

## **HEART 2 HEART**

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## **BETWEEN YOU AND US**

Six scores and half a decade ago, one fine morning, Young Sathya returned from school, cast away His books and declared to His sister-in-law, *"I am going; I don't belong to you; Maya has gone; My devotees are calling Me; I have My Work; I can't stay any longer"*. From that momentous morning on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Oct, 1940, Young Sathya never looked back and today the whole world looks up to Him. Politicians to sportspersons, professors to lawyers, bureaucrats to businessmen, common man to presidents and Prime ministers...everybody flocks to Prashanti Nilayam to seek His guidance and blessings.

On the first week of September, it was the turn of healthcare professionals. More than 900 doctors, health administrators, and other professionals connected with the medical profession converged at His Lotus Feet for an unprecedented international conference on "Sai Ideal Healthcare For All". They discussed the Sai Health Mission and reminded themselves of the nobility inherent in the doctors' profession.

For two days they basked in His love... and were transformed and charged... to dedicate themselves in the service of humanity and as one Doctor from the US said, ***"I pray that Swami will continue to inspire me to serve my patients with love, compassion, and humility so that I can be a pure instrument of His Love"***. This is the sentiment that echoed from every participant. You will know what the distinguished speakers spoke at the conference, what Swami told the doctors and what the doctors told Swami, when you read our detailed account of this in our cover story. We have tried our best to bring alive the highlights of the conference with lots of pictures and even audio files for you to download. You are going to be transported to the Sai Kulwant Hall...

In the last issue, we carried a story on the Mumbai deluge and how the Sai workers went to the rescue of the affected and the distressed. Now we bring you a feature on Katrina. We tell you what are Swami's views on natural disasters and what are the lessons that Swami wants us to learn from such occurrences. Rita has also struck in the meantime and the sooner man learns the better.

Col. Joga Rao and Sri Ajit Haksar - two important personalities of the Sai family are no more with us. While Col. Joga Rao was an engineer par excellence who served Swami for more than two decades erecting most of the structures that adorn the ashram today, Sri Ajit Haksar was an illustrious industrialist who first came to Swami in 1981 and played an important role in the setting up of the management programme in Swami's institute when the course started in 1986.

By now, you must have heard about the St. Louis Mayor's proclamation on Sai Baba. In case, you haven't, or want to see the actual document, go to our article in the miscellaneous section. You will also find in this issue a very

moving article in the Window to Sai Seva section about a school for special needs children in Kuwait. This is a must-read. For, it is surely going to inspire you.

When you see the pictures of Swami's giving tokens of appreciation to doctors in the cover story and then lovingly distributing watches and clothes to sweepers and cleaners of the ashram in the Prashanti Diary of this issue, we are sure, you are going to say, *"This is the our compassionate Lord, our beloved Sai."*

Before we leave you to explore this issue, one last word - don't miss the photo album. We have some old pictures of Swami sitting in decorated palanquins as He used to do during *Dasara* processions in yester years, as this is the month of *Dasara*. *Dasara* reminds one of the sonorous Vedic chants that fill the ashram during this enchanting festival.

Let us fill ourselves with these holy vibrations.  
Let us transport ourselves to the holy land of Prashanti Nilayam.  
Let us be in peace and love.

Loving Regards,  
Heart2Heart Team.

## **SPIRITUAL BLOSSOMS**

### **SATHYA SAI SPEAKS**

#### **WHO IS SAI?**

***20th October is the Avathar Declaration Day - the day in 1940 when Baba, at the tender age of 14, declared "I AM SAI BABA".***

**GOD is inscrutable. He cannot be realised in the outer objective world; He is in the very heart of every being. Gemstones have to be sought deep underground;** they do not float in mid-air. Seek God in the depths of yourself, not in tantalising, kaleidoscopic Nature. The body is granted to you for this high purpose; but, you are now misusing it, like the person who cooked his daily food in the gemstudded gold vase that came into his hands as an heirloom.

Man extols God as omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, but, he ignores His Presence in himself! Of course, many venture to describe the attributes of God and proclaim Him to be such and such; but, these are but their own guesses and the reflections of their own predilections and preferences.

Who can affirm that God is this or that? Who can affirm that God is not of this form or with this attribute? Each one can acquire from the vast expanse of the ocean only as much as can be contained in the vessel he carries to its shore. From that quantity, they can grasp but little of that immensity. Each religion defines God within the limits it demarcates and then claims to have grasped Him. Like the seven blind men who spoke of the elephant as a pillar, a fan, a rope or a wall, because they contacted but a part and could not comprehend the entire animal, so too, religions speak of a part and assert that its vision is full and total.

#### **There is Only One Religion - The Religion of Love**

**Each religion forgets that God is all Forms and all Names, all attributes and all assertions. The religion of Humanity is the sum and substance of all these partial faiths; for, there is only one Religion and that is the Religion of Love.** The various limbs of the elephant that seemed separate and distinct to the eye-less seekers of its truth were all fostered and activated by one single stream of blood; the various religions and faiths that feel separate and distinct are all fostered by one single stream of love.

The optical sense cannot visualise the Truth. It gives only false and fogged information. For example, there are many who observe My actions and start declaring that My nature is such and such. They are unable to gauge the sanctity, the majesty and the eternal reality that is Me. **The power of Sai is limitless; It manifests for ever. All forms of 'power' are resident in this Sai palm.**

*- Divine Discourse, 19th June, 1974 in Brindavan.*

**CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI**  
**PART 13**  
*(Continued from the previous issue)*

**Questions On Prayer:**

**Hislop:** Is not praying to God the same as begging?

**SAI:** To beg from an equal puts you down and him up. **But to ask God, you rise up to His level.** You must ask God. To ask God is perfectly all right. It is not begging.

**Hislop:** But I had thought that since God knows each problem, that if it was appropriate to remedy the trouble God would do so without being asked.

**SAI:** Important answer! No. It is your duty to ask God. Words must be spoken, and the words must correspond to the thought. **The thought must be put into sincere speech.** It is correct that Divinity is Omniscient. But He requires that sincere words be spoken. The mother may know the child requires food to maintain life, but milk is given when the child asks for it.

**Hislop:** It is not clear when one should ask God and when one should not. For example, there is a headache that doctors seem unable to cure. I do not ask Swami to cure the headache; I do not pray for a cure. However, in a letter, Swami wrote; 'How is your health? Do not worry about that. Your God is always with you, in you, around you'.

**SAI:** That is right. What Baba said is enough. For you, body identification is weakening. You have a headache today, a stomach pain tomorrow. Let it go. Don't worry about it. You are not the body. Once Baba has told you not to worry, there is no need to ask Him about it. Don't identify.

**Hislop:** Does Swami mean that for those persons still fully identified with the body, a continuous headache might be a proper subject for prayer?

**SAI:** Yes, but why bother Swami about a mere headache. You may tell others the same.

**Hislop:** Then, is it really all right to ask God?

**SAI:** **God should be asked for help when there is a real need** . A child asks his parents for a peppermint sweet, and the parents oblige. When older, the child asks for property from the parents, and it receives this. It is by right that the child asks, and it is by right that it receives. A child may ask a stranger for a peppermint once or twice and expect to get one. But if he asks for property from a stranger he will not expect to receive anything. But God is not bothered by a multitude of small requests, and He will certainly give property (things of great value). Therefore, one should always ask God to

meet one's needs. It is the individual's right to ask. There is no question of begging.

**Hislop:** Swami said that in praying to God, the petitioner raises himself to the level of God. In order to make such a prayer, in what state or condition should one first put himself?

**SAI:** It is not necessary to put oneself into any particular state of meditation.

**Hislop:** Usually, the idea is that one should go to a quiet place and be in a quiet mood when one wishes to pray.

**SAI:** **Whenever and wherever you put yourself in touch with God that is the state of meditation.** You may feel that 1 p.m. in California is not a good time to call Me, for I may be asleep in India and that I should not be disturbed. I know you have felt like that once or twice. But, **I am omnipresent; I have no such limitations. I never sleep. At the middle of the night, I turn off the light and rest in bed, because if the light is on, devotees will gather. I have no need of sleep.** But you need at least 4 hours of sleep.

**Hislop:** If I am walking in the street, with people around, and my mind is engaged with things I must do, is that a good time for prayer?

**SAI:** At the beginning, one might need some special set of circumstances for clearing the mind for concentration on God. But in a little time, if one finds that God is omnipresent and becomes aware of Him, and one's thoughts are centered on God, then no matter where you are, it is the same. The prayers may be addressed to God and will reach Him.

**Hislop:** Swami says that God is omnipresent. What meaning does Swami give to the word, 'omnipresent'?

**SAI:** Omnipresent means everywhere at the same time, all the time.

### **On Peace of Mind:**

**Hislop:** If a person does not have any material or worldly needs, then what is the proper subject for prayer?

**SAI:** Peace of mind. One should pray to God for peace of mind.

**Hislop:** I am surprised. I thought Swami said that peace of mind has to be secured by oneself working on his desires and getting rid of them. And now Swami says we can pray to Him for peace of mind!

**SAI:** How can you be free of desires? **At this moment you are with Swami, and you are free of desires.** As soon as your wife has a pain, you have the desire that she should be well, and you pray to Swami to cure her. At any time, a desire may come up; and then where is your peace of mind?

**Whereas, if God answers your prayer for peace of mind, He must, by having granted that boon, automatically fulfil your needs and desires.**

First you want a chain from Baba, next day you want something else - a ring. Both are made of gold. **Why not ask for gold and then you can have everything you want from the gold.**

**Hislop:** When Swami says, 'peace of mind,' what is the meaning He gives to that phrase?

**SAI:** There is some small confusion in terms, for **there is no mind as such. Mind is a web of desires. Peace of mind is 'no desire', and in that state there is no mind. Mind is destroyed, so to speak. Peace of mind really means purity, complete purity of consciousness. All spiritual practices are aimed at purification of the heart.**

#### **On Swami's Visit to America:**

**Hislop:** Swami, please excuse this question, but it is in everyone's mind. Will Swami come to America soon?

**SAI:** Baba will delay until a further base is built in America. However, I can go informally anytime. The devotee need only call me and I will appear at once. Swami has his work to renew India. This must be finished before he is willing to do the same in a foreign country. People generally go to a foreign country with a desire of some sort. Baba has no desire. Of course foreign individuals come to Baba.

#### **On 'The Most Subtle Aspect of Swami's Teaching':**

**Hislop:** What is the most subtle point of Swami's teaching, and then in the circle around that point, what are the things to do in order to realize that most subtle aspect of His teachings?

**SAI:** **The most subtle aspect of Swami's teaching is love. The circle around that subtle point, in order to realize it, are the spiritual practices such as meditation, repetition of the Name of the Lord, talking with good people, directing the mind away from harmful thoughts and so on. In themselves these spiritual practices are of no value. The only thing of real value is love itself.**

In dealing with people, Swami looks to the good and ignores the bad so as to intensify the good. Swami's teaching is, in a way, just as when you go to buy sugar in a shop, you do not bother about all the other details of the shop; the history and character of the shopkeeper, his personal relationship with other people, his personal looks, whether he is tall or short, old or young, and so on.

**The central part of Swami's teaching in regard to living in the world is to see in other people that essential quality which is God and to love that**



**quality and not to be bothered by all the actions, qualities, misbehaviour, and characteristics of the person.**

And the love of God in the person with whom one is dealing is spiritual love and not physical love. That does not mean, in terms of the worldly nature of the being in whom one sees the Lord, that one condones or admires, or does not scold the misbehaviour of the worldly part of that person. Even though one sees and loves and really pays attention to God in that person, nevertheless, that person should be scolded, and his attention called to his failures and shortcomings and so on. That is not being cruel. The factor here is the intention.

Just as in a street fight amongst labourers, one man might scratch the hand of another man with a penknife and cause no wound at all - yet the police will come and take him away to jail. Whereas in a nearby hospital, a surgeon might take a sharp knife and cut a five-inch gap in a man's body in order to remove the appendix, his action being highly rewarded.

So in one case the doctor is severely wounding a person and getting praise; and in the other case, a labourer merely scratches someone and ends up in jail. The important issue is the intention of the person. Sometimes Swami finds it advisable to operate on someone that is to wound him, to say something that may hurt him, or to reveal his bad points instead of just looking at the good points. But when Swami does that, the intention behind it is that of helping, and not of hurting or harming the patient.

*(Swami then turned to Hislop and said)*

It is perfectly all right to ask all these questions and clear all your doubts. You are examining Swami and Swami is giving the answers. But when this is all finished, the next time around, Swami will be the examiner and you will be examined. You will have to have the right answers in mind and heart. Now, all doubts should be emptied so that tomorrow Swami can fill your being with something new, a new oil to bathe the skin, so to speak.

**Hislop:** One finds himself so faulty that there seems to be no possibility of being of any help to others.

**SAI:** People often think they have to be perfect themselves before they can help anyone else, but such is not the case. If one has a fault or certain weakness, one can point out to others that same weakness that is in oneself. And if someone replies, 'Before you tell me how to behave, why don't you behave correctly?' Then one could say that he knows the pain of behaving in this way and he hopes that the other person could avoid the same trouble that he experienced. In that way, not only is the difficulty in oneself helped to be overcome, but others will be helped as well.

