to bad tendencies accumulated in the past. Human birth has been given for achieving self-improvement. The opportunity must not be wasted.

☛ These days, the media has a tendency to glorify body instincts and encourage indulgence in sensual pleasures. Such indulgence is a sign of weakness, and drags one to the lowest level, that of *Tamas*.

☛ *Tamas* must be quelled by *Rajas* and in turn, *Rajas* must be checked by *Sattva*.

☛ *Sattva* is no doubt admirable in many ways. Yet, it also binds, chaining one to a dual world.

☛ One must really aspire to go even above *Sattva*. This is the state of *Gunatheetha* or one who has transcended the *Gunas*.

Is this really feasible? Can anyone ever become a *Gunatheetha*? This is the standard doubt expressed before

quitting. Nothing happens unless one tries. No one will try unless there is a strong urge, bordering on burning passion. Who ever thought man could fly? One day, the Wright brothers showed that it could be done. Who ever thought that tens of millions would be flying every year and tens of thousands would be flying across the Atlantic and the Pacific every day? But when the effort was made the impossible did happen. Who ever thought the Everest could be climbed? Now hundreds have done it. Who ever thought that man would walk on the Moon? But man has done it.

The human mind is VERY powerful. If it wants something very badly, it will see that the goal is reached. It has that kind of power. This is no ordinary power, having been given by God Himself. Yet, hardly one in a billion wants to use this power to get back to God. Hardly one in a billion even says to himself: "Let me try to see what is it to become a *Gunatheetha*." People quit readily even before trying, using the excuse, "This is just impossible." It is tough but not impossible. It seems impossible because we have made up our mind that it is so. People have attempted to go over the Niagara in a barrel; they did not think it is impossible! People have attempted to cross the Niagara by rope walking; they did so in the belief that such a feat is possible. They made all such foolhardy efforts because of the yearning in them. But when it comes to God, the yearning vanishes at the slightest excuse!

God gives us so much. Can we not at least try? God says, "Bangaru, you don't have to become a *Gunatheetha*; just TRY to become one; just try to take the very first step; that would do, and I shall take care of all the rest." And what is that very first step? Just to tell ourselves, "That other person is Swami in disguise. Therefore, I shall not hurt that person or cause harm in any way whatsoever. I shall

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not think ill of that person. I shall not speak ill about that person to others. I shall not speak rudely or harshly to that person. I shall instead, speak nicely and sweetly to that person. I shall, if possible, try to help that person. Even if that person is supposed to have harmed me, I shall ignore it. I shall regard the action as a test by Swami of my quality of forbearance.”

Developing this sort of attitude is definitely NOT impossible. OK, it won't happen overnight. But if we make the effort relentlessly, then after a week or so, we would ourselves begin to see some small change in us. And soon this change would become a habit. Soon, this habit would become a way of life. All this because, the moment we start, Sai would stretch out for us and lead us by His hand. Once He takes over, how can we ever fail?

No, we would not succeed if we tried all by ourselves. We must make the try in partnership with God, with Sai. Then victory is assured,

The *Gita* ends with the words:

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Partha [Arjuna] the archer, there, be rest assured, lie Victory, Prosperity, Glory and Justice.

Gandhi says that Krishna represents the end [obviously a noble one] and Arjuna represents the means. When the end is noble and the means are good, then success is assured that is what this *Sloka* is supposed to convey, according to Gandhi. No one can take exception to this interpretation. This is what we must keep in mind when we seek to return to the Lord.

One final word. Our behavioural genes, i.e., the *Vasanas*, are very powerful. They will drag us where they want, unless we are determined to take hold of the reins. Ninety-nine

percent of the people are meek prisoners of their *Gunas* [shaped by the inherited *Vasanas*], though they might wax eloquent about how they control their destiny. The tragedy is that they do not even know that they are captives.

Some people are compulsive talkers. Sometimes, they give the excuse that they are talking about Swami. These people are prisoners of their *Gunas*. Swami prefers silence. Do not be like these chatterboxes.

Some people like to fraternise too much. These people are prisoners of their *Gunas*. Swami often tells boys, “Only rats and cats move around all the time. Are you're a rat or a cat? Don't unnecessarily go around looking for conversation, or buttonhole the nearest sucker.” Do not be like these people.

Some people like to find fault with everything and are always criticising others. These people also are prisoners of their *Gunas*. Do not be like them.

Some people think they are very straight and declare, “I always tell it like it is.” This is a sign of arrogance and not truthfulness. Such people are prisoners of their *Gunas*. Swami often reminds us being truthful has larger implications than mere adherence to so-called factual accuracy. If by stating facts one causes hurt, then, according to the scriptures, that is not being truthful. Do not be like such people.

Our *Vasanas*, through the mind and the body, shape our *Gunas*. This we must remember, while tackling the *Gunas*. If we are below the *Gunas*, then selfishness cannot be avoided. If we want to become selfless, then we must try to rise above the *Gunas*. The more selfless we are the higher we rise. Notwithstanding the service or *Seva* one might do, true *Karma Yoga* is NOT possible if one is a slave of

the *Gunas*. This we must remember.

Our destiny is not what our body or our mind decides for us, but what God would like it to be. Our destiny should be to make this the present birth the very LAST one. Our destination ought to be God and nothing else. We should not make the mistake of believing that we are in charge, when it is the *Gunas* that hold the controlling say. To get angry, to feel diffident, to give in to sorrow, to become jealous all these tendencies are due to *Gunas* and nothing else. How can one say one is the master of oneself, when one succumbs to anger, lust, pride, and the like? One becomes a real Master when one controls the senses and masters the Mind. Thus, Mind and sense control, play an important part in breaking out of the prison called *Gunas*. In this context, we would do well to remember what Swami often tells us:

**MASTER THE MIND AND
BECOME A MASTER-MIND!**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES
RELATING TO THE ABOVE**

☛ A good understanding of *Gunas* can help a lot in dealing with other persons in daily life.

☛ *Gunas* explain how diversity comes about in Nature. Of course, diversity is a must for nature. At the same time, man must not meekly submit to *Gunas* and becomes drowned in diversity himself. While living in equilibrium with his environment, man must at the same time focus on the Unity underlying diversity, which means trying to rise above the *Gunas*.

☛ According to *Vedanta*, the One became many when the *Gunas* “dormant” in the One deviated from equilibrium.

☛ Earlier it was mentioned that the

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wide diversity that can result from the various combinations of the three basic *Gunas* can be understood via the analogy with the mixture of the three basic colours, Red [R], Green [G], and Blue [B]. Figure 01 is an illustration of that concept.

☛ Notice how when R, G, B are fully mixed in equal proportions, one gets white colour [neutral equilibrium].

☛ Every person can be type cast by an “average” *Guna*. Usually one does this with words like, meek, dynamic, lazy, crafty, etc. At the same time, there could be temporary deviations from this average. For example, a so-called meek person could become very angry and aggressive under extreme provocation. In mathematical terms, one could say that the *Guna* of a person is a function of circumstances and time, and represent this fact as,

$$Guna = f(\text{circumstances, time}).$$

☛ In a human being, the *Gunas* are essentially encoded in the Mind.

☛ It is necessary to examine *Gunas* in the context of evolution of Circumstances dictate your behaviour



species, and man in particular.

☛ In Nature, one can recognise three strands of evolution as below:

☛ Science recognises only two of the strands shown above, that relating to the evolution of gross matter and inanimate objects in the Cosmos, and the origin of life and the

The three strands of evolution



subsequent evolution of the living species. It gives no consideration to the evolution of Consciousness in man. That is because scientists are not able to understand and accept Consciousness as an integral part of Creation.