For example, suppose a man walks along a road covered with thorns which cut his feet with great pain. Having crossed the thorns he sits down to rest, and then sees other people approaching the thorny area. Now, should he

beckon them to come across the thorns and endure the same suffering that he had endured? Surely, that would not be a good deed. Or, should he call to them and warn them that the thorns are there and that they should try to find some other way of getting across and reaching their destination?

**If a person has the humility to recognise a fault in himself and admit that fault, then others will be helped thereby and also oneself.** To pretend that one is perfect, to tell people how to behave, pretending that oneself behaves in a perfect fashion and that one is perfect, is a great sin. Not because it harms other people, but because it seriously harms oneself.

***(To Be Continued)....***

## CHINNA KATHA

### SACRIFICE - A FAMILY'S GREATEST ASSET

At one time there was a severe famine in Bihar. A family consisting of father, mother and two children started from Bihar to find livelihood elsewhere. The father of the family being responsible to feed this family underwent many difficulties and hardships. He even starved himself on some occasions and because of this frequent starvation, he died after sometime.

The mother having lost her husband, suffered from loneliness. She had to bear the burden of keeping the family alive in this wide world. She went begging from house to house for food and if she got some and if it was not enough, she starved. But she let her children eat.

In course of time, she became so debilitated and frail that she found it difficult to walk from house to house. Begging from door to door was very hard for her. Her sons felt very sorry for her. The boy of twelve looked at the pitiable sight of his mother and sitting on her lap said, *"Oh mother, please take rest for some time. I shall beg and bring food for you."* As she listened to the words of her son, her heart melted. She felt very miserable that she had to send her son to beg for food. No mother wants her child to become a beggar. But the boy insisted and the mother very reluctantly consented.

From that day the little boy was begging for food and giving it to his mother and the little brother and he himself would starve. After some days, he felt he could not walk and go out for begging. He went to a house and found the master of the house reading a newspaper sitting on an easy chair. In a feeble voice, he asked the master for food. The master replied that it would be useless to give him alms and said that he would give him food on a leaf. The boy, out of weakness, fainted.

The master of the house lifted the boy and put him on his lap. The boy sat mumbling some words. To be able to understand what he was saying, the master put his ear close to the mouth of the boy. The boy was inaudibly whispering, ***"The food that you wish to give, please give it first to my mother."*** After uttering those last words, he passed away.

We do not now find this kind of love, this intimate love existing between the members of a family. ***Here we find that the head of the family starved himself to death for the sake of his family. The mother starved herself for the sake of her children and the son starved and killed himself to save his mother from begging. Look at this example of affection that bound them together as father, mother and child. They look like the Holy Trinity.*** Therefore, each member of the family must discharge his own responsibility.

**BABA**

## **COVER STORY**

### **INTERNATIONAL SAI MEDICAL CONFERENCE ON IDEAL HEALTHCARE FOR ALL**

*"I must also point out to the doctors serving here that perhaps even more than the drugs they prescribe, the sweet, soft words they speak and the love and sympathy they evince can cure better and quicker the illness of their patients. Look upon them as your own kith and kin, as your special guests and as your closest friends, and attend to them lovingly and with unflinching care. I call upon you to maintain this attitude in every situation. Remember that the patient has to cooperate with you in order that you may affect the cure, and when cured, the patient confers on you satisfaction, joy, and a sense of elation. Be grateful to the patient for all this."*

**~Baba**

This is the pristine way every patient in the world has to be cared for. This is the new dimension for healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - the most holistic and holiest of approaches to patient care and health administration that the world needs. This is the golden message on healthcare from the Master Physician, Doctor Divine Bhagavan Baba.

It is to convey this significant aspect of patient care that the International Sai Medical Conference was organised in Prashanti Nilayam by the International Medical Committee of the world-wide Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations.

During the valedictory session of the two-day conference, Dr. Venkat Sadanand, a fellow in paediatric neural surgery at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, said,

*"We have to love our patients - love, love, love till it hurts. Love till there is nothing left of your body. All that you can see is the God within you. As physicians we have to ask ourselves – 'In what way have I given up something that is dear to me that I can make someone happy?'"*

This was the common sentiment which every eminent doctor who took the podium echoed on the final day of the conference. The conference had served its purpose.

So, how did the conference actually go? What did Swami say to all the 900 professionals who had gathered at His Lotus Feet? What were their impressions on Swami's Hospitals? As you read further, you will know all this and more.

#### **Genesis of the Conference**

To know how the idea for the conference came up, we need to go back to November of 2004. It was Swami who orchestratedd the formation of the International Medical Committee [IMC] during that time and immediately guidelines for the committee were laid down, with Dr. Narendra Reddy being appointed as the Chairman.

When the tsunami struck just in the month following its formation, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, it became clear why Swami had planned it in November. The yeoman service that Sai organisations did for the tsunami victims and how the IMC met the Presidents and Prime Ministers of various countries and discussed the relief and rehabilitation efforts to draw workable plans for the Sai Organisation is history now. [Read our special Tsunami issue for the full account of Seva done during the tsunami]

After the successful execution of the mammoth tsunami service activities in Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and other affected countries, the committee saw it fitting to organize an international conference of this magnitude at Prashanti Nilayam, not only to celebrate the 80th Year of the Advent of the *Avatar*, but also to provide a new direction, an altogether new dimension to the way medicine is practised the world over.

### **The Organisation of the Conference**

The sheer logistics and difficulty of arranging a conference of this magnitude with attendees from such diverse areas can be understood, if not fully appreciated. A web site was established where interested healthcare professionals could get information about the conference and sign up for it.

Information about the conference also filtered down through the many Sai Centres and Sai Seva Samithis throughout India and abroad. Wherever participants had no access to email, registration was done the old fashioned way - by snail mail. Slowly, one by one, the diverse blocks fell in place and all these conference attendees assembled in Prashanti Nilayam by the evening of September 2, 2005 to attend this unprecedented conference on the 3rd and 4th of September, 2005.

### **INAUGURATION OF THE MEDICAL CONFERENCE - Sep 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005**

#### **The Sun Emerges**

When the warm rays of the Sun lit the beautifully decked Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep, it found over 900 healthcare professionals (which included apart from doctors, hospital administrators, insurance people, and even public relations officers) seated neatly facing the dais; some in suits, some in whites, all dressed up for the occasion. You could see mixed signs of anticipation, expectation and hidden joy on their faces as they awaited the sunshine of their lives – their beloved Lord - to emerge from His abode.

Soon Swami's car came in view and there was an excited buzz in the Sai Kulwant Hall. But the car took a turn. Swami was on His way to the EHV building to inaugurate the Sai Ideal Healthcare Exhibition.

### **The Sai Ideal Healthcare Exhibition**

Swami, to the immense delight of the organisers, spent a good 20-30 minutes and went to every corner of the hall seeing the exhibits, the video presentations and the posters. The exhibition, a vital part of the conference, provided a mother lode of health related information to the visitors. Apart from outlining the extensive service done by the seva organizations by holding medical screening camps in India and abroad - in countries like Ghana, Argentina, South Africa, the U.S, the U.K., to name a few - the exhibition also provided a very educative experience on a healthy life-style to every visitor who took the tour.

An eye-catcher of the exhibition was the uncommon and old pictures of Swami visiting and guiding the doctors and staff of the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital entitled '25 Years In the Service Of Humanity'. It portrayed pictorially how Swami has been deeply involved with the Hospital, taking a span of 25 years (1976 to 2001).

At the end of the tour, every visitor not only feasted on the beautiful old pictures of Swami, but also knew what constitutes a good diet, what precautions to take against cancer, diabetes, TB and a host of such ailments.

### **“We Are Here to Explore Sai Ideal Healthcare...” – Dr. Goldstein**

When Swami returned to Sai Kulwant Hall from the exhibition, the conference began. On the dais beside Swami was a galaxy of eminent healthcare professionals. Dr. Goldstein, Chairman of the International Sai Organisation, in his welcome address, made the objective of the conference very clear when he said,

*"We are here to consider the administration of Healthcare. We are here to consider the role of healthcare in human life, explore Sai ideal healthcare and the relevance of the Creator in the dedicated pursuit of the divinity within... Baba says that a doctor should have faith in spirituality. If the doctor is full of love and compassion God will work through him... By practising the 5 human values, the ideal Sai health care professional can effectively heal the plague of violence in our society. Selfless service is doing what we are qualified and trained to do, by doing it the best we can. Human life is a God given opportunity to realize our divine heritage".*

Later, placing the model of Swami's Super Speciality Hospitals before the audience, the Director, Dr. A N Safaya, spoke at length on how globalisation and non-commercialisation of medicine is not only possible, but also surely sustainable, in modern society with Swami's Hospitals standing as glowing examples (all treatment in Swami's hospitals are completely free). But more importantly, the director emphasised, it is the humanisation and the

spiritualization of medicine which are the key differentiators of Swami's Hospitals. He mentioned how the practice of medicine becomes a spiritual practice when the doctor's heart is filled with love for the patient. No wonder, these edifices are described as "Temples of Healing" – one can easily feel the divine vibration when one enters the central dome of the hospital, he observed.

### **Wealth of Quality Information**

In fact, to acquaint all the participants with the Sai Health Mission being practised so gloriously in Swami's Hospitals, a booklet entitled "Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission" was distributed to all the participants before the conference actually started. In addition to this, there were two other informative, nay, enlightening booklets which were inside the leather carry bag that every participant was given on their arrival to Prashanti Nilayam.

One was the Jan 2005 issue of SWISSMED magazine (Swiss Review for Medicine and Medical Technique) which was a special issue on the Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospitals in Puttaparthi (Andhra Pradesh) and Bangalore (in Karnataka State) of India. And the other was an exquisite collection of Swami's messages on healthcare and medicine called "Sacrifice is the Hallmark of a Doctor." This wealth of quality information, so painstakingly researched and so thoughtfully presented, truly, laid a good foundation for a fulfilling and rewarding experience of the conference for every participant.

### **"Miracles Happen Here..." - Dr. Alan Gradman, Keynote Address**

So continuing with our story of what happened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Morning, after the inspiring talk of Dr. Safaya, it was the turn of the keynote speaker of the day, Dr. Alan Gradman, Chief, Division of Cardiovascular Diseases, Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburgh; and Professor of Medicine, Temple University School of Medicine.

Talking first about how he first came to Swami and the profound influence that Swami had over him, Dr Alan Gradman said, *"The first time that I came here I was, much to my surprise, privileged to have an interview and actually be in the presence of Swami. And I watched Him perform miracles, I watched Him create a ring and I sat there speechless, thoughtless. And of course we all know that Swami's message is not about making rings and doing miracles. He has said that in today's world, where people do not believe in such things, in this scientific world where nothing can be believed, that only shock therapy can work to make people believe. That certainly worked for me - it had a tremendous effect on my whole view of the world. So I learned from my experience here that miracles happen and that they are real and this is not something in some old book somewhere."*

Then at length, he talked about the tremendous advances in cardiology which has changed the facade and functioning of cardiology in the last 30 years and before closing his illuminating talk said,

*"I want to close by talking about cardiology education because I am an educator and I run a training programme. When I first came here I asked Swami if it would be possible to bring some fellows here to learn and to see this different model of healthcare and He agreed. For many reasons this has not happened yet. I believe that even Swami says there is no lack of intelligent men in the world and there are many scientists. It is because the intelligentsia and scientists have not been educated along the right lines that the world is plunged into chaos and disorder.*

***I would like to educate a few people and have them view this healthcare system that is so different from our own and at least see what is possible. Our trainees come in as young idealistic people and what we need to do is to ensure the safety of the sapling of education. You have to build a fence of dharma to guard against the animals of desire. I would like to figure out how to do that."***

Impressed with the working of Swami's Super Speciality Hospitals, this was his final word,

***I do not think that the (Swami's) Super Speciality Hospital is the answer to all the healthcare problems of the world, or even the US. It is an example of what can be done. It has been replicated in Bangalore and perhaps it could be replicated in Pittsburgh. But it stands as an example of what is possible and I think that certainly it could have an impact."***

#### **"EDUCARE" FROM THE DIVINE LIPS – SWAMI'S DIVINE DISCOURSE**

If you read carefully, one of the most important things that needed attention which Dr. Alan Gradman mentioned was the '**safety of the sapling of education**' in young professionals. He had, indeed, hit the bull's eye. For, when Swami rose to speak, upon the prayers of Dr. Goldstein, at the end of Dr. Gradman's talk He elaborated a great deal on this very aspect of right education in His Divine discourse. He said,

*"People think that pursuing academic education and acquiring bookish knowledge is real education. No, that is not real education. **Education devoid of educare is not real education. What is educare? Educare is that which brings out the latent divinity in a human being. Divinity is also known as consciousness. It is only because of the consciousness present in him that every individual is able to know the nature of the world around him. It is only this consciousness that is protecting every human being. Education is negative and artificial, whereas educare is positive. One need not go to foreign countries for acquiring educare. It wells up from within and protects the person constantly. Educare is the unity of thought, word and deed.***

Explaining further on this idea of Educare, Swami said,

*Realising one's innate divinity is educare... Educare consists in realising the nature of the Atma (self). This Atma Tattwa (principle of self) is equally*



*present in every being. This is the fundamental principle. It is only because of this fundamental principle that every living being acquires value. Since ancient times people in India have been striving to realise this fundamental 'I' which is present in all beings. The human body is ephemeral and is bound to perish one day or the other. **When we speak of 'I', it should not be limited to the ephemeral human body, but to the fundamental 'I'.***

Giving an example to understand this all-important principle of 'I', Swami explained,

*Supposing you question somebody, "Who is the doctor?" The doctor will immediately rise to answer, 'I am the doctor'. In this example, the doctor identifies himself with his profession and says 'I am the doctor.' But he forgets about the fundamental 'I' present in him. When a question is put, "Where is God?" The natural answer would be, "He is present in all." The one who realises the truth that the same Atma Tattwa is present in every human being and, in fact, every living being, is the happiest person. This principle is changeless and eternal".*

Thus while the doctors discussed ways and means of healing the body, the Divine Healer extended it to the realm of the spirit. His was a divine prescription - the prescription to raise one's consciousness from the level of the body to the eternal and changeless level of the spirit. Truly, it is the permanent panacea to all the maladies of the body.

Did Swami's main message percolate into the hearts and minds of the bodily focused physicians?

### **The Real Reason Why Swami Has Come....To Raise Our Consciousness – Dr. Reddy**

It certainly did, going by Dr Reddy's comments on the opening ceremony morning,

*"The whole purpose as, Swami said this morning, the purpose is to know who you are. By His very Sankalpa Swami can cure incurable diseases, He can make the lame walk and the blind to see. He has cancelled incurable cancers and He has raised the dead to life. That is not the purpose why Swami has come. The purpose why Swami has come is to raise our consciousness so that we realize who we are. He makes us realize our innate divinity, manifest that divinity and radiate that joy and love to one and all. That is the reason why Swami has come."*

### **Becoming Pure Being...Pure Consciousness – Dr. Anand**

This spiritual aspect of healthcare was emphasised by the eminent doctors in the valedictory session. Dr. Anand, Professor of Paediatrics in the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, said,

*When the light of pure divine awareness is obstructed by the idea 'I am the mind', it creates a shadow - that shadow is the personality. It has likes and dislikes and fears and all kinds of plans. Through Swami's grace and His benevolence we can get beyond this idea that I am the mind.*

*Swami, with your divine grace, let us practise medicine that we may see the divine effulgence in all of our patients. **We may serve them with the utmost of love that we may sacrifice all this humanness at your divine Lotus Feet and simply become into pure being, into pure divine awareness**".*

### **"When I Was Helping the Poor...I was Helping Myself" – Dr. Rackoff**

Echoing similar feelings was Dr Michael Rackoff, Executive Director of three community health centres in Maryland, and also a member of the Sai International Medical Committee, who had worked for 'healthcare for all' and among many other things trained barefoot doctors in the Bronx and used acupuncture to treat drug addiction, During the valedictory session he said,

*"Years later I realized that I was practicing mind-body medicine and how important that was. Now I know that I was practising Sai heart medicine. In all the years before finding Swami when I did service I thought I was helping the poor, I did not realize that I was changing myself.*

Then in January 2005, when Dr. Michael Rackoff had a chance to ask Swami Himself how to teach ethical values to the students, Swami responded, **"What is spirituality? It is nothing but an idea in your head. What you must teach is truth, compassion and love. How do you educate? You must show these qualities in practice."**

Isn't it heartening to hear such words from distinguished professors of medicine from different countries? This is the kind of gratifying response that the conference received from the participants. And this is also what was emphasised in the conference – each doctor must become a role model for others. He should radiate love and concern.

### **THE CLOSED-DOOR SESSIONS OF PHYSICIANS IN THE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM – 3<sup>RD</sup> AFTERNOON AND 4<sup>TH</sup> MORNING.**

If you thought that the conference discussed only the spiritual dimension of healthcare, then you must know that after the morning session on 3rd September, and in the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> September, all the participants converged at the college auditorium and discussed the physical aspects of healthcare in great detail, facilitated by eminent doctors.

Distinguished doctors like Dr. Ramachandran Coopan from the Harvard Medical School talked about preventing diabetes; Dr. Anil Nanda from the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Centre shared his views on neurological healthcare in the third millennium; Dr. Kishore Udipi from the Medtronic Vascular Comp. dealt with the role of industry in Healthcare and Dr.

K S Anand from the University of Arkansas elaborated on the pillars of paediatric care.

### **The Sai Medical Mission Worldwide**

To increase the awareness of the audience on the worldwide Sai service activities on the healthcare front, Dr. Narendra Reddy, Chairman of the International Medical Committee, explained in detail the principles and practices of Sai Healthcare activities giving an overview of the free medical camps and other medical services being offered in different regions of the world by the Sai Organisations. He noted that,

*“There were many eye camps carried out in Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia. At the Sai Vision Project they are attempting to carry out 8,000 eye surgeries by the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and already 5,000 have been done.”*

A fitting supplement to this presentation was the talk by Dr. Keki Mistry, a member of the Expert Advisory Panel of WHO on Oral Health on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sep morning. Dr. Mistry, being a very active organiser of service activities in Mumbai and Maharashtra, shared with the international audience the innovative medical service activities of the Sai Organisations in India.

*“Bhagavan emphasizes health, hygiene and nutrition. Baba’s definition of health is that it is not only an absence of disease, but a sense of complete physical well-being and in mental and spiritual aspects. To bring this about we use illustrated charts and one to one talks. Special focus is made on children and stress on the perils of smoking, alcoholism and drugs. Bhagavan says the villages are in the grip of the evils of smoking and drinking.*

*4,400 patients have been benefited by the Sai Medical Seva carried out at Chennai Railway Station, for those vulnerable people who are staying in the environs of the station with nowhere else to go. This is a first for Indian Railways.*

*Another innovation has been the Seva carried out for auto rickshaw drivers who are often suffering from TB and other diseases connected with the hazards of their job. They have been taught physical relaxation techniques, yoga, Namasmarana and Bhajans to de-stress themselves and have felt the care of the Sai Seva workers.*

*We have eminent physicians, neurologists, dentists, urologists, and cardiologists networking with 135 hospitals throughout India. Patients are taken to these doctors by the Seva Dals and treated by these eminent specialists free of charge. In this way we can outreach, free of charge, without building a hospital.”*

Another presentation on the same lines was by Dr. Kalyan Ray, Senior Adviser in the Office of the Executive Director, UN, who narrated his

experiences with the SAINET project and dealt on the role of government and other health agencies in offering service to the needy.

### **The Models of Sai Ideal Healthcare**

One valuable part of the proceedings in the college auditorium on the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> Sep was the presentations by the Heads of the Department of Swami's hospitals. Dr. Neelam Desai from the Cardiology Department, Prashanti Nilayam, provided a virtual tour of the Hospital through her slides and then recapitulated some very salient messages which Bhagavan has been time and again telling the doctors of His Hospitals. Principles like –

- The principal reason for heart ailment is, in brief, 'hurry, worry and curry' and
- Moderation in food habits, work, sleep and physical exercise is the best way to prevent heart ailments.
- Treat the patient, not the disease.
- Inject courage and hope along with the regular injections.
- Examine patients with smiling faces and talk to them with love, slowly, soothingly, radiating compassion.

Dr. A S Hegde, Head of the Department of Neurosciences, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Bangalore, then made a very revealing presentation.

Recalling the initial days of the Whitefield Hospital, he said, "In 1999 during the planning stages of the Hospital, I asked Swami, 'Swami, what kind of department should we have? Should it be one of the best in the world?'

Swami paused for a while and then said 'THE BEST - not one of the best.'"

### **There is No Stress in Swami's Hospitals**

Dr. Hegde, then, went on to state some very important facts about patient care and health administration in Swami's Bangalore Hospital when he said,

***"Most often people believe that if it is a charitable or free hospital then the kind of surgery that you do is very simple, you do not take risk and major cases are pushed to other centres. This is not true.***

*I think one of the most important things is that there is no financial burden to the patient. You must see it to believe it, as I have worked in a government hospital, in a corporate hospital and in Swami's Hospital. Here, patients are relaxed, relatives are relaxed. A lot of times it takes away a huge amount of stress from the surgeon....*

*In a corporate hospital where I worked we give an estimate to the patient. What happens is that if the patient stays a few more days in ICU, the cost goes up and the attendants invariably ask 'Sir, when are you shifting the*

*patient out of ICU?’ because every day the clock is ticking and they have to pay more money. (In India, insurance does not cover the majority of the poor). **There is no such financial stress here, so I think the patient is in an atmosphere where he is cared for, he is peaceful and is hoping that he will recover from the illness with Baba’s blessings and go back. So it takes away a lot of stress from the treatment team.***

### **The Treatment is Equal and Reliable in Swami’s Hospitals**

Elaborating more on the uniqueness of the Hospital, he said,

*“Also the diagnosis is reliable. We have the best equipment possible and we treat only when it is needed. There are people who operate only on marginal indications. We work with state of the art equipment, caring staff and very important - whether VIP, or non-VIP - all get the same treatment. **Sometimes money is given to the patient to go back – they are that poor.**”*

In fact, this is one fact which Dr. Neelam Desai from the Puttaparthi Hospital also mentioned when she said more than 80% of the patients treated in the Puttaparthi Hospital are in the annual income group of Rs. 0 – 6,000 (US\$130 approx.)

Another striking fact highlighted by Dr. Hegde was regarding the transformation of patients. He said,

*“**What is very important and amazing is that some of the attendees who have come with the patients, who have seen the Hospital and have stayed in the Hospital for some time, have opted to become Seva Dal volunteers. None of them were devotees earlier,**”* Dr. Hegde remarked with exclamation and delight on his face.

*“The implants that we use for the patients,” he continued, “are the best available in the world. We do not use any locally produced, non-standardised products. **The cost that the multinational companies sell it to us is one third than the price for the corporate hospitals. It is amazing how they can come down. I think that they believe that this is one hospital where genuine service is being done.**”*

### **“Emulate Swami’s Ideal...Enhance Your Goodwill” – Dr. Hegde**

As a final parting word to the fellow doctors, Dr. Hegde suggested,

*“It is for others now to emulate (Swami’s Hospitals) either fully and run a free hospital, or else partially and treat some patients for free. This is a social responsibility of the corporate sector and if they do this they will generate a lot of good will and it will also enhance the reputation of hospitals. **The people that you treat free, the poor people, the blessings will come to you and the money will come some other way.**”* And thus ended Dr. Hedge’s very illumining talk.

## VALEDICTORY SESSION OF THE MEDICAL CONFERENCE – 4th AFTERNOON

### **“We have Spent These Two Days in His Love...”- Dr. Goldstein**

Welcoming the participants for the valedictory session of the conference in the afternoon of Sep 4<sup>th</sup> in the serene Sai Kulwant Hall, Dr. Goldstein said,

***“We have spent these two days in Bhagavan's divine presence basking in His love. Distinguished physician have addressed us from around the world and most importantly they spoke to us about love, demonstrated love and emanated love.”*** And how true it was! For, in the past two days hundreds of doctors had completely tuned into Sai, had interacted with each other like brothers and sisters in a great spirit of love and camaraderie.

### **The Very Source of the Big Bang**

And they did not mince words to express their love to Swami. Dr. Venkat Sadanand, a Ph. D in Game theory, a NASA employee and a paediatric neuro surgeon, said,

*“Mercy blesses twice. It blesses him that gives and him that takes. Mercy is an attribute of God Himself and that quality of mercy rests in each of us. Swami says He is our Hrudyavasi - He is eternally in our hearts....*

*The physicists know everything about the genesis of the universe, how it began; the Big Bang they will tell you. **But what is the beginning of the Big bang, the very beginning - the energy of love, where does it come from? From our beloved Bhagavan.”***

Dr Sadanand also narrated how when he saw Swami giving 2 watches to students a few years ago, he developed the desire to have watches for his own 2 kids. And how when Swami passed by him, gave him a mischievous smile and placed 2 watches in his hand. It was a reminder, he said, not to entertain desires.

*“Every little attachment to our body drains our divine energy from what we can give to our patients. We have to be a conduit of love to our patients. **When we go back we can be active, we can be proponents of Swami's healthcare mission and in our hospitals. We can let them know how important love is, how important understanding is, how important patience is, how important is the love in our heart. Divine love engenders inspiration and inspiration engenders good health,”*** Dr. Sadanand received thunderous applause.

When he went up to receive Swami's blessings after the talk, Swami with a gentle wave of His Magical Hand and a sweet smile on His face, manifested a beautiful chain and so lovingly put on Dr. Sadanand's neck with His Own Hand. The doctor, needless to say was overwhelmed with Swami's love.