☛ Diversity in Nature exists against a background of Cosmic Consciousness, and indeed evolution itself takes place against this invisible background. As a result, Consciousness permeates every entity including the so-called inanimate objects. That even inanimate objects can feel is clearly brought out by the story of the weeping sarees narrated by Hislop.

☛ Consciousness basically means awareness. Low-level consciousness that makes living beings aware of the external world is present in all living species, but here the focus is on higher-level Consciousness that makes a person aware of his Inner-

being.

☛ Man alone is endowed with the capability to achieve awareness of his Inner-being, and when this awareness is developed fully, he becomes liberated.

☛ This evolution of the awareness of the Inner-being can come about only when man transfers attention from diversity to the underlying Unity.

☛ It is important to distinguish between two types of evolution individual and collective.

☛ At any given point in human history, a select few may rise to a very high level and achieve liberation. Saints and sages belong to this category. At the same time, the bulk of humanity also evolves in its own way.

☛ The growth of human civilisation is one index of collective evolution. Concern for human rights is another. Concern for the environment is a third. Abolishing death penalty [which the countries belonging to the European Union have done], is yet another.

☛ There is concern that growth of modern science and technology has made people rather selfish. This is certainly true in the short run but all hope is not lost. The people of the first world are well educated and for that reason can also switch fast to a saner way of life. In the language of the *Gunas*, it is far easier to climb from the *Rajasic* to the *Sattvic* level than from the *Tamasic* to the *Sattvic* level. There is only one step to climb instead of two.

☛ What is the simple meaning of rise in Inner Consciousness? It means two things. Internally, the feelings, the thoughts, the words and

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the action of an evolved person are in perfect harmony. At the external level, such a person is in complete harmony with his surroundings, in fact the whole of Creation.

☛ *Guna* “management” is most essential for being in harmony with one's Inner Self and one's external environment. This harmony can be described as follows. A violin has four strings. Unless the four strings are properly tuned, the instrument cannot produce good music even in the hands of a great violinist. It is the same in the case of humans too; perfect inner and external harmony is necessary.

☛ What is the meaning of external harmony? Let us examine in some detail. In every society, there are

strata. This is inevitable and built into Creation whether one likes it or not. Thus, even in Communist Society, for example, there was a class structure. Now class structure need not always be oppressive. When the system gets skewed, people of every category would try to escape their obligations and an imbalance would automatically arise. Sometimes the swing would be one way and at other times it would be the other way.

☛ In autocratic societies for example, those who wield power would tend to exploit those at the bottom of the totem pole. On the other hand, in the name of socialism, labour can become intransigent and damage society. Obviously, both are undesirable.

☛ While one clearly understands what is actually desirable, in day to day life one has to encounter imbalance rather than balance. What does one do under these circumstances? This is where a good understanding of *Gunas* helps to a great extent.

☛ One who knows all about the play of the *Gunas* understands the psychology of the people he has to deal with and adopts the appropriate strategy. One can see this very clearly in the way Swami deals with students. These lessons are applicable to ordinary mortals also and in fact Swami teaches these lessons for all of us to follow!



Swami's Discourses in Brindavan

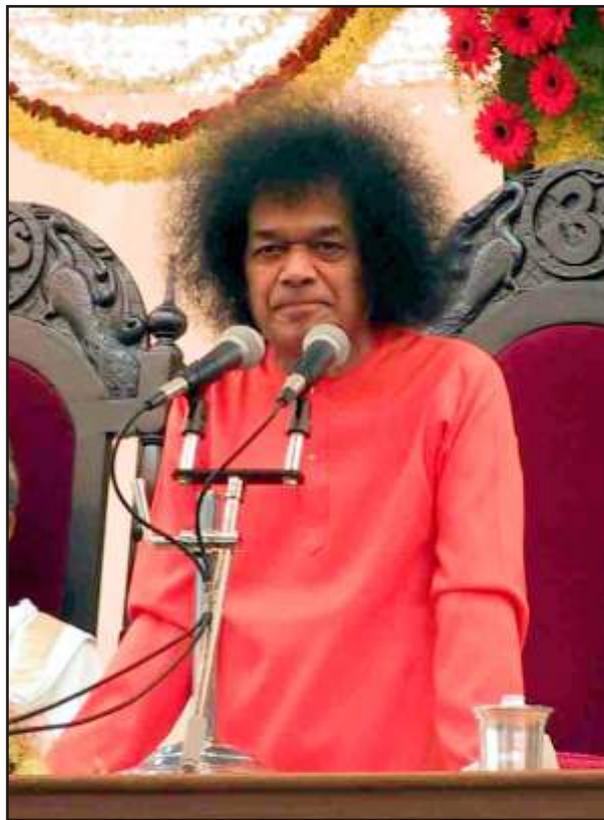
Reflections by Dr. G. Venkataraman

Loving Sai Ram, and greetings from Prasanthi Nilayam.

In this article, I wish to present some thoughts I once aired over the radio. Prior to this particular broadcast made a couple of years ago, I had spoken regarding Ugadi and the other New Year Days that were to immediately follow. I had just got back after a brief trip to Whitefield, and during my stay there, I heard what Bhagavan Baba said in His Divine Discourses on those festival days. In this article I wish to share with you some reflections on those Discourses. I shall, of course, try not to paraphrase those Discourses, since they have been broadcast by Radio Sai. What I would like to share with you presently are my own thoughts, as they came to me while I was hearing those Discourses.

During the year, we celebrate many festivals. We do it as a matter of routine, barely seeing any connecting link between the various festivals, except perhaps at a purely superficial level. In His recent Discourses, Swami emphasised that this is not correct. The ancients of India did not fill the calendar with numerous festivals without a proper reason. One should not imagine that on *Vinayaka Chaturthi* day one propitiates Ganesha, on *Krishna Jayanthi* we renew our insurance with Krishna, and so on. As a matter of fact this is what most people do; notwithstanding that, such simplistic thinking is a grave mistake. All festivals are in celebration of just One God for the simple reason there is only one God! What the different festivals seek to do is to direct our attention to the different aspects of this One God. For example, on Rama Navami day, we must reinforce our dedication to *Sathya* and *Dharma*, for that was what Rama stood for. On

Vinayaka Chaturthi day, we must focus on developing our *Buddhi* or intellect; on *Krishna Jayanthi* day, we must not only recall the teachings of Krishna as given to us in the *Bhagavad Gita*, but also how God is the very Embodiment of Nectarine Sweetness. And so on. The life style in ancient India was so designed that every activity, every day, and indeed every moment drew one's attention to God in some manner or the other.



On festival days, one typically wears good clothes, sometimes even new ones, and has a grand lunch, complete with a lot of sweet dishes. In fact, for many, a festival simply means a fabulous meal, and how eagerly they look forward to it! Swami is very critical of such an attitude. Thus He once said, "What is the use of wearing new clothes when the inside is dirty? The New Year, and indeed all festivals, must be celebrated not by covering up the dirt inside with new clothes but by scrubbing the inside clean."

This raises a question: "How does the

inside get dirty in the first place?" Swami has explained that on many occasions. For example, in the last of the *Navarathri* Discourses delivered in 2001, He said [in essence]: "You are a combination of the body, the Mind, and the *Atma*, Soul, or the Eternal Spirit, [call it what you like]. If your life is dictated entirely by your body, you descend to the level of an animal. If you allow your life to be guided by the Mind and the body colluding together, then you would end up as a demon. That is not how it should be. The Mind must be subservient to the *Atma*. Taking orders from the *Atma*, the Mind must control the body and the senses, directing them on the correct path." Swami has also repeated the same message in a slightly different way. He says that true Spirituality meant first destroying the animal and demonic qualities within, next living like a human should, and finally pulling oneself up to the level of the Divine.

Shortly before these new-year day festivals to which I made a reference, Swami gave a Discourse in Whitefield on the joint-family system. Earlier that day, Baba had visited the house of a long-time devotee, who is the patriarch of a large joint-family. In the olden days, we had in India what is called the joint-family system. In a family, the daughters would get married and go off to the houses of their respective husbands, but the sons would all stay together with their father and mother in the ancestral home. Even if the sons were married and had children of their own, they would all stay together. Apparently, it was the same in China. No doubt there were problems with such a family style, but on the whole the pluses seem to have outweighed the minuses. Today, of course, the joint-family system has practically vanished may be some

Swami's Discourses in Brindavan

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tribes somewhere still follow it but in India it is all but extinct. In His Discourse, Swami praised this system lavishly, pointing out the many advantages.

There is a reason why I am bringing all this up. The human being is like a joint-family. As Swami sometimes says, the *Atma* is like the grandfather, the Mind is like the father, and the body is like the grandson. If the human being followed the joint-family system within, then the Mind would take orders from the *Atma*, and the grandson, i.e., the body would go strictly according to the wishes of the father or the Mind. In this case, guided by the *Atma*, the Mind would enquire properly before embarking upon any action involving the body and the senses.

These days, people behave as they want, guided entirely by the body and the Mind. They call this the exercise of FREE WILL. Swami however asks: "How can you call this free will, when the person is completely under the control of the senses and is guided entirely by animal feelings?" Elsewhere, Baba points out [effectively]: "The *Atma* is the Divine Light, with the Effulgence of a billion Suns. You want to shut it out and live in darkness! Is this sane?" But that precisely is what modern man is doing.

In the Discourses I alluded to earlier, Bhagavan also drew pointed attention to how we waste time. For example, we worry about the future. How does this help? Instead, should we not be doing something so that the future turns out to be the way we want? If we want a good future, then the present must be utilised properly. But is that what we do? No! Swami said that what we do is to spend a lot of time criticising others. No use at all. We spend a lot of time chasing so-called happiness. Once again, a futile exercise. Some prefer to make a fortune, often by questionable

methods. Does happiness lie in money or within us? If money is happiness, then why did Ramakrishna Paramahansa feel so uncomfortable with money? Does happiness lie in alcohol? If it did, then why do some people spurn it while others relish it? No, happiness is within. Just as we hang a coat onto a hanger, we attach happiness to the objects that we desire. Swami repeated all this once more for our benefit.

We do not give enough attention to what Swami is saying and He is saying SO MUCH for our sake. We just do not bother to reflect on His message or even read carefully the text of His Discourses. Once when I was in Whitefield, I got a phone call from a cousin of mine in Singapore. He said that according to the information on the internet, Swami was headed for Kodaikanal on the 19th. He asked me if this was true. I was amazed when I heard this. I mean is this the way time must be spent, spreading rumours? I find that people spend an enormous amount of time speculating about Baba's movements instead of trying to understand His teachings. As one person in Brindavan told me: "When Swami is in Puttaparthi, every one asks when is Baba coming. After He comes to Brindavan, everyone now asks, when is He going to Kodaikanal. When He returns from Kodai, the speculation now shifts to, when is He returning to Puttaparthi?" This gentleman then asked me, "If people are so busy arranging Baba's travel, when will they find time to recall His teachings and to follow them?"

Yes, we waste a lot of time without realising the implications. As Swami told us recently He has of course done this in the past also once this body goes, it will not come back. The body and life come as one indivisible package. Do we fritter this opportunity? Is it for this that God

has conferred the boon of human birth?

Another thing that Swami talked about was gratitude. We all proclaim that we are grateful to Swami for this, that, and so forth. But let us search our Hearts: Are we really grateful to God in the true sense of the word? Do we thank Swami for the Earth, the Sun, the Wind, the Water, and so on? We never do. We take them all for granted. This only means that we fail to see God in the Five Elements. If you have heard carefully many of the Discourses of Baba that have been broadcast by Radio Sai, you would have noticed that the Five Elements form a recurring theme. The insight He gives into the Five Elements is extra-ordinary. I am no Vedic scholar but I am prepared to bet that even in the *Vedas*, the insight that Swami is now giving us cannot be found.

This is constantly happening. For example, on the Tamil and the Malayalam New Year day, Swami spoke about certain events related to the life of Rama that are not to be found in any of the known versions of the Ramayana. In fact, Swami Himself has not discussed them ever before! Thus, even though the days and the years might not bring anything new, Swami's Discourses always do. Even if He is speaking on a theme familiar to us, you can be sure He would be shedding new light on an old issue. All we must do is to keep our eyes and ears open. And when we have time on our hands, we would do well to spend it on chanting the Name so that every cell of the body gets charged with the Divine spirit. Incidentally, do not think I am giving you any advice. This is what Baba Himself said in His recent Discourse.

Far better it is to chant His Name that to send messages about His movements. This is not the message that Swami wants us to spread! Spreading rumours and misinformation in the name of service is

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not the type of *Seva* that He wants us to perform however much we might try to justify our actions. Swami says that His happiness increases when He makes others happy. I have personally seen this any number of times, especially on festival days. He would go around distributing this and that, seemingly without an end. And how His eyes would glow with Love then!

The bottom line is clear. If we want to make Swami happy, we must make others happy by seeing Swami in them. And we must make others happy not in the way we imagine; for example, we think we make people

happy by keeping them informed of speculations about Swami's movements. This type of alleged service, I can assure you, does not cut much ice with Baba. We must serve others in the way Swami would like us to. And this automatically rules out acting like self-appointed internet correspondents. Where Swami is concerned, He has clearly spelt out our priorities.

With Him, it is always the Inernet and never the Internet!

One last word, and then I am through. Some people complain: "Listen, you are saying the same thing

over and over again. There is nothing new." That is right! There is nothing new, because there is only one thing to say! What must be new is ourselves new improved versions of ourselves. I am always wonderstruck how much effort is being made to constantly improve soap and tooth paste [just look at the ads if you do not believe me]! If we can do so much for tooth paste, why not a bit for ourselves? Disagree? Does not matter but do write to us and tell us why you do so!

JAI SAI RAM.
G.VENKATARAMAN

Hospital Statistics

BANGALORE SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL	
Cumulative statistics from 19 Jan 2001 to 30 June 2004.	
Cardiac Surgeries	: 4,493
Cardiac Catheterisation	: 7,904 [4,073-Diagnostic; 3,831-Interventional]
Neuro Surgeries	: 3,864
CT Scans	: 13,868
MRI Exams	: 14,478
PUTTAPARTHI SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL	
Cumulative statistics from 22 November 1991 to 30 June 2004.	
Heart surgeries	: 14037
Cath procedures	: 14245
Urology surgeries	: 23613
Ophthalmology surgeries	: 23590
CT scans	: 3771