Dr. Rackoff from Maryland, who spoke before him commented,

*As I learned more of Swami's ways I have looked for ways to put His Message into practice. I decided to try to teach ethics to medical students. I was having trouble formulating the curriculum without talking about spirituality and I knew the Dean would not permit me to talk about it. When I went to medical school in the 60's I was taught that you are not even allowed to ask your patient what their religion was. **What we all know is that when someone gets sick the first thing that they and their family do, is to put their hands together and pray. How can we be compassionate physicians and ignore this important part of our patients' lives?***

### **"It Was All Based On Love..." – Dr. Safaya**

After Dr. Rackoff's and Dr. Sadanand's talk in the valedictory session, it was for Dr. Safaya and Dr. Goldstein to make the parting words.

Dr. Safaya, who played an important role in organising the meet said, *"I am very happy to see such a conference being held today over these two days to discuss and make a beginning in this direction because the approach to health sciences in the world needs change and leadership.*

*"During the two days of the conference," he continued, **"I witnessed the presentations of people who are actually involved in the drama of life and death. It was beautiful to see the beautiful way how they presented their work, but they all commented on one single fact that it was all based on love."***

Referring to a new project for extended patient care being undertaken in the Whitefield Hospital, he further noted,

*"We have a project in Whitefield Hospital where we have a reverse referral follow up. That means after the patient is discharged, after having been operated upon, we check up on how they are doing in their villages and in their localities. Has the patient joined his work? Has he really been restored to health? It is from the hospital door to the home door that we are with the patient."*

### **Weight Loss Through Words!**

It was fittingly left to Dr Goldstein, who had started the conference with his welcome address, to now sum up the conference at the end. Starting with a personal experience of Swami's love for him, Dr Goldstein related how a blood pressure cuff exploded off his arm and bounced around the room for two minutes, after Swami playfully took his blood pressure. He took this as a divine sign of displeasure over his weight. Swami's displeasure became more obvious when one day, Swami jokingly mentioned to Goldstein that given his width he would not be able to get through the interview room door walking alongside Swami! This was the last straw and Dr. Goldstein lost an incredible 50 kgs in 9 months with a strict exercise programme.

## **Loving All, Serving All....Is Our Modus Operandi – Dr. Goldstein**

Dr. Goldstein then beautifully summed up the conference saying, "***The most important ideal of Sai Healthcare is Love. Healthcare must be delivered with love, free of greed and condescension. All forms of life are sacred and must be protected and preserved. Economic constraints should not determine the quality and quantity of healthcare...***

*Healthcare is being driven by the market and this is causing chaos in the field. The Sai way will offset this trend as much as it can. **Love, compassion, humility, identification with the needy, healthcare education and disease prevention are our trademarks. Loving all, serving all, without regard for race, religion, or nationality is our modus operandi....***

*The common bond of the conference was our love for Swami. Proceedings of conference will be put into a feasible plan to uplift healthcare worldwide."*

### **Love, Love and More Love**

Truly...the common bond of the conference was love. In fact, every participant was touched by Swami's deep love and compassion. On both the days all the participants were seated right in front of Him and quite unusually on chairs. Swami's love and motherly concern for the doctors was to be seen to be believed. For more than one and half hours everyday Swami was with them, listening to the talks, taking their letters, speaking to them, smiling at somebody, blessing the other...it was absolutely undivided attention from Swami.

Not only the physical proximity, Swami had taken great care of their physical needs as well so that they feel at home. Truly, it was a homecoming for the participants and besides the fine accommodation, Swami saw to it that sumptuous meals were provided for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the Ashram Canteen with a large variety of items. Many doctors remarked that it was as if they were enjoying some wedding feast!.

After the scheduled speeches in the valedictory session, Swami very lovingly gave mementoes to all the speakers of the conference and also the members of the working committee who had tirelessly worked to make the conference a success. **And as each one went up to Swami to collect his 'moment of love' Swami had a kind word with one, a gentle pat on the cheek for the other, a mesmerising smile for the third, a beatific blessing for the fourth....and so it went on... great moments of intimacy and never-before-bliss. It was as much joy to every member who was witnessing it as to the receiver....every moment each one wished was eternal.**

### **The Pleasant Surprise!**

The scheduled speeches were done, the mementoes were given, and the parting messages from the organisers were over and every one thought that



the conference is over. But Swami wanted to bless the participants with more! In His infinite compassion, He asked all the eminent doctors seated beside Him on the dais to share their thoughts. It was literally an unexpected pleasant bonus!

The eminent doctors took this opportunity as a divine boon and with great joy expressed this gratitude and love to Bhagavan.

#### "Patient Devo Bhava" – Dr. Anil Nanda

Dr. Anil Nanda, Chairman of the Neurosurgery Department at the Louisiana State University, USA, said,

*"It is His guidance that makes medicine possible. It just reminds us sometimes when we have a smooth operation. But when I get a complication I think Swami is reminding us: 'Think of Me at all times'. Not just when you have a complication, not just when things are going smoothly, think of me at every nanosecond."*

Swami always emphasized 'Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Archarya Devo Bhava.' But to this Dr. Nanda said that he wanted to add another dimension at this conference – **"We must do 'Patient Devo Bhava.'"**, he said, **"We must treat the patient as Divine and if we see Bhagavan in all our patients, at all times, it is the secret to happiness."**

#### "Without Him, There is Nothing"- Dr. R Coopan

Dr. Ramachandran Coopan, who came to Swami 25 years ago as a young idealistic physician, thanked the Lord for this fortune and then recalling an interview with Swami, remarked,

*"He (Swami) looked at me and said, "You are doing my work". And as a physician hearing this from the Divine Physician caused a transformation within my body and who I was. And then I turned and looked at Swami and said, "Swami, I love You." And He said "I know and you will always do so."*

*And in those intervening 25 years that love for Swami has manifested in everything I have tried to do. Every time I see a patient I ask myself what would my beloved do? What would He expect of me? And Swami's one teaching, which is really missing in all of healthcare, the paramount one, is that when we serve, the divine serves the divine. **The common bond here is one of love; and the more we serve the more it grows and the more it grows the more we have to give. And this is what Bhagavan is; Bhagavan is the manifestation of love. Without Him there would be nothing in the universe. Nothing to keep us and sustain us"**.*

#### **More Expressions of Love...**

Like this it went on....each one filled with great emotion and love. Dr. Anand, Prof. of Paediatrics at the University of Arkansas, observed,

*“Swami, Your inspiration provided how to define the four pillars of paediatric care – purity, Prema, prevention and pain relief....let us practise medicine that we may see the divine effulgence in all of our patients.”*

And then Dr. Kalyan Ray from the UN stressed,

***“Our Sai is Lord of the universe, not of the world... if you are ready to perform some selfless service then nothing is impossible in this world.”***

After this, Dr. Kishore Udipi, Research Director at Metronics, started off by saying that he was not a physicist but a scientist in the medical field. In fact, it was his ardent desire to be associated with the medical field and so at one time, he proposed to his director whether they could synthesize some polymers for medical applications, so that some of the patients could benefit from the knowledge that they had gained in polymer science. The head office turned it down because they were apprehensive of the risks of liability suits.

So he forgot about it - but not Swami. He moved around a few places and eventually came back to the same company which had earlier refused to endorse his project, but had now started a bio-materials project targeted at medical applications. How Swami orchestrates our lives is mysterious, he said, and expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Swami.

And on that cheery note the extended and ecstatic conference ended.

Long after the *arathi* had been taken and Swami had retired to His abode, all the participants still lingered on in the divine-vibrations-suffused Sai Kulwant Hall...you could see they were silently and fondly savouring in full the magic of the moments just gone by... imbibing and imprinting deep in their hearts the sweet memories of the past two days so that... it will linger ever fresh in the tapestry of their lives to inspire them for ever to be an instrument of the divine!

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## **APPENDIX**

The following appeared as box items on the internet version. They are now placed in the appendix.

### **Aims of the International Medical Conference**

The purpose of this conference was to elucidate the fundamental attributes of "Sai Ideal Healthcare." The conference sought to integrate and reaffirm Swami's teachings on the **Science, Art, and Integrity** of medicine to put forth the noble ideals as the **SAlence** of medicine.

These ideals included four primary considerations:

(1) Practitioners of healthcare should consider the nature and sacredness of human life, the great significance of supporting human life through healthcare, and respond accordingly, not only with medicines and surgical procedures, but more importantly, with love and compassion.

(2) Economic considerations should not prevent anyone from receiving the highest benefits of healthcare. Private and government resources must be mobilized in order to extend the benefits of healthcare, "Sai Ideal Healthcare."

(3) Healthcare should focus on preventing disease, not merely reacting to disease once it occurs.

(4) Healthcare professionals, including those in supportive roles must incorporate these ideal considerations in their practice.

The two day conference was an attempt to provide a forum for understanding Bhagavan's message that **"Sacrifice is the Hallmark of a Doctor"**. It was a forum for discussing questions of import like: How do we inculcate spiritual value systems in our daily work life? How do we make selfless service a habit? What are the challenges we face in our work that make it difficult to practise the above values? What are the experiences of other doctors in this noble endeavour?

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### **The SAINET Project**

To commemorate the 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Kenya, has launched a National Project to save vulnerable people from the killer disease of malaria. **The objective of the SAINET project is to distribute over 50,000 SAINETs, with Baba's message 'Love All Serve All' inscribed, totally free of cost, to poor families in malaria endemic areas.** Africa carries more than 70% of the global malaria burden. 1.8 million children die from malaria every year in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for at least 20% of all childhood deaths. Malaria accounts for 40% of continent's public health expenditure.

#### **Key Features of the Project Include**

- Visits to villages and distribution of nets with community women's group meetings for raising awareness on the need of nets.
- Distribution of SAINETS through schools, clinics and medical camps

#### **Examples of SAINET Distribution**

- On Saturday, 11 June 2005, 2,200 households, home to some 16,800 population spread over 20 villages in Namanjalala, were freed from the mosquito menace. A truly memorable sight was waiting for the devotees as they approached the villages. The women came singing and dancing, welcoming them to their village. Each team quickly divided itself into two groups - one group screening the villagers and the other group giving out the SAINETs and the maize meal. With

efficient handling of crowds, the long queues started moving fast and the villagers received not only SAINETs and maize meal, but lots and lots of love flowing abundantly from SAI through His devotees.

- 110 Sai volunteers travelled to Malindi, on 15 July 2005, to share Swami's love and joy with the poorest of the poor in the remote villages, who live under the constant threat of cerebral malaria. **The project distributed 12,000 SAINETs and 27 tonnes of maize meal, to some 42,000 impoverished people living in 50 villages spread over 8000 sq.km.**
- **SAINET project distributed 10,700 insecticide-treated nets to 36,000 rural poor living in Bondo on 27 August 2005.** A major challenge to overcome was to take the nets to the people living in an island off the main coast, requiring one and half hour of boat ride. A village chief commented: ***"Since independence, no one has come to help us in this way and magnitude."***

**Within a short time the Project has made SAI a household word in Kenya by taking SAI messages to remote villages never reached before.**

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### **The Unexpected Blessings – Dr. Phaneuf's Experience**

Nothing escaped Swami's ever-loving-ever-vigilant attention. On the afternoon of the 3rd, the delegates had to sit on the floor as the afternoon session was late and the delegates came to Sai Kulwant Hall only at 4:30 PM. Sitting uncomfortably in the front row was Dr Joseph Phaneuf, dermatologist at Kaiser Permanente in Northern California, USA and Medical Director of the Ashland Free Medical Clinic. Seeing him change his position many times, Swami affectionately asked him to sit cross-legged to be comfortable and after a few minutes, even lovingly beckoned Dr. Phaneuf to Him and spent a good 10-15 minutes talking to him.

Let us now hear it from Dr. Phaneuf in his own words –

*"I first visited Sri Sathya Sai Baba in 1986 at His ashram in Puttaparthi. Since that time I have returned to visit Him on many occasions and I have learned many things from Him that help me when I am serving my patients at Kaiser Permanente in Northern California such as "Service to your patients is service to God" and "Hands that help are holier than lips that pray" and "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly."*

*I have had the wonderful opportunity to work in the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital next to the ashram in Puttaparthi on many occasions. I am very grateful for each and every chance to serve patients at His hospital.... Swami has also inspired me and many other Sai devotees in Northern California to start the Ashland Free Medical Clinic to serve those who are poor and do not have access to health care.*

*On August 3rd after the afternoon session of this International Medical Conference on Sai Ideal Healthcare, all the delegates, as well as the general public, had a wonderful Darshan of our Beloved Swami. **During this Darshan he called me from where I was sitting in front of the veranda up to His chair to speak with Him. He then showered His love and blessings on me during this 'public interview', and during this time, He materialized a beautiful ring and lovingly placed it on my left hand. We spoke on several topics and I expressed my appreciation to Swami for all of His help and inspiration in starting and keeping the Ashland Free Medical Clinic open. This was a very unexpected blessing from Our Dearest Swami. I pray that Swami will continue to inspire me to serve my patients with love, compassion, and humility so that I can be a pure instrument of His Love**".*

Yes, Dr. Phaneuf that is all our prayers too.

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### **A Doctor Shares Her Conference Experience**

Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters,

...The physicians (in the conference) were outstanding in the different health areas: Paediatrics, Neurosurgery, Cardiovascular Surgery, the Medical Director of the Super Speciality Hospitals in Prashanti and Bangalore, the doctor in charge of the medical camps in India and so on.

All the professionals developed their presentations in an impeccable way, while offering at the same time countless Sai guidelines helping us reach new and higher levels in health and quality of life. It was stressed that the highest standards of medicine should be available to everyone. The correlation was conveyed between the latest scientific discoveries and the wisdom as given by Sai, in terms of the importance for patients to change their life styles, in order to treat the endemic ailments of our times. Science points not only to genetic factors in the aetiology of diseases, but also the unhealthy habits encouraged by this modern consumer society.

There was an exhibition of the healthcare being carried out in India as well as in other countries. It was wonderful, and again impacting in terms of the new projects developed in Russia, the Philippines, Canada, United States of America, Latin America, etc.

The Seva Dals were very kind and radiating love. Sai invited us for two days to enjoy free food available to all the 900 delegates, where we were kept spellbound and grateful, after being served three times a day with a great variety of delicious dishes. These meals were capable of satisfying the body's appetite, as well as purifying all the layers of our Being and giving solace to the mind and peace to the soul.

**The volunteers told us that each one of the dishes was personally chosen by Sai Himself.** We were able to remember Hypocrates, father of the modern medicine, who said, "Let your food be your medicine."

We participants felt a strong call to commit ourselves even more to this area of work strengthened by this Conference. We are sure that the area of Health in our Sai movement will grow and that together we will find new and more creative options in order to serve, strengthening our efforts and resources, accomplishing thus one of the noblest purposes of human beings:

To take care of our species, to take care of nature, and all living beings, acknowledging them as sons of God, unique and individual. To alleviate suffering to heal and share with each soul on the path.

It is our genuine desire that, inspired by the Sai ideal, in our land, birth, growth, and old age, as well as death itself, will be lived with dignity and happiness. Let us pray then, that for this endeavour Swami will use us as sensitive instruments, attuned with His Divine Will.

With love for everyone,

Rosana Molho de Berra,  
Argentina

## **FEATURE ARTICLES**

### **HURRICANE KATRINA –**

#### **ARE THERE ANY LESSONS TO BE LEARNT?**

Last month, we carried a feature on the Mumbai Floods. The purpose of that was not only to highlight the magnitude of the disaster (one metre of rain fell in just one single day!) but also to report on the wonderful Sai Seva that was done following that disaster. This month we are doing a feature on Hurricane Katrina that has caused unprecedented havoc in a few States in USA, bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Readers might wonder why. The answer is simple. Every disaster is a wake-up call for humanity, and we would do well to listen and read the signals.

#### **Hurricane and Tsunami – Are They Siblings?**

Elsewhere we explain what a hurricane is, and the kind of punch it can pack. Some people have asked us: “Which is more devastating? The tsunami or the hurricane?” Both are ferocious and devastating, each in its own way. The tsunami has a very long reach, as we saw in the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami that struck on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2004. By contrast, the hurricane impacts one region, causing extensive damage there. In addition, whereas the tsunami dissipates within a kilometre or so of the coastline, the hurricane can and often does penetrate deep inland; may be the winds might lose power, but the hurricane can still deposit a lot of rain, causing extensive flooding.

#### **This Year, Katrina**

Every year, there is a storm season in certain parts of the world; that is when conditions are favourable for hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons to form. Hurricane Katrina followed an interesting trajectory. Originating in the Atlantic Ocean, it made its first landfall on the east coast of Florida, then cut through the southern part of the peninsula, and entered the sea again, that is, the Gulf of Mexico. Here the conditions were just right for it to grow, and grow it did, to the level of a category 5 hurricane.

Initially, the weather forecasters thought the hurricane would make a direct impact on the city of New Orleans but at the last minute, the hurricane curved slightly towards the east and, missing New Orleans, hit another place. After that, it moved deep inwards, losing wind power but dropping a lot of rain all the way. It is interesting that though the hurricane missed New Orleans, it is that city that is very much in the news, long after the hurricane has gone. Why? That is what we shall consider next.

#### **New Orleans – Waiting to Happen**

Mississippi is one of the great rivers of the world. It flows into the Gulf of Mexico, right near the place where New Orleans now is. Some distance away from the river

is a big lake, Pontchartrain. For thousands of years, the river has been depositing silt, forming a delta. Thus, in region where New Orleans is located, there are these three agencies, the river, the lake, and the delta. In addition, there is also the sea itself to the south of the delta. Added to all these, when there is a storm, there are fierce winds combined with downpour and storm surges.

New Orleans is located right where these forces act on each other. That is why the city has been described as a city waiting for a disaster to occur. The region where the city is located is actually below the level of the lake, the level of the river and also the level of the sea! It is thus in a bowl. How come then the city is not drowned? That is because of some protection walls called levees. There are levees that protect the city from Lake Pontchartrain, and also from the river. The delta provides some marginal protection from the sea.

Despite all this, the city is not quite safe. There is a constant tussle between the sea and the river; the river tries all the time to build a delta while the sea tries to encroach. As for the lake, it is waiting to spill over. The bunds or levees, call it what you will, try to prevent that, but the cure also is a problem! Thanks to the bund, the level of water in the lake can rise beyond natural limits; this means that if there is a breach, a tremendous amount of water can enter the town and flood it. And that precisely is what happened recently. The hurricane caused a storm surge that breached some portions of the levees on the lake, and water from the lake began to pour into the city.

### **They Predicted It In 2001**

It is not as if people did not know that this would happen. In fact, as early as 2001, an article in the ***Scientific American*** entitled “Drowning New Orleans” said:

*The city lies below sea level, in a bowl bordered by levees that fend off Lake Pontchartrain to the north and the Mississippi River to the south and west. And because of a damning confluence of factors, the city is sinking further, putting it at increasing flood risk after even minor storms. The low-lying Mississippi Delta which buffers the city from the gulf, is also rapidly disappearing. A year from now another 25 to 30 square miles of delta marsh-an area of the size of Manhattan- will have vanished. An acre disappears every 24 minutes.*

The journal not only warned that a direct hit by a hurricane is inevitable, but also described what the human and economic costs would be. Alas, all that the journal had predicted has come true. This raises many issues, some of which we shall touch upon shortly. But first a few remarks about the disaster itself.

### **No Rain, No Storm, but New Orleans is Flooded**

As already remarked, Katrina missed New Orleans but the storm surge breached the levees and the flooding started. The lake simply started pouring into the city, and there was this crazy sight – no downpour, no storm and yet the city was getting flooded; in a sense, it was like what happened during tsunami time. Thanks to the agents of destruction located all around the bowl in which New Orleans is situated, and the city almost drowned.



The destruction was severe, and it stunned America. Inevitably, there was acute human distress. Distress is the same everywhere, but America had not seen anything like this within its own frontiers. News correspondents kept shaking their heads in wonder and said: "This is America! How can we have refugee camps of the type we see in the Third World?!" But that is the way it is; death and Nature's fury do not make any distinctions.

Much has been said about many of the things that happened after the disaster, the agony of the suffering, the late arrival of help, and so on. We shall not comment on those aspects since they do not concern us. But there is one aspect that needs our attention, and that is connected with pollution.

### **Pollution – New Orleans' New Problem**

Into the bowl in which New Orleans once sat in all its glory, water first poured in from the lake and the river. This water drowned most of the city and as a result, there was a lot of oil pollution, oil from drowned trucks and cars, oil from furnaces in the houses, oil from factories, oil that had leaked from refineries that had suffered damage and so on.

Next, there was pollution from heavy metals such as lead from paint covering walls, cadmium and mercury from computers, and so on.

Added to all this was sewage, garbage from homes, hotels and so on. As if this was not enough, there was the additional complication from dead bodies, floating all over the place.

In this deadly brew, microorganisms went to work and started breaking down many of the complex molecules that formed a part. This was facilitated by the bright sun shining from above. This molecular reduction was accomplished by the bacteria in the water, using up whatever oxygen there was in the polluted water.

Why is all this important? It is important because the water accumulated in the city is now being pumped into Lake Pontchartrain – this is how the city is being drained. But will this not harm the ecology of the lake? Some say the lake would heal itself but others argue that if water deficient in oxygen is pumped into the lake, then it would kill the fish, that is, if the heavy elements fail to do so!

### **Nature's Fury - Due to Man's Folly**

What it all shows is that while scientific and technological knowledge may assist progress so-called, it also tends to push wisdom into the backburner. Right now when there is talk of rebuilding New Orleans, many people are asking: "Should we commit all the old mistakes over again? Should we not learn to respect Nature and be in harmony with her?"

We are not sure if those voices would prevail; in fact, they may not even be heard. But they need to be, and it is to stress that fact that we are presenting this article.

Yes, the time has come ask seriously: How long can we go on defying Nature and acting against Her?

It is becoming increasingly clear that many of the problems that humanity is facing now have been created by man failing to live in equilibrium with Nature. For example, after the recent tsunami, it was pointed out by many ecologists that the destruction in many places would have been much less if the mangroves along the coastline had not been recklessly destroyed to make way for fish and prawn farms – this was the finding in India at least.

### **The Increasingly Disappearing Indian Tiger**

Talking of being in equilibrium, there was recently a heated debate on one of the radio channels in India about the vanishing Indian tiger. In 1939, it was estimated that there were about 40, 000 of these big cats in India. Jim Corbett, the famous British hunter, was worried about the tiger population shrinking, and initiated moves to preserve the tiger. World War II intervened, after which India was partitioned. The country then became involved with so many social problems that people forgot their national animal, and the tiger population came down to an alarming level – just a couple of thousands.

Even as late as 1950, tigers could be seen here and there occasionally. We are sure readers must be aware of how a tiger in the vicinity of Puttaparthi was killed by a British officer. The British Officer, whose jeep did not move after the killing, was surprised when Swami Himself came there and said,

*"I stopped the jeep at this place, for it is a mother, whose three small cubs are at this very time loudly wailing and calling out to her, that you are carrying. Go back! Recover those cubs and gift them to some zoo where they will be well looked after. And do not shoot wild beasts again, for they have caused you no harm. Why do you kill them, surround them and lay traps to catch them. Shoot them instead with a more superior weapon, your camera. That won't maim or kill them."*

Mr. Kondal Rao, who has worked on all of Swami's water projects, says how when he was a young engineer and had to travel on work down the Godavari River on a boat, he would occasionally see a tiger coming down to the river bank to drink water.

When the tiger population crashed, the Government woke up, and a serious effort called Project Tiger was mounted. After that, the tiger population did climb up to about 3000. But lately, there has been an alarming amount of poaching, and in fact in one so-called tiger reserve, it was found one day that there were no tigers at all. This was incredible – the tiger was supposed to be a protected species but it had vanished, thanks to poaching.

Let us get back to the radio debate. It was a heated affair; most people were in favour of saving the tiger but the views expressed about the methods varied widely. The issue was the following: It was said that the space available for the tiger had shrunk abnormally and that therefore all humans must get out of the forests (that

mercifully still remain). In the rich countries, people do not live in forests anymore but in India, a lot of tribals still do.

One idea that is being floated is that the tribals must all be moved out. Might seem like a good idea to get humans out and leave the jungle all to the tiger but there is a big problem; the tribals have been living in the forests for centuries; and there are ten million of them! How to move them all out? Where would they be located? What about jobs for them? Would they like to leave the forest? And so on.

One side argued: "Listen, don't try to throw the tribals out of the forest. They have lived in the forest for thousands of years and know better than all of us how live in harmony with everything in the forests, including the animals."

The other side says: "That was long ago. Nowadays, they help with the illegal logging of trees and also in the poaching of animals. They are poor, and can be easily tempted with money."

### **The Common Factor of All Disasters**

If you look carefully behind the disaster caused by Katrina in New Orleans, the tsunami disaster in some parts of Asia, the near-extirmination of the tiger in India [and many other such problems], you would find that the common factor is the failure of man to live in harmony with Nature. Partly it is due to the growth of the population and partly it is also due to man wanting to "tame" Nature so that he can have his way. As was pointed out in the article on the Mumbai floods, the main reason for that flood was the obstruction man had put in the path of the rainwater. Last year, there were disastrous floods in many parts of Europe. It was not heavy rain that caused the flooding, but the extensive obstruction that man had put in Nature's drainage paths.

The places may vary and the disasters might be different but there is one common lesson behind all of them. Over centuries, man has, in the name of progress, moved farther and farther away from Nature. And in the process, he has totally forgotten all about living in harmony with Nature.