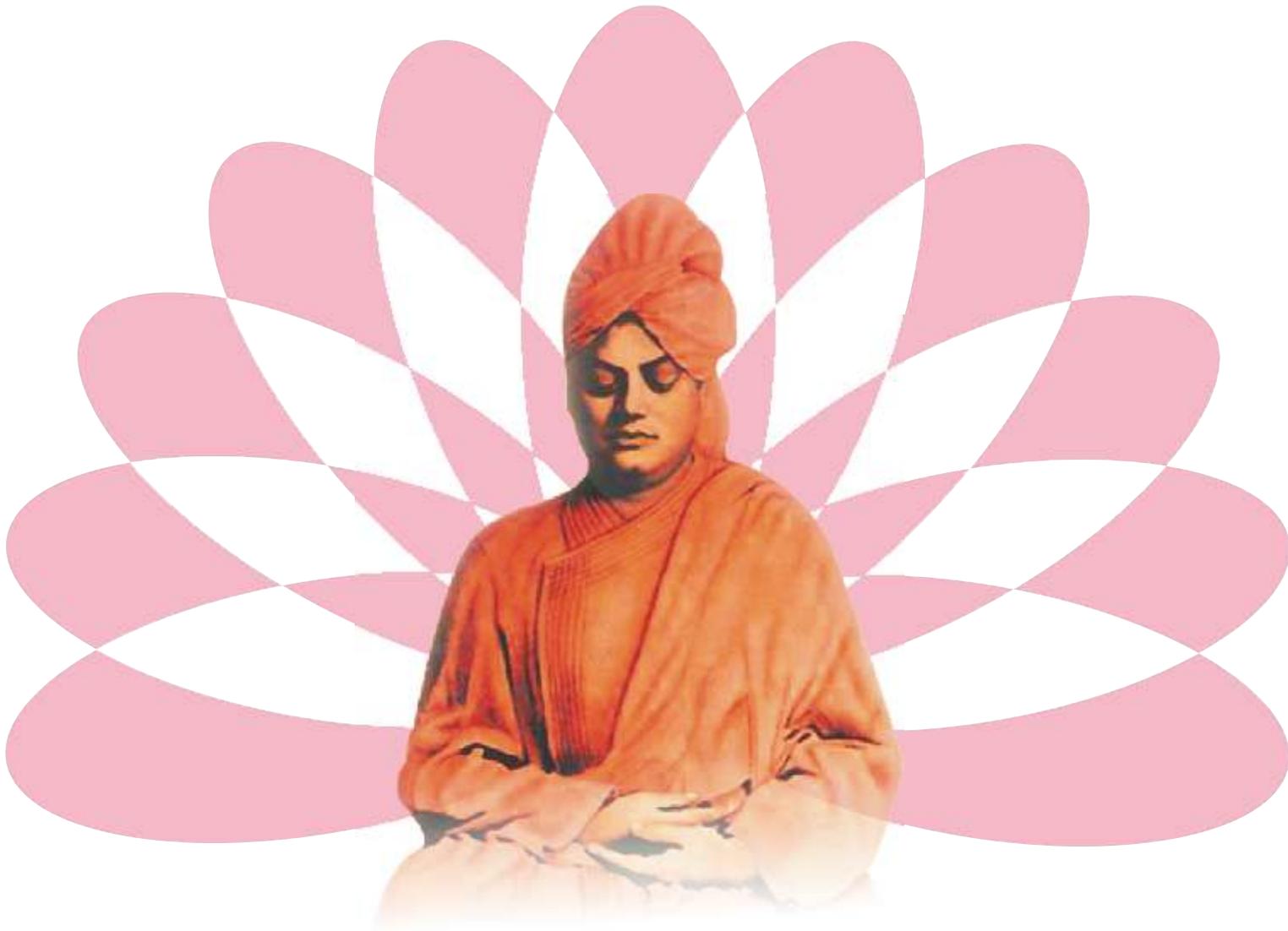
Break All Other Idols!

He who is in you and outside you
Who works through all hands,
Who works on all feet
Whose body are all ye,
Him worship and break all other idols!

He who is at once the high and low,
The sinner and the saint
Both God and worm,
Him worship visible, knowable, real,
omnipresent,
In whom is neither past life

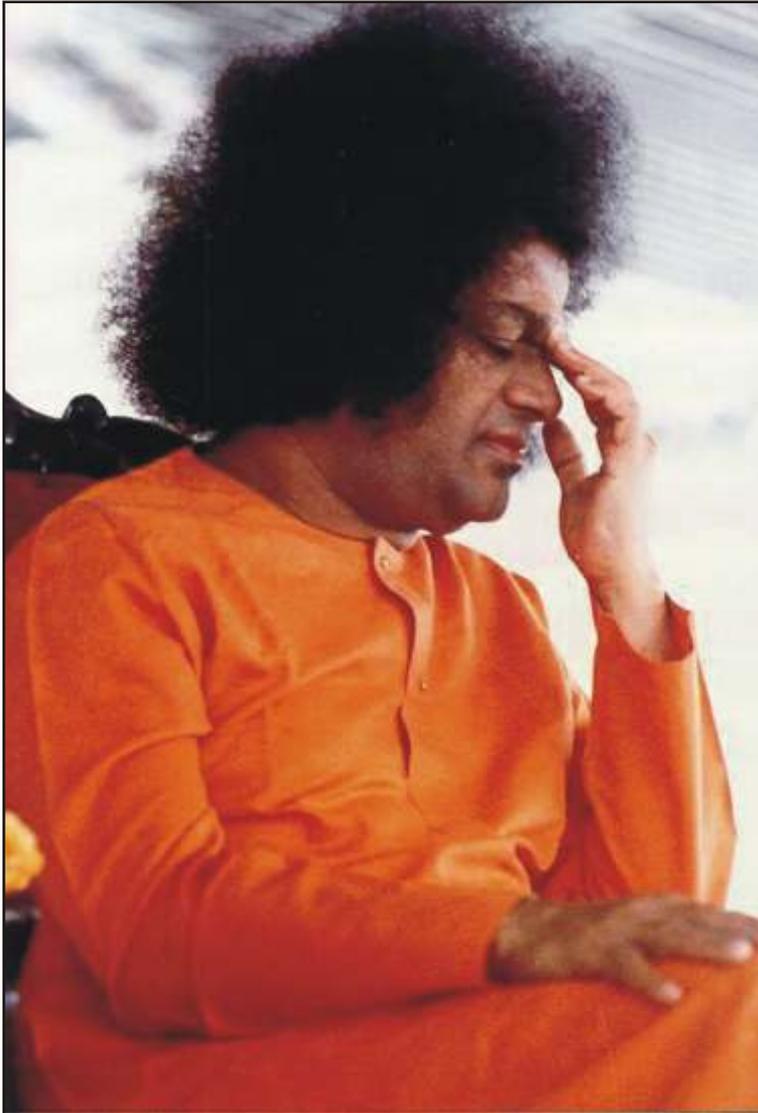
Nor future birth nor death,
In whom we always have been
And always shall be one,
Him worship and break all other idols!

Ye fools! Who neglect the living God,
And His infinite reflections with
which the world is full,
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
Him worship, the only visible!
Break all other idols!



The Master of My Destiny

The experiences of a student



the tiny island of the Trinidad, “What is that Swami expects of me in this beautiful island. I had no clue whatsoever and my first few days in the country were of sheer misery-having left parents, family and motherland, I was in a dilemma...I wondered if that was a correct decision in my life ? But, the only consolation was the fact that I had asked Bhagawan personally about it.

While contemplating upon Swami's words, I kept trying to get in touch with Sathya Sai Organization in Trinidad... I also wondered, if this small island did have any organization, in the first place. My only solace was the fact that I had seen Swami's picture in the newspaper and I had a ray of hope regarding finding the organization.

With Swami's grace I had my work permit papers processed by my hospital within a months time (usually it takes 4-6 months time) and I went to the local transport office for my car license exam .While I was taking a photograph for the license , a young lady turned up to me and asked me very politely.. “Are you a devotee of Sai Baba ? “ For a moment I did not know what to answer and before I could reply, she said “I remember seeing you at the Sai centre here !” I managed to get my composure back and replied that this is my first trip outside my hospital campus and that I was, in fact, looking forward to get in touch with Sai centre. She was surprised to know that I had moved into Trinidad recently and was kind enough to give me the number of her brother-in-law, Mr. Rajendra Bansi, who happened to be the convener of north zone of Sri Sathya Sai Organization.

“Manchidi Bangaru.... ekkadikayna vellu....kani service cheyyi..!! (Go wherever you want to go but do service)”.These were the words which kept ringing in my ears...when I was in my maiden trans-atlantic flight to the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago. These were the words which Swami blessed me with, when I asked for His consent for me to leave India for higher studies abroad.

I never imagined that at that moment of my life that I would be traveling to Trinidad and it was once again Swami's Divine play that I landed up at Trinidad Embassy seeking a visa to go to Trinidad. While I was waiting to meet the High Commissioner of Trinidad in India, I casually opened a newspaper from Trinidad and what I saw in the newspaper left me awestruck. In the newspaper was a smiling picture of Swami and an article written on Him. I was convinced beyond doubt that...Swami was going to be with me.

While the flight was landing, I wondered, looking at

I started attending satsangs regularly at the centre and 3 monthly medical camps...and the people in the Sai organization showered me with so much love, which I cannot emphatically describe in words. Once they came to know I was a Sai Student they asked me to share my experiences with Bhagwan and it went to the extent of me giving a radio programme on one of the FM stations..where they interviewed me about my stay at Puttapparthi.

While I have realized the importance of being a Sai student , it also concerned me, that the expectations of the Sai devotees regarding Sai students are also very high. I always remember Swami's words during my 12th standard, wherein he clearly stated “It is not a problem for me, if you don't get marks...but never get remarks!”...and also..when he said “When you leave the institute, if you cannot bring good name to your institute...at least don't get a bad name !! “

The Master of My Destiny

The experiences of a student

But with Swami's grace my stay had been a wonderful one in Trinidad and the Sai family was like my own family and I had become much closer to Swami during my two years stay there. Now, having come to UK and working in one of the prestigious hospitals in London, I often recollect Swami's words, which he once said in an interview "The whole world is in my hand...all that you have to do is hold on to the other hand and I shall give you whatever you deserve"

Just to emphasize this with my own experience : I was one of those city-bred public school brats during my school days, whose main interest in life was to miss school and play cricket as much as possible. It was primarily due to the devotion of my parents that I did manage to go to Parthi during my 8th standard when Swami blessed us with an interview. During the interview Swami asked me what I wanted to become in life. The brat I was...I answered most haughtily that I wanted to become an engineer ! I clearly remember even to this day that Swami laughed most heartily to my reply and hugged me but at the same time gave some nice pats on my back. Maybe for all the mischievous deeds I have done in my life ! He told me clearly that I was weak in mathematics and that I needed to concentrate on my studies and always listen to my parents.

I never ever imagined that my life would change so much in years to come after the interview. I started to work hard at my studies but only to the extent that I just managed to pass my pre-finals of my 10th standard exams ! I applied for both mathematics/biology groups and managed to get short-listed for written exam in biological sciences. I wrote my entrance exam and with Swami's divine grace I managed to secure a seat in higher secondary school at Puttaparthi.

If there is any example of how Swami's institute can transform an individual and prove that Swami's educational system...based upon human values is the best in the world, I am a living testimony of that fact. Is it possible for a person who just managed to pass his pre-finals in 10th standard to score a high percentage of 90.4% in 12th standard? Is it possible for him to be a doctor? I have no qualms saying that I owe what ever I am today to His mercy and abundant love.

Many people ask me what did Swami give you ? Any rings, medallions? My only reply to them is that HIS greatest gift to me is His LOVE and the transformation it has brought about in my life. I wonder, if I am worthy of so much love and ask myself the question "Is my life a gift to HIM?"

I would like to end with a very personal experience of mine. My mother once dreamt that she was attacked by a bandit (covered in a black blanket) and who was pulling her mangalsutra (a thread worn around the neck that is most sacred for married Indian women; probably more

important than life itself!)! She was crying desperately to Swami to rescue her. Then Swami appeared and seeing Him, the bandit left her mangalsutra and escaped. She woke up totally shaken up by the dream and praying Swami for His grace. Few weeks after this incident, my father happened to visit Puttaparthi for Swami's darshan and while returning from Puttaparthi , the car he was traveling accidentally skidded off the road and toppled 3 times over and fell into a ditch off the road. The local villagers were even scared to approach the vehicle expecting the inevitable. While the car was skidding off the road, all that my father remembers was saying "Sairam!" . The car was in a total wreck, but there wasn't even a scratch on my father or the driver of the car. This is our Swami, who can do anything and everything for us, HIS children.

I have no other words to saybut...

" Jeevan daatha ..Bhagya vidhaatha....Yuga Yuga Vandan Sai....Yuga Yuga Vandan Sai"

"O Bestower of Life! O Master of my Destiny! I bow down to You!"

That Feeling of Love

-By His School Boy

School time is the best time for everybody. All of us miss those little games! Locked up within us, that spontaneity and that sweet simple nature still remains a treasure gifted by those times.

"What is it that Swami does not have in His room?"

"Something that we could make and send to Him..."

We, a small group of ninth class boys, sat discussing for long. In an hour's time, we were already cutting a sheet of thermacol, checking angles and putting forth all our engineering skills. Luckily we had a good pair of scissors; the thick sheet of paper was being cut into regular rectangular pieces, "1, 2, 3..." another boy went on counting and numbering the pieces with the nicest of calligraphic pens having a flattened nib! After a couple of hours, we caught hold of a beautiful white wrapping paper with blue and purple flowers.

"Hey, look here, I have a pen stand; it even has these small compartments for paper pins, clips, stamps, etc."

After serious consideration and due deliberation, the pen stand was also included. As a compromise, we added a

thermocool sheet for base, spanning the bottom of the entire gift. There was that beautiful calendar, with a pen stand beside it, simple but elegant! No automatic date change, no fancy music, not even those photos of the sun and the moon, which we usually find. But believe it or not, it had lots of love. The first compartment was filled with cloves; second with paper pins and the third was empty to let the User have His choice! One pen and an ink eraser was placed in the pen stand, if our memory is still strong. This whole gift was then encased in another carton box about 18 cms long, 9 cms wide and 8 cms high. Holding this piece carefully, we approached our teacher-in-charge.

"Sir, could you please go over to Swami's residence and give this gift?"

"Well, I can try but you will have to pray hard. Don't you want to tell me what you have inside?"

"Sir, it is a gift of Love to our Mother"

Swami was informed about the gift and that lucky piece of thermacol went into His room. After a few days, an elder



That Feeling of Love

-By His School Boy

Your Love is all I want

brother who takes care of things inside Swami's room sent a message to our teacher in-charge:

"Sir, believe me, He won't let anyone change the date; He would himself put his finger into the paper pouch and lift each piece of paper in accordance with the date. Everyday before He goes out for Darshan, this gift steals His attention. He occasionally picks up a clove from the compartment. And when the Prime Minister of India was to visit this room, He had everything cleared from the tabletop only this little gift remained!"

For our most loving Mother, that feeling of Love was most important.

"Do you fellows think Swami will climb up fifty steps to see your prayer room?"

We little boys stole two arches made of a bent rod, stayed awake the whole night; white washed the walls all along the way (we had to redo it twice because the first time, by mistake, we used white bleaching powder instead of white cement!) The senior brothers decorated the hostel quadrangle and made elaborate arrangements for Swami's visit.

Swami came and spent some time in the hostel quadrangle. There were songs, speeches and also a small drama. After the programme, the senior boys were asked to go into the dining hall and occupy their seats for dinner. Swami was about to enter the hall. We small monkeys, the school boys, were climbing up the small parapet wall to see Swami.