### **Creation is Divine**

It is time to see God, to see Swami in Nature, and not regard the latter as just a collection of galaxies, stars, clouds, mountains, sky, rivers, animals, etc. To the normal eye, they may appear that way but the reality is they are all forms of God. Once man reveres Nature and worships Her as the Universal Mother, there would be no question of exploiting Nature, and we would learn to live in harmony with everything that forms a part of Nature - the air, the water, the land, the forests and the animals too. But if we try to take away the space that belongs to other species as God had granted them, we can expect trouble for sure.

It is time that at least we Sai devotees realised the importance of being in harmony with Nature. This year when Unity, Purity, Divinity is the theme being discussed everywhere in Sai circles, we would do well to appreciate that Unity also means being one with Nature, our Universal Mother.

## **Swami On Nature**

Once many years ago, Swami was addressing students in Trayee Brindavan. He said, "Modern man calls himself civilised and contemptuously dismisses the ancients as being primitive and superstitious. Why? Because ancients worshipped sky, water, trees, animals and so on. But what does modern man do? He pollutes the air, water and land, cuts trees recklessly and hunts animals to extinction. Who is more stupid, the ancients or modern man?" A telling comment on progress!

On another occasion, Swami said: "Nature must be treated as Dear Mother. If you pray to Her, she will give you all you want and much more. But if you try to harm Her, then beware! When Her patience wears out, She can be devastating!" Swami also has remarked that the abduction of Sita by Ravana in the Ramayana must be seen in allegorical terms. It is symbolic of man trying to appropriate Nature for himself. If he tries to do that, he would pay a heavy price. But if man prays to Mother Nature in all humility, there is nothing She will not give.

By the way, we take this opportunity to narrate a little known tale about a big tank of water, a deluge from above, a breach threatening the tank, and prayers to the Lord which dramatically prevented the breach from occurring.

## **Madhurantakam Miracle**

Madurantakam is a small town about seventy kilometres to the south of Chennai [formerly Madras], located on National Highway 45 connecting Chennai with Kanyakumari, the southernmost point of India. There is rich folklore associated with this place and it is said that Lord Rama Himself visited it, while wandering in search of His Consort Sita. There is big tank in the neighbourhood, and Rama is supposed to have had a bath there while visiting the place. In later years, a temple for Rama was duly established.

Let us now fast forward to the closing years of the eighteenth century. By that time, Madras and many regions near it had come under the rule of the British East India Company, and that included Madurantakam. Sometime in 1795, there was deep depression in the Bay of Bengal following which there was a heavy downpour in and around Madurantakam. The then Collector named Lionel Price got the news that the lake in Madurantakam was full and that there was the danger of a breach. If the breach occurred, it might result in severe damage to surrounding property.

Col. Price lost no time in heading for Madurantakam, and after carrying out the inspection, ordered that the breach be plugged. He then decided to visit the Rama temple in the neighbourhood. Removing his shoes out of respect for native tradition, he entered the temple. He found it in a dilapidated condition. Apparently, devotion had declined and that was part of the reason for the poor state of the temple.

Looking around, Col. Price saw in a corner a heap of bricks. He enquired what the bricks were doing there, piled up high. He was told by the temple priest that they were meant for constructing a temple for Mother Sita, but the construction could

not be carried out because there was no money. Why was there no money asked the collector? The reply given was that the huge tank regularly breached during cyclones and that caused much loss to the people; that was why they could not raise funds for building the temple.

Col. Price then asked, "How come your Rama is not coming to your rescue? Why does He not protect the tank, allowing you to build the temple for His Consort?" The temple authorities were deeply hurt by this remark and replied, "Next time there is an emergency, you will definitely see Lord Rama coming to our rescue." As it turned out very shortly after that, there was a heavy downpour and this time the situation was really serious. Col. Price rushed again to Madurantakam, and the sight that greeted him overwhelmed him. A ferocious storm was raging and the fury of Nature stunned Col. Price. Gone was the earlier bravado and he was at his wit's ends. It was just too much, and God alone could save the situation.

There was a big crowd of villagers taking shelter in the temple. The water level in the lake was rising menacingly and Col. Price was wondering whether he would have a watery grave here in this village while his wife and family were in far-away England, unaware of his situation. While immersed thus in his thoughts, he found an elderly gentleman talking non stop about Lord Rama, His Glory and His Power.

This was a desperate situation beyond the might of the British East India Company. Though a devout Christian, Col. Price decided to give Lord Rama a try and silently prayed: "O Lord Rama, they say You are great. In that case, please come to the rescue of all of us and save everyone by preventing the lake from breaching. If You respond to my prayers, I shall, as an expression of my gratitude, build a temple for Your Consort."

The moment Col. Price concluded his prayer, there was a flash of lightning, and he had a vision of Rama and Lakshmana smiling! Astounded, he simply cried, "Look there!" and immediately fainted. When he regained consciousness, Col. Price found himself in a comfortable bed in his own quarters, surrounded by his minions. He sat up with a start and demanded to know the latest position about the tank. He was told that miraculously the rains stopped suddenly, besides which the water level in the lake came down abruptly to a safe level. Col. Price felt relieved, ecstatic and most grateful to the Lord who had come to the rescue in such a dramatic fashion.

Not only Price but also the people of Madurantakam realised that it was Lord Rama who had come to their rescue. Thus it is that even today the temple deity is not referred to as just Rama but as Rama who protected the tank. As for the Colonel, he duly kept his promise and did have a temple constructed for Mother Sita. In fact, there may be found to this day, an inscription in Tamil and Telugu that the temple was built by Company Collector Lionel Place. [The person who did the engraving apparently got the name wrong!] There is also a small representation of the Colonel himself, apparently in his official uniform.

The temple has a serene atmosphere, and is a wonderful place to visit. A unique feature is that on the walls of the temple may be found the songs composed by Saint Tyagaraja in praise of Lord Rama.

The above story also has a deep message and a lesson for us. It tells us that in addition to learning to live in harmony with Nature in all its aspects, we must also constantly pray to God to protect us. That is the best insurance we can ever take.

That really is the message [enshrined incidentally in a most wonderful way in the 22<sup>nd</sup> hymn of the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the *Gita*, where Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, *'Arjuna, whether people understand it or not, take it from Me that I am the One who has ordained this Universe; I am also its Father, Mother, and Grandfather.'*]

We want to draw your attention to this word of God, and the Katrina disaster has provided an opportunity to do so. By the way, Swami refers to this hymn as the fulcrum of the *Gita* – it occurs right in the middle!

Praying to Swami that all of us in the Sai family and the world at large would learn this lesson,

The Heart2Heart Team.

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## **APPENDIX**

**The following items appeared in boxes on the internet version – they are now placed in the Appendix.**

### **ABOUT HURRICANES**

The term hurricane is derived from the word Huracan, believed by ancient aboriginal tribes that lived in Central America, to be the god of evil.

Cyclonic storms of which hurricane is one example, form over tropical waters, in areas of high humidity, light winds and warm sea surface. Such conditions prevail in certain seasons over some regions of the oceans on earth.

The starting point of such storms is the formation of what is called convergence. In this, winds blowing in different directions come together. When this happens, there is what is called a tropical disturbance that manifests as cluster of thunderstorms. Under favourable conditions, the tropical disturbance can become better organised; that is to say, there is a drop in pressure accompanied by cyclonic circulation of the atmosphere in that region. A lot of heat is released, as a result of which the system rises, expands and cools, and in favourable circumstances, causes a chain reaction. In the process, the wind speed increases and can attain awesome speeds.

As a hurricane moves closer to land, there is an accompanying storm surge. This is the name given to the rise in the level of the ocean, which can be quite high,

sometimes as high as 30 feet. This rise is not local; rather, a dome of water is formed which can be say, 30 feet high and as wide as 50 miles wide! That kind of water surge can sure cause heavy damage.

The cyclonic storms that form in the Atlantic are tracked very scientifically, and graded in categories according to the power they pack.

CATEGORY	WIND SPEED [MPH]	STORM SURGE [FEET]
1	74 – 95	4-5
2	96 – 110	6-8
3	111 – 130	9-12
4	131 – 155	13-18
5	MORE THAN 155	MORE THAN 18

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## HURRICANE NAMES

In India, the cyclone season coincides roughly with the North East Monsoon, which usually extends from mid-October to mid-December. The cyclones come and go, but they are not given names; in fact, they are not even given serial numbers! That is the way it has always been. Where hurricanes are concerned, they have a naming system.

Apparently, there was always a tradition for naming hurricanes but it was only when meteorologists took to the serious tracking of hurricanes when they moved forward, that the naming business became serious.

Until World War II, hurricanes were given masculine names. In the early 1950's the weather services began naming storms alphabetically and only with female names. By the late 1970's this practice was replaced with alternating masculine and feminine names [gender equality?!]

Presently, the names are chosen by the World Meteorological Organisation.

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## HISTORY OF NEW ORLEANS

The city of New Orleans was founded by the French in 1718, and given the name Nouvelle Orleans, after the city Orleans in France located south of Paris. The original settlers found it to be a lone high ground in a flood-prone region, adjacent to the banks of the Mississippi river. It was also close to a trading route between Mississippi river and Lake Pontchartrain, followed by the Red Indians.

In the beginning, the area was occupied mainly by fur trappers and traders. In 1711, a French priest-chronicler described the place as malaria infested, full of serpents and alligators. One year later, New Orleans became the capital of French Louisiana.

In 1763, the colony was ceded to Spain but no Spanish Governor came to establish office until 1766. In 1795, the Spain allowed the US the right to use the port. The colony reverted to French rule in 1801 when Napoleon conquered Spain. Barely two years later, Napoleon sold Louisiana along with other French possessions in America in what has come to be called the Louisiana Purchase. From that day, New Orleans became a part of the United States of America.

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## THE AVATAR ON NATURAL DISASTERS

**This is an excerpt of the extended 2½ hour interview given by Bhagavan Baba to the *Editor-in-Chief*, Sri R.K. Karanjia of Blitz News Magazine in September of 1976:**

**Karanjia:** The critics of Swamiji asks why Sai Baba does not help people in distress by bringing rains in times of drought or creating food where there is famine by means of his *Sankalpa Shakti* (divine will-power)? Cannot an Avatar help humanity to control the natural forces and prevent calamities like earthquakes, floods, droughts, famine and epidemics?

**Baba:** This is precisely what I am doing by incarnating or rousing the indwelling God in man to overcome such calamities like Earthquakes, floods, droughts, and epidemics. **There are two ways in which an 'Avatar' can help people: An instant solution as against a long term one. Any instant solution would go against the fundamental quality of Nature itself as well as the "Karmic" law of cause and effect.**

Most of people live in the material world of the desires and egos, which is governed by this law. They reap the fruits of their actions. This brings about their evolution or devolution. If the "*Avatar*" intervenes to instantly solve their problems, it would stop all actions development, even evolution. This solution can be ruled out, because it totally negates the natural laws.

**The other and more effective alternative presents a long-term solution, whereby the "*Avatar*" leads the people themselves to a higher level of consciousness to enable them to understand the truth of spiritual laws so that they may turn towards righteousness and steadfastly work for better conditions.**

This will relate them back to Nature and the Karmic law of causation. They would then transcend the cycle of cause and effect, in which today they are involved as victims and thereby command and control the natural forces to be able to avert the calamities you mention.



**Karanjia:** You mean that you are presently raising the consciousness of mankind to a godlike condition to enable them to command their own destiny?

**Baba:** Exactly. They will become shareholders of My *Sankalpa Shakti* (Divine power, universal energy). I have to work through them, rouse the indwelling God in them, and evolve them to a higher Reality in order for them to master the Natural laws and forces.

**If I cure everything instantly, leaving the people at their present level of consciousness, they would soon mess up things and be at one another's throats again,** with the result that the same chaotic situation would develop in the world....Suffering and misery are the inescapable acts of the Cosmic drama. God does not decree these calamities, but man invites them by way of retribution for his own evil deeds....

So, finally, if the Avatar brings the calamities to an immediate end (which I can do, when there is great need) the whole drama of creation with its Karmic law will collapse.

**Remember, these calamities occur not because of what God has made of man, but really because of what man has made of man.**

Therefore, man has to be unmade and remade with his ego destroyed and replaced by a transcendental consciousness, so that he may rise above the *Karmic* bondage to the freedom of averting such disasters. This is the work of the Avatar, which I am presently doing.

- *God Lives In India, Pg 18-19.*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Heart to Heart wishes to record its indebtedness to the many sources from which information was drawn for preparing the special feature on Hurricane Katrina. The hurricane photos came to us from devotees. H2H invokes God's blessings on all the photographers who captured poignant moments, every one of which is a powerful reminder, as President Clinton said after the recent tsunami, that someone else is in charge! The graphics illustrating the course of the Mississippi River in New Orleans and how the city lies at a lower level etc., are courtesy of Scientific American. All the photos of Madurantakam have been provided by the District President, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu.

## **MUSINGS FROM PRASHANTHI NILAYAM**

### **GANDHIJI'S SARVODAYA – WELFARE FOR ALL**

by Prof. Venkataraman

***This is the text of 'Musings From Prashanti Nilayam' which was aired on Radiosai a few days ago.***

Loving Sai Ram, and greetings from Prashanti Nilayam.