"Swami, please come and bless our shrine also", an eighth class boy prayed pulling Swami's Hand. "Where is your shrine?"

"Swami, up in the third floor"

The whole lot of us ran up three staircases and reached our prayer hall. Step-by-step, fifty in all, He physically climbed up to bless our simple shrine. He was so happy seeing our simple decoration. He blessed the main photo

with His signature; threw toffees. To add to the confusion we belted out some loud songs. The seniors were waiting for fifteen minutes locked in their seats in the dining hall.

Later, the warden told us that Swami had not climbed up those stairs even during the inauguration of the hostel. That was the very first time.

For our most loving Mother that feeling of love was most important.

Some time in the middle part of 1994, the Sai Kulwant Hall construction had began and Swami's residence in the Poornachandra Hall was being modified. Swami was in Brindavan for a very long time, about five months.

"This is too much"

"We have to bring him back"

"We want Swami"

"Let us do Namasmara. Swami's form will be pulled by His Name!"

And soon we launched the Continuous Namasmara Scheme throughout the day and the night. One batch of students would leave the altar only when another batch of students continue to chant 'AUM SRI SAI RAM'

"Swami, it rained heavily and a lot of work is being redone."

"Doesn't matter. Even if one small room is ready for Me, it is sufficient. I have to go back to Puttaparthi immediately. My boys are praying for Me."

In two to three days time, Swami started from Brindavan. We had to clean up the pieces of bricks, lots of sand, nails and metal rods in the Sai Kulwant Hall in a hurry.

For our most loving Mother, that feeling of love is the most important ever.

Prashanti Diary



Concert by Music College Boys

for Guru Poornima is still weeks away. The darshan crowd is still sparse. It is like one cozy family, relaxing at the feet of the Lord, basking in His limitless love. The sonorous holy Vedic chants by the students pervades the atmosphere and surcharge it with spiritual energy.

This bucolic setting provided a back-drop for the students of Sathya Sai to regale Him with a choice program of music and drama, expressing their love and gratitude for all that He has done for them. We bring you this report, of course with exclusive pictures, for your enjoyment.

The programs were kicked off with a Classical concert by the students of the Sai Mirpuri College of Music on June 13. They started with Pancha Mathanga, in Malahari Raga, Roopakam Tala, composed by Sri Muthuswamy Dikshithar in praise of Pancha Mathanga Mukha Ganapathi or Lord Ganesha with five faces. This was followed by the krithi Brova Bharama in Bahudari raga and Adi Talam. Here Sri Tyagaraja asks Rama whether it is a heavy burden for Him to protect a single soul such as him. Following this was Nee Daya Rada (Vasantha Bhairave, Roopakam talam), where Thyagaraja asks Rama plaintively whether He would accept him and his devotion. In the next krithi, Varamulasagi, Sri Patnam Subramaniam Iyer asks Lord Venkatesha, the ultimate bestower of boons, to save him from worldly bondage. This was followed by a song on the leelas of Lord Krishna by Narayana Theertha. The last two songs sung by the students



Telugu Drama by SSSIHL Students

June is a relaxed, laid-back time in Puttaparthi. Swami has just returned from Brindavan. The rush of devotees

were Thillana and then Adi Purusha, where Sri Annamacharya describes the Lord of the seven hills,

Venkatesha, as the Ultimate One and the ruler of the seven worlds. He describes His beauty and His might in this song.



Blessing the Mangoes

Swami liked the program so much that the Music college boys were allowed to sing again in His Divine presence on June 26, 2004. This time He invited them to come up to the verandah and sit next to Him facing all the devotees. The boys were thrilled at this honour and gave a moving concert of Carnatic and Hindustani music that had the audience enthralled.

On June 17, the boys of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) presented a drama, entitled 'Service is my life breath' in Telugu. The story was that of two sons and a father who reside in a village. The elder son is interested in worldly name and fame, while the younger believes in serving his fellowmen in the village. The difference in opinion breaks the family apart and the righteous father stays back with the younger son. After a series of dramatic events, the elder son realizes his folly only to return and join the brother in his good work.

Indian summer is always synonymous with the consumption of the mango, the King of Fruits. On June 19th, in the evening, Swami sent a group of students scurrying to His residence in Poornachandra. Interest was heightened, curiosity was whetted - what is going on? Everyone broke out in smiles when the boys came trooping back, each carrying a basket of the golden fruit, neatly packed in a bed of hay. The baskets were opened, the fruits were blessed by Swami and the now doubly sweet prasadam was distributed to the delight of one and all.

These readers are familiar with the Deena Janoddhara Pathakamu (DJP), a home for destitute boys that



Distributing the mangoes to all

Prashanti Diary



DJDP Drama

of their second anniversary, a playlet in Sai Kulwant Hall in the morning. They narrated their unfortunate background before they were brought into His fold. Almost all of them were either without a father or were orphans with no one to look after them, and not knowing where their next meal was going to come from. Several boys were tending sheep or cattle in the hillocks for a morsel of food. The transformation of the boys in just two years has been, according to them, phenomenal and unbelievable. All the boys who could neither read nor write Telugu when they came to the Home are now able to recite poems in Telugu, slokas in Sanskrit, and speak extempore in English. Seven of the boys who appeared for the Class X Public Exam, passed in the first class, a very creditable achievement. A dumb boy who was brought to the Home is now able to speak, a cancer stricken boy is now completely cured. As the boys related, what they have had at the Home, under the direct benediction of Bhagavan is very much beyond their comprehension. "Is this real or a dream?" they wondered at the conclusion of their play.

On June 23 rd, Swami kindly permitted some students of the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Learning (SSSIHL) to speak in His Divine Presence to the crowd. All of them related their love and gratitude to Bhagavan, for the transforming effect He has had on their lives and for the care and nourishment He has shown them at trying moments in their lives.



DJDP Boys expressing their love for Swami

we featured in a recent cover story (Vol 2 Issue 12). These boys numbering 60, presented on June 20, on the occasion

On June 24th, the students of the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School presented a cultural program entitled 'Dharma

Vaibhavam' The Glory of Dharma. The programme unfolded different dimensions of Dharma as manifested in the lives of the great men of India. The students demonstrated the glory of Dharma by presenting dharmic episodes from the lives of Lord Sri Rama, Harischandra, Gautama Buddha and Satyakama Jabali. At the end they showed that Bhagavan is the supreme embodiment of Dharma, for He is Dharma Swaroop himself.

June 29th saw the presentation by the Bala Vikas children of the Indian states of Maharashtra and Goa on the occasion of Ashada Ekadashi. This and the Guru Poornima celebrations lasting upto July 5th is reported in our cover story.



SSIHL student expressing his love for Swami



Drama by High School Students



Clothes for Waiting Boys

Divine Impressions

Niramala Hridaya Virajitha Charanam.....
The Holy Feet That Dwell In A Pure Heart !



Footprints of Love

Walk For Values, 29th May 2004, Canada

It doesn't get more real than this. The divine presence was palpable in the gentle caress of breeze, the picture perfect weather with a high of 18 degrees Celsius, sunny, blue skies, the warmth of late spring, thousands of smiling faces and blissful hearts ... love pervaded every step of the Walk. Our Founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba led us in spirit on the march to transform ourselves in our effort to improve the world. For the record, several preceding weekends in Toronto had been cold, wet and grey.

The Sathya Sai School of Canada's second annual Walk for Values was held in a total of eight Canadian cities including Abbotsford, Coquitlam and Vancouver in British Columbia, Calgary in Alberta, Saskatoon and Winnipeg in the prairies and our national capital Ottawa. In the city of Toronto, over three thousand people walked in unison to raise their self-esteem and consciousness, not money. Talk of wearing your heart on your sleeve, well almost all participants at the Walk for Values had to display their personal pledges boldly on their attractive white T-shirts printed with red and blue logos.

Dedicated volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Centres of the Greater Toronto Area were the first ones to turn up on the lovely morning of Saturday, May 29, 2004 at the corner of Brimley Road and Lawrence Avenue. Dressed in bright red sweatshirts, from a distance, they appeared like crimson flowers against the lush green background of the park. The word "Volunteer" and the logo of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation on their clothes made it easy to identify them in the sea of white T-shirts. Upon arrival, they got busy organising the venue for the 3 km walk to Scarborough Civic Centre. Registration booths, T-shirt stalls, and portable toilets were all set up before participants began to pour in.

Opening ceremonies included the soulful rendering of "O Canada" by professional singer Jennifer Sohan and prayers from the First Nations by Gold Mitch of International Association of Educators for World Peace. His chanting was accompanied by the beat of the native Indian drum. Sai youth stood out like our Founder Sathya Sai's brave young ambassadors, cheering the crowds, motivating the participants, managing the numerous logistics such as registration, on-site T-shirt distribution, conducting warm-up drills and shooting and beaming globally on the school's



website all the going-ons live, via webcast. Even as the event was just beginning, our website had received hits from various parts of the world.

In light of our Founder's advice that the noblest of all gifts is the gift of food, participants liberally donated non-perishable food items, such as grains, cereals, baby food, cookies, pasta and canned food for the needy at the stall that was set up by the Fort York Food Bank at the venue where the Walk began.

At the opening ceremonies, Honourable Jim Karygiannis, MP for Scarborough-Agincourt and Parliamentary Secretary to the

Minister for Transport read out Honourable Prime Minister Paul Martin's message of commendation for upholding values which bind Canadian families and contribute to the well being of our social fabric.

Principal of the Sathya Sai School, Mr. T.R. Pillay reminded everyone of the inscription at Niagara Falls which says: "With its thunderous majesty, Niagara reminds us of the boundless energizing power of a higher force, such that will one day be the power of peace on earth. When human beings everywhere aspire and strive for peace based on love and the feeling of oneness, the cascading power of peace will transform the fate of humanity."

He further said that "it is in this spirit that we have gathered here today each pledging to practice a value for self-transformation, and sharing a common desire for a safer and peaceful society....Inspired by the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, this Walk too has assumed a distinctive character. It is a raiser of awareness, not a raiser of money. Its seed is personal commitment, not the womb of collective outrage. It is enshrined in the hope that positive change is possible. It is above all a fellowship of hearts which throb in unison to the rhythm of all that is worthy and noble."

The participants in Toronto were led by the students of the Sathya Sai School, a private and tuition-free school located in the heart of Scarborough that specialises in integrating Character Education within the Ontario Academic Curriculum. The students marched under the banner of "Character" echoing the motto of the school that "The End of Education is Character". Others who rallied behind them were divided into five groups, each representing a human value, namely Truth, Right Conduct,

Footprints of Love

Walk For Values, 29th May 2004, Canada



Peace, Love and Non-violence.

They were accompanied by three large floats colourfully highlighting human values and carrying Sathya Sai School kindergarteners and some Grade 4 pupils who were dressed like great personalities who practiced Human Values in their lives, such as the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Albert Einstein, Helen Keller and others. The energetic band from Salvation Army atop one of the floats added spring to the step of our walkers.

The 3 km walk ended with celebrations at the Scarborough Civic Centre where participants arrived at the Albert Campbell Square to receive their lunch packets and to view an exhibition on Value Parenting.

Befitting the theme of the Walk, a mother of a victim of violence, Julia Farquharson of U-Move Group along with other dignitaries planted a Peace Tree at the concluding ceremonies. U-Move represents families who have lost their dear ones to mindless violence.

Lately Scarborough, located in the east end of Toronto has been in news for all the wrong reasons such as street shootings. At the Sathya Sai School's Walk for Values, the neighbourhood saw thousands including peace loving and civic-conscious residents, parliamentarians, policy pundits, decision makers, educators and law enforcement officers turn up to endorse the efforts of North America's only Values Education School to revive and restore Toronto to its former glory of "Toronto the Good." Organised by the students and parents of the Sathya Sai School, this unique event brought together diverse groups of people, proving the universal appeal of our Founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message of human values which transcends party, faith or racial lines.

Going beyond the conventional money pledges, the participants made personal promises to change the world around them by changing themselves first as a part of their

personal crusade to self-improve. They reminded themselves and others of Baba's advice that individual transformation is the key to social transformation and the best route to this goal is through the practice of human values. The organisers presented a plaque to Councillor Mike Del Grande who was representing Mayor David Miller. In his acceptance speech, Councillor Del Grande suggested that the Sathya Sai School would do well to administer a dose of Education in Human Values to the city's and country's parliamentarians.

Mr. Tony Warr, the Superintendent of Police, 42 Division was present on behalf of Toronto Police Chief, Julian Fantino. Commending the great awareness the Sathya Sai School was creating about the practice of human values in daily life, he quoted Mahatma Gandhi who said "Become the change you want in the world." He hoped the media would give this positive event the coverage it deserves.

Representatives from the three levels of Government addressed the concluding ceremonies, bringing the messages of appreciation from the Canadian Parliament and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Several of them acknowledged the need to bring in the five human values into the various levels of governance. They further reminder the gathering of the need to be proactive in practising human values if we wish to preserve the values system in society. Evil will prevail if good people do nothing, was the consensus among the speakers. These included Derek Lee, MP, Dr. Shafiq Qadri, MPP and Councillors Raymond Cho & Mike Del Grande. Former MPP and Member of the Liberal Party, Mr. Raminder Gill brought greetings from Stephen Harper, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Canada was represented by Central Co-ordinator Dr. V.P. Singh and Chairperson Ms. Myriam Jozsa.

Ms. Jozsa expressed her profuse gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Founder of the school, for teaching the five human values and inspiring so many people around the world to practice them. She said the event had touched her