Recently, a conference of economists was organised in the Institute here, on the initiative of Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, a leading economist in the country who joined our faculty a couple of years ago, after serving with distinction for many decades in the famous Delhi School of Economics of Delhi University. Prof. Pandit shares with me the teaching of the Awareness Course to our post-graduate students here, and since I know him very well, he asked me to give an evening lecture during the conference. Today, I am going to tell you something about what I said during my talk.

The title of my talk was: SARVODAYA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: IS IT AT ALL POSSIBLE? Since most of you might not be aware of what *Sarvodaya* means, I should perhaps start by telling you something about it. This word became a part of the Indian vocabulary thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, who translated it as: WELFARE FOR ALL. I would add, welfare for all based on a moral philosophy relating to the principle of Trusteeship.

#### **How Gandhi Found the *Sarvodaya* Idea**

I shall explain shortly what this means, but before that I ought to tell you two things. Firstly, Gandhi came upon this idea in 1904. At that time, he was in South Africa, and once when he was travelling by train from Johannesburg to Durban, he started reading John Ruskin's book, *Unto the Last*. About this experience, Gandhi later wrote:

*I could not get any sleep that night. I was determined to change my life in accordance with the ideas in the book. .... I later translated the book into Gujarati, entitling it, Sarvodaya, the welfare of all.*

Gandhi introduced the idea of *Sarvodaya* to the Indian public when he became involved with the freedom struggle. He asked himself, "When India becomes free, what kind of a country should it be?" That was when he made his views on *Sarvodaya* widely known. In short, Gandhi wanted Independent India to have a *Sarvodaya* Society.

Of course, things did not work out that way at all. Instead, India went on the path of what might be called Scientific Socialism with a strong emphasis on

heavy industries and all that. It was propelled on this path by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, the man whom Gandhi himself declared was his successor. Why on earth did Nehru then distance himself from the Mahatma's cherished dream? There is a historical reason for this.

Before I come to that, I should mention that a few of the remarks I would be making shortly might be considered by some people as "negative". I hope I would be pardoned for this, but there is a reason behind my statements. I am here discussing problem-solving and not trying to give a cosy talk. When we want to get rid of malaria or cholera, we must start with factors that cause malaria or cholera in the first place. Then alone can one plan a good strategy that would solve the problem. Please keep this in mind and bear with me for a while.

### **Gandhi and Nehru – Divergent Paths, Common Goal**

Let me get back to the Indian scene. Continuing on what I was saying earlier, both Gandhi and Nehru were deeply pained by the massive poverty in India. Both wanted India to be rid of abject poverty; only, their recipes for achieving this differed.

Gandhi preferred the philosophy of Sarvodaya, while Nehru was attracted to the economic policy followed by the Soviet Union of those days. Nehru saw in mighty Russia a concrete example of a Society that had rid itself of poverty, and had provided all its citizens with employment, shelter and food. Of course, Nehru did not accept Stalin's cruel dictatorship but he asked, "Why can't I combine Russia's economic philosophy with democracy?" Thus was born what is nowadays referred to as Nehruvian Socialism. Nehru passionately believed that Science and Technology alone could solve the massive problems of India. Nehru died in 1964, but Nehruvian Socialism survived him and had a long innings up to almost 1990.

### **After Nehruvian Socialism, Now American Capitalism**

So what happened in 1990? People woke up to the fact that Nehruvian Socialism had not delivered the goods. They then went shopping for a new economic philosophy. In the shopping mall of economic theories, there was the market-oriented philosophy that America had pioneered, and that China appeared to have shown to be a wonderful model for a developing country to adopt. Thus, willy-nilly, India has swung from the idealistic but non-workable Scientific Socialism of Nehru to the new Market-oriented Capitalism of the West, with Globalisation coming in tow.

India has been experimenting with this new philosophy for about 15 years now, and one might ask, "What is the score card like?" The answer you will get would depend very much upon the person whom you are asking. There are many who would say things are much better, in fact 'simply wonderful'; that's because these people can now readily buy goods in the Indian market that fifteen years ago were unthinkable, especially consumer goods of various kinds. These people sing praises because they have the means to purchase.

The list of things we can now buy here is in fact quite impressive – everything from cars to TV's, refrigerators, air conditioners, down to perfumes, designer clothes and what not. Add to them such goodies like computers, cell phones, digital cameras, etc., and it looks like a real dream.

Earlier, most of these things were simply not available and such things as foreign liquor and tape recorders could be obtained only in the smugglers' market. Yes, today we can even get imported cheese, imported biscuits, and all the rest of it. As if this is not enough, we have hamburger joints, pizza parlours etc., to make the cup of "joy" full. And for those who can afford, there is the Rolls Royce too!

### **The Curses of Capitalism**

But there is a flip side to all of this. Firstly, thanks to heavy importing, a good bit of manufacturing has had to close down, leaving hundreds of thousands unemployed. In Gujarat, which used to hum with manufacturing, hundreds of factories have closed down. And this has not only thrown factory workers on to the streets, but also left truck operators etc., who moved the industrial products, high and dry. There are more serious problems, caused by a strong shift to the so-called market-oriented economy.

Nowadays, everything has a high price tag, from medical services to education. The way things are right now, I am afraid most young men in the future would not be able to get college and professional education. That would leave all these millions barely employable, except in low-grade tasks. **Thus, while for the haves it is a wonderful change, for the have-nots, things are not so good; in fact, in many respects, it is worse.**

To put it in a nutshell, the way things are going, soon the world over, especially in the very rich countries and in countries with huge populations like China and India, there would be basically two categories of people – one that is rich and can afford, and the other that is poor and cannot afford. **Once there is a sharp gradient in income levels, many social evils automatically surface.**

Thus, the more aggressive in the disadvantaged group take to crime that includes extortion, kidnapping, drug-peddling etc. At the other end, many of the rich either cheat the law in such matters as taxes, or simply ignore the law by engaging in mighty corporate frauds and shady deals of various kinds. In addition, there are bright people who try to get a big kick out of cyber crimes, hacking, generating computer viruses and so on. In short, anything for kicks or money or both. In between are caught millions who feel highly insecure and do not know which way to turn.

Let me restate the two different perspectives on the present scenario. The supporters of the consumerist economy, globalisation and all that say:

- Listen, there is no alternative to free-market economy, coupled with freedom of choice, freedom of the press etc.
- The human mind will always seek pleasure and be driven by greed.
- Greed is not all that bad. It is the fuel that drives the engine of modern economy.
- Yes, those with drive and initiative come out at the top. What they have earned is through hard work and diligent use of their skills. What's wrong with that?
- OK, they have accumulated wealth but their quest for wealth and pleasure also generates so many jobs. Thus, there is a trickle down of wealth to lower levels, and you cannot dismiss it.
- In short, this is the best system one can think of, and it has come through trial and error and a long process of evolution. To reject it would be the height of stupidity.

I have given you a very weak summary but if you hear the advocates of the free market philosophy, you would find that they really go to town with their suave presentation and will convince almost everyone that this is THE thing one must go for – marketing at its best I would say!

Let me now turn to the negative side of this scorecard that appears so glittering on one side. You know the old saying – all that glitters is not gold; that applies very much in this case. Here is the way I see it:

- Yes, superficially, things do appear better in India now, thanks to the free market, globalisation and all that.
- **However, it is better largely for those who have managed to move up.**
- The free-market economy is basically built on the philosophy of profit for one or at best a limited number of people that own stock in a particular corporation or business or whatever. **It is really not bothered about the welfare of the public at large.** If it creates some jobs, that is purely incidental – all that the company wants is money, money and still more money.
- Here is an example. **The big tobacco companies rake in huge amounts. But do cigarettes do any good to anybody?** Not at all; on the other hand, millions die on account of lung cancer, which is directly traceable to cigarette. And, to make matters worse, there is now evidence that these tobacco giants have been secretly making efforts for many years to get young people addicted to tobacco. For example, there was recently a TV programme in India that highlighted how the tobacco companies are inducing Indian movie producers to introduce a lot of scenes showing smoking.
- By the way, in the globalisation era, jobs have been made mobile. If tomorrow country B offers lower wages compared to country A and therefore gives greater scope for profits, orders would go from country A to B, leaving thousands in country A jobless, literally overnight.
- **Greed not only causes havoc to human Society – by promoting obesity and juvenile diabetes, for example – but also ravages the**

**environment.** The rapid growth in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere is one example.

I won't make a long song and dance of it all. As I see it, during the last hundred years or so, many political and economic philosophies have been tried, and most of them have floundered. Some may appear to be successful but when one examines deeply, it is a different story. I would say that there is nothing really worth choosing from amongst the socio-economic philosophies offered thus far. **There is one common reason for this collective failure – and that is they all lack a serious moral basis.**

You see, my point is very simple really. Let me take the Communist philosophy, which Stalinist Russia swore by. As a philosophy it is unquestionably idealistic; but in practice? That is a different matter altogether; that is why one intellectual whose name I do not remember said: **“A man is a fool if he is not a Communist at the age of twenty, and he is a fool if remains a Communist at the age of forty!”** OK, now what happened in the Russia of those days? No doubt the essential wants of the people were provided, but the tyranny of the State eventually led to a collapse. Basically, the system had no moral engine to drive it.

Let me now turn to the other extreme, namely Capitalism, especially as it is being advocated these days. When there is a lot of space for everyone, Capitalism does appear OK; and indeed, it was because of that hundreds of thousands flocked from Europe to America in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. America was truly the land of opportunity.

### **The Devious Philosophy of Capitalism**

But lately Capitalism has become global, and its philosophy mostly appears to be: TO HELL WITH SOCIETY. MAKE PROFIT BY HOOK OR BY CROOK. People may accuse me of gross oversimplification but you know this in fact is what many people say even in America, Britain, France etc. Take the pharmaceutical industry, for example. Recently, the BBC ran a documentary serial entitled: PILLS, PATIENTS AND PROFIT. In that serial, the broadcast journalists explored in detail why life-saving drugs cost so much. It is largely because of the desire of the corporate sector to make as much money as possible.

There are any numbers of such examples I can give, including of the inhuman desertion of the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, but I shall not. I shall make just one simple point. As I see it, **the current globalisation mantra is all about securing profit for a few, namely the shareholders.** This might create jobs but that is incidental. Profit is the main motive, and if securing profits means jobs have to be cut, people have to be pushed to poverty etc., that is just unfortunate but that is the way the cookie crumbles. In short, it is all about wealth for a few at the expense of many. **There is, on the part of the big corporations, only passing concern for the sufferings of large sections of humanity, and much less for the environment.**

Just to give you two examples, take a look at the way gambling casinos are multiplying the world over. Often, governments aid and abet this process. In the gambling business, the owners of the casinos never lose money; on the contrary, they make tons of money. But if you look at the people lured by gambling, many of them go broke; and the tragic part is that most of these are people with limited means. Incidentally, this is what is happening in the rich countries! Here then is a clear example of taking gullible people for a ride in the name of making money. Mercifully, we do not have the big casinos, at least as yet. Similarly, if you look at the increase in the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere, you would find that it is many of the rich countries that have failed to stand by the Kyoto protocol that calls for measures that would bring about a sharp decrease in the emission.

### **Sarvodaya of Mahatma Gandhi**

It is time to bring in *Sarvodaya*. Let me start by placing before you some of the things that Gandhi said. Gandhi was quite clear that one can not factorise life and say this is political, that is spiritual and so forth. For him, life was always one indivisible whole. It just could not be cut and parcelled as one wishes. He says:

*The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know of any religion apart from human activity.*

It is often said that Gandhi was against machines, industrialisation and all that. It is true he started off like that and it is equally true that he was always uncomfortable where machines were concerned. However, over the years, he reluctantly conceded that machines did have a place but within limits. This is how he expressed this idea once:

*I do visualise electricity, ship building, iron works, machine making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. Hitherto, industrialisation has been so planned as to destroy the village and village handicrafts. In the State of the future, it will sub serve the villages and their crafts.*

Why was Gandhi so distrustful of machines? There were many reasons, one of them being that they tend to produce unemployment.

*Mechanisation is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required, as is the case in India.*

Another reason why Gandhi was concerned about machines was that they tend to produce a monopoly that worsens the state of the poor. This can be clearly seen in the case of medicines and drugs. Protected by patents, IPR and all that, the big pharma companies today charge a very high price for the anti-retroviral drugs [ARV] that HIV infected patients must take regularly if

they are to save themselves. And who are those that need these ARV's? Mostly the poor, especially in Africa. Thus it is that Gandhi said:

*I have no consideration for machinery that is intended to enrich a few at the expense of the many ..... I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me.*

### **First Morality, then Machines**

Gandhi was always very clear about one thing. **Life is given to man by God for going on the spiritual path.** So he always asked himself: *"Will machines deflect me from the spiritual path?"* Giving expression to his concerns, he once wrote:

*As a moderately intelligent man, I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialisation. But I have a great concern about introduction of machine industry. The machine produces much too fast, and brings with it a sort of economic system I cannot grasp. I do not want to accept something when I see its evil effects, which outweigh whatever good it brings with it. I want the dumb millions of our land to be healthy and happy, and I want them to grow spiritually. Once we have shaped our life on Ahimsa, we shall know how to control the machine.*

Yet another of his concerns was about the manner in which technology leads to an unnecessary multiplication of wants. He knew very well about the weakness of the Mind and its infinite capacity to delude itself. Thus he wrote:

*The Mind is a restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants and still remains unsatisfied. Therefore, the idea of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. Civilisation in the real sense consists, not in the multiplication of wants but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants.*

When I see what is going on today, I find Gandhi's warning prophetic. I mean just look at what they are doing with mobile phones and video games. The people who produce these gizmos give fancy names like convergence and all that, but it is a lot of rubbish really. None of these things do anything for the soul of man. As I see it, they are devil's instruments. And this precisely is what Gandhi himself said, long before anyone knew that devils toys would be available in hundreds of millions.

*I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a step nearer its goal... I whole-heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilisations stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic.*

OK, Gandhi was against all the things that we now take for granted, like TV, for example. Maybe they have problems. But what are we to do? Where do we go from here? Is there any alternative to a philosophy and a way of life



based on consumerism, globalisation and all that? That's what I shall deal with next.

### **Where Does Consumerism Culminate?**

Thanks to heavy brain-washing, there is a mindset amongst most educated people that there is no alternative to a consumerist economy, globalisation and all that. All these passionate advocates would forcefully point out to the success of China and indeed of India. They would say: "Listen, are you not aware how people are talking of China and India as the potential Superpowers of the 21st century?" and so on. I don't wish to get deeply entrenched in this kind of argument – I do not have much time for it anyway. But there are a few points I would like to place before you concerning where reckless consumerism can and does lead.

**Firstly, the forces that promote consumerism want everyone to spend – the more we spend, the happier they are because they can rake in huge profits.** Next, consumerism leads to a lot of waste. People may say, "Oh, that's no problem we can always recycle." That is all more easily said than done. **Right now, the job of dismantling old ships, old computers, old mobile phones etc., is being quietly dumped on the so called Third World, and leading to a lot of pollution there.**

I heard a BBC radio documentary dealing with dismantling computers and mobile phones. The BBC reporter went to a flat in a crowded part of Delhi where a large number of small-scale industries were located. The owner of this small shop was tearing down computers and all that, with absolutely no safety provisions, and was unaware that he was discharging dangerous metals like beryllium, lead, mercury, cadmium, into the environment. The reporter asked this fellow, "Do you know what a dangerous job you are doing? Do you know you can die?" The man doing the dismantling replied in a philosophical manner: "I am going to die anyway; this job at least gives me something to eat while I am alive." I can go on and on, but **the simple point is that consumerism leads ultimately to grave danger to the planet.** And when the planet is in danger, ALL are in danger, EVERYWHERE. One cannot simply hide oneself inside an impregnable fortress. As someone said, "One cannot live in an island of luxury in an ocean of misery."

### **Is Going Nuclear the Answer?**

Dear listener, please spend some time thinking deeply about the long-term consequences of all that modern consumerism implies. If you do, then you would come to the inevitable conclusion that there can be such a thing as too much. When James Watt invented the steam engine roughly two hundred years ago, he unknowingly ushered in the famous Industrial Revolution. True the Industrial Revolution has conferred a lot of benefits but it has also left us with a heavy price tag. The carbon-dioxide pollution of the atmosphere and the danger of the greenhouse gases is the price tag. This is the burden that the generations of the past two centuries have left for the present. And now what is happening? People are saying go nuclear; go for atomic power

stations; everything would be OK; no carbon dioxide problem any more.

I can say something about nuclear electricity, having lived for 13 years right next to a nuclear power station near Madras, where two reactors were pumping electricity into the local grid. Yes, with a nuclear power plant, we do not have the carbon dioxide emission problem. There is of course the safety problem, and after the famous Chernobyl accident, people do have a reason to be deeply concerned.

**But let us say that the reactors of the future operate accident free. That does not let us off the hook for there would still be the problem of what to do with highly toxic radioactive waste generated.** In simple terms, we have to think deeply about whether we can have limitless growth in a finite world. To put the problem in perspective, just consider the following facts:

**1) The amount of fresh water available to humanity is fixed and limited.**

**2) The amount of cultivable land too is fixed; in fact, due to misuse, the amount of arable land is actually decreasing.**

**3) The population of the world, on the other hand, is increasing rapidly.**

QUESTION: What do we do about water in the future, especially as the consumption of water is rapidly increasing thanks to demands from the industry? What do we do about food in the future, considering that agriculture also needs water and added to that land?

You may at this point say, "Listen, we have heard all this sort of thing so many times from you. But what is the alternative? In fact, is there an alternative?" That is the question I shall now deal with.

### **The Solid and Sole Alternative – Spirit of Trusteeship**

The alternative we have, and in my opinion the only sane alternative is *Sarvodaya*. You might immediately object saying, "Listen, when even Gandhi could not get *Sarvodaya* started, do you think you can do it? Moreover, remember, this is the internet age. Much has happened since Gandhi died. Be realistic man!"

My reply would be the following: firstly, I am not trying to implement *Sarvodaya*. I am merely recommending it. Secondly, I am not for a moment arguing that we try to implement Gandhi's blue print *in toto*, with *Charka* (spinning wheel) and all. Not at all. Nor am I suggesting that we get rid of Science and Technology; that would be, to use an American idiom, like throwing the baby with the bath water. I am merely saying we must take a serious look at the SPIRIT of *Sarvodaya*, and implement that spirit, keeping in mind all the modern factors and parameters. Well, what exactly is that spirit? It is the spirit of Trusteeship. I have mentioned Trusteeship in many of my

talks, but on this occasion, I would like to make some brief remarks in the context of the new economic order that I am advocating.

**Trusteeship is what I would call Moral Socialism or Socialism with a Conscience.** What has been tried out earlier by so many people in so many countries is what Gandhi refers to as Scientific Socialism. It is a philosophy based on idealism no doubt but without any reference to individual and collective morals. The philosophy tries to seek equality and welfare for all, by sheer economic planning. Citizens are expected to be patriotic, idealistic, and ethical and so forth. In practice, this has not worked on a sustained basis.

Take, for example, the erstwhile Soviet Union. It started off on a wonderful idealistic note and indeed abolished poverty in a sort of manner. Nobody starved, everybody had employment of some sort, and everybody had access to education as well as health care, and so forth. There was, as one scholar put it, a kind of arithmetical equality.

Yes, there was a guarantee of employment, housing, etc. But since the system lacked a moral backbone, the leaders and those who exercised administrative and bureaucratic control, decided they would be more equal than others. Quickly, this led to a gross system aberration, followed by mass discontent. System collapse inevitably followed. What comes out strongly from the experience of various countries is that unless there is honesty across the board, unless people decide to be uniformly unselfish, there is always trouble.

### **The Philosophy of Sarvodaya**

OK, so what is the alternative? Let us go back to *Sarvodaya* and examine what exactly it implies. The *Sarvodaya* philosophy does not seek any arithmetic equality. It recognises stratification in Society, and tries to adjust to it in a spiritual way. How? Via the principle of Trusteeship.

**The starting point of the Trusteeship principle is that everything belongs to God.** By the way, this is not my declaration; Swami Himself has said this many, many times, starting from the *Krishna Avatar*. My next point is that every one of us is blessed in some way or the other. God may have blessed us with material wealth, good health, intelligence, etc. All these are to be regarded as assets belonging to God, and the individual must simply regard whatever he has as God's property, of which he or she is just a Trustee.

Let us say there is a brilliant scientist. He makes all kinds of wonderful discoveries. But the scientist is humble and regards all the knowledge resulting from his discoveries as belonging to God. He does not patent his discoveries, shares his knowledge with all, and engages only in work that is beneficial to Society and is not harmful. In particular, he avoids unethical research like poison.

You may say, this will not work in this day and age. That is what we would think, conditioned as we are by the constant propaganda about IPR or

intellectual property right etc. But are you aware of something called open source software? This is a remarkable concept and it is amazing it is working so well in this fierce globalisation age.

I will not go into all the details, but mention the key concept: FREE SOFTWARE. What it means is that the person using it has the freedom to modify the programme obtained as free software and the freedom to distribute copies, either gratis or for a fee. Closely related is the concept of 'copyleft' (opposite of copyright). The central idea of copyleft is that the one who uses the source programme (obtained free) and modifies it, must make the modified versions available free. This is how the entire community is supported and encouraged to grow.

But does this not go against the fundamental principles of business? Not quite. What has happened is that since knowledge is available for free, lots and lots of people are able to download and develop their own products and promote software growth. This enables system costs to come down; hardware can now be bundled with free software, and that also promotes economic growth. For example, right now, in India we can get a PC with Linux for a much lower cost than a PC with Windows.

### **The True Trusteeship Society**

Let me get on with the Trusteeship idea, for time is running out. You see, in a true Trusteeship Society, everyone owns minimal wealth – all the rest belongs to God, and is administered for and on behalf of God. Yes, the doctor would need some extra money to maintain his clinic, and so on; but that is not contested. No one ever grudges legitimate perks. For example, even in a Communist Society, people were reasonable enough to accept that the Head of State would need a special aircraft to travel; one just cannot expect the Head to come in the queue and book his ticket on a commercial flight. Why was there this acceptance of the perk? Because of two reasons.

**In a true Trusteeship Society, everyone owns minimal wealth – all the rest belongs to God, and is administered for and on behalf of God....The important point is that everyone is busy working for others for that is their duty.**

Firstly, the Head does not own the aircraft and secondly, the Head is not flaunting any personal wealth of his. In the same way, in a true modern *Sarvodaya* Society, no one would grudge legitimate "perks" coming with some category of jobs.

**The important point is that everyone is busy working for others for that is their duty.** When one is busy in this manner and is committed to a moral and simple life, it automatically means that individual desires would come down, there would be less of consumption, especially of unwanted and undesirable goods, less of energy consumption and therefore less of pollution, and so on. This, many would complain, is an unrealistic proposal and will not work in practice. To rebut this idea, Swami cites the example of the human

body. It is really a beautiful example. I have no doubt mentioned this on earlier occasions but in the present context, the human body provides an unmatched example.

### **The Best Model - The Human Body**

You see, in the human body, we have, to start with many systems like the respiratory system, the circulatory system, the nervous system and so on. Each system is made up of sub-systems and so on, and when we come down the hierarchy ladder, we reach the organs, like the heart, the brain, the liver, the stomach, the pancreas and so on. If we go further down, and we can, we eventually reach the level of the cells. In a sense, the cells are the basic building blocks of the human body.

Now what has the human body got to do with social problems, economics and all that? That is what Swami has explained beautifully. He says that Society is a complex system built by man using the individual as the building block, just as God has built the human body using cells. Like the body, Society has systems, subsystems etc. performing different functions. The body lives, and so does the Society. OK, so far so good. There are many analogies. So what?

Swami says that man must not just see analogies. Instead, man must try to understand the principle on which the human body works. To use jargon, what is the Operating System that governs the body? Believe it or not, it is the principle of Trusteeship, that is, every organ works for the common benefit of the entire body! Don't believe?

Just consider what Swami says: He says that when we have fever and the doctor gives a bitter medicine, does the tongue spit it out? No, bitter or not, it swallows. Why? So that the body may get better. Or say the doctor wants to give an injection? Does the arm say, "No way! Why should I suffer the prick for the sake of the body?" Similarly, does the brain look down upon the kidney for doing low- class work? Not at all. In fact, God has given us two kidneys, a spare one, which alone ought to show how important the kidney is.

I can go on and on but I shall not. **I don't think it takes much intelligence to appreciate that God has given the perfect Operating System for the human body. Swami asks why then does not man simply copy this system when it would solve all our problems?** The answer is simple. Humans want room for selfishness, and the Trusteeship system does not allow any room for that. People would argue, "Be reasonable, who can be unselfish?" and so on.

### **Is Unselfishness Possible? – Swami Shows the Way**

Well, if we want to cling to selfishness, then we have to pay the price for it – there is no such thing as a free lunch. Just watch Swami at work. Is there any trace of selfishness? Absolutely not. That is how He has been able to establish a world-class hospital that offers free treatment to all who come. Just take a moment to digest this. Here in Puttaparthi which was until recently

a bona fide village in a developing country, Swami has set up such a big hospital that offers advanced medical treatment completely free. Such a thing cannot be found even in a rich country. That is what Love and selflessness can achieve.

People would say, “Oh come on, be reasonable; we are ordinary humans; we cannot be selfless like Swami.” Possibly true but we can try to be like Trustees at least to some extent. We can cut down our desires, share what we have in good measure with the have-nots and so on. We can curb anger, jealousy and hatred at least. Will that not start improving our world?

### **Swami's Way - The Simplest Route to