Footprints of Love

Walk For Values, 29th May 2004, Canada

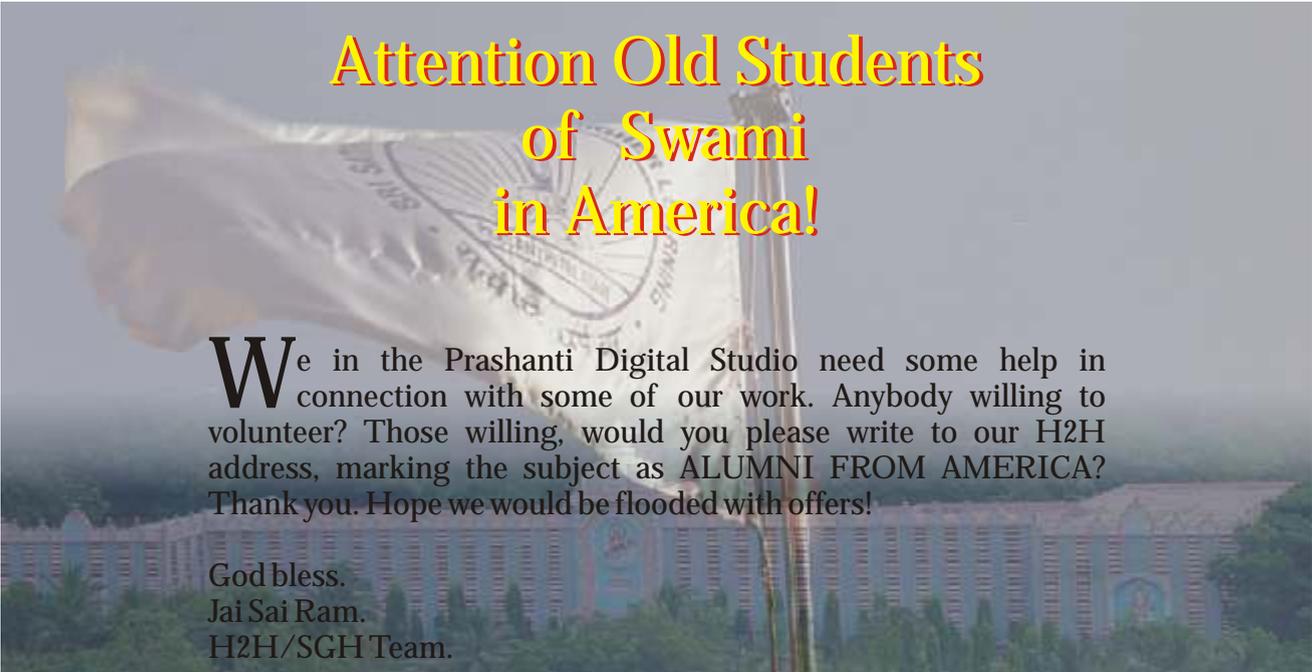
heart and moved her deeply. She felt a strong need for the entire Sai fraternity in Canada and the world to organise similar Walk for Values, a divinely inspired brain child of Toronto's Sathya Sai School.

Earlier in the year, when the organisers of this walkathon had sought various permits from the city to hold an event of this magnitude, a sizeable contingent of Ontario Provincial Police was assigned to control the crowd and ensure its smooth completion. On the actual day, the dedicated teams of Sai volunteers had everything planned to the last detail and the event was so orderly and peaceful, that the police officers on duty did little else than enjoy the fine weather. When asked to comment on their experience, several police constables were unanimous in saying that it was indeed a privilege and an honour for them to be associated with such a remarkable celebration. They admitted that they had nothing to do as everything was exceptionally well organised and planned. They also commented positively on the participants' sense of civic consciousness and discipline. The volunteers of the Sai organisation shone as examples of selfless service as personified by our role model and Founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Corporal Wakisan who led a team from Canadian Forces in uniform was so impressed by the function that he promised to bring over 100 officers for next year's walk.

The icing on the cake was a presentation by three Sathya Sai School students - Kirusanthi Kaneshwaran, Kumaran Subendran and Nakeah Fearon-Spence. Their excellent oratory and entertaining expressions to convey how they are taught in their school to learn and live in the light of the five human values won the adoration of the audience.

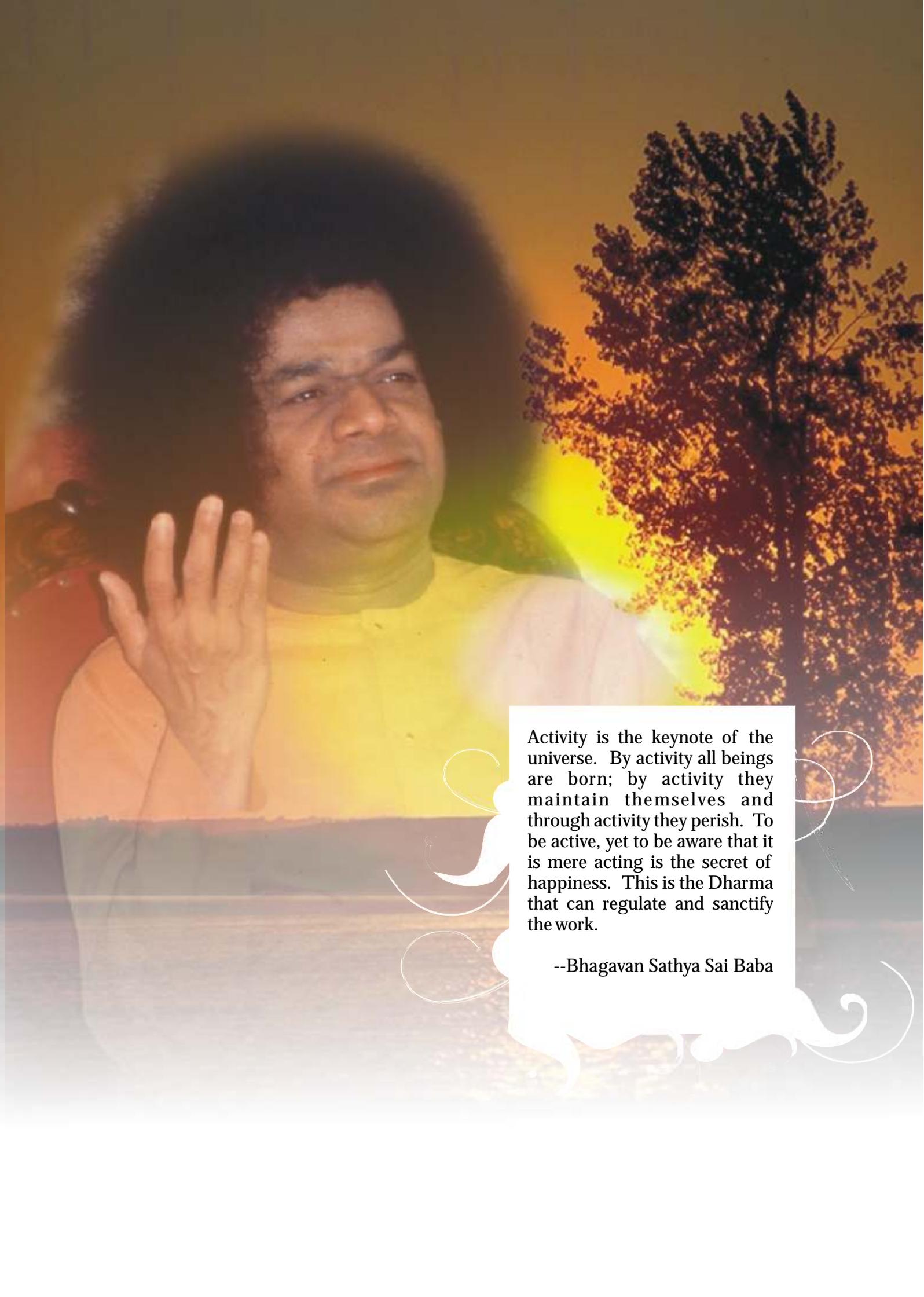
Students of the Agincourt Junior Public School Band and professional singer Jennifer Sohan entertained the gathering at the end as did Mitch Gold of the International Association of Educators for World Peace bringing messages of love and truth from the Eskimo elders. Several Canadian media outlets carried reports of this one-of-a-kind walk and the one-of-its-kind Sathya Sai School behind it. The Divine presence was experienced in everything and by everyone at this celebration of our Founder's teachings.



Attention Old Students of Swami in America!

We in the Prashanti Digital Studio need some help in connection with some of our work. Anybody willing to volunteer? Those willing, would you please write to our H2H address, marking the subject as ALUMNI FROM AMERICA? Thank you. Hope we would be flooded with offers!

God bless.
Jai Sai Ram.
H2H/SGH Team.



Activity is the keynote of the universe. By activity all beings are born; by activity they maintain themselves and through activity they perish. To be active, yet to be aware that it is mere acting is the secret of happiness. This is the Dharma that can regulate and sanctify the work.

--Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL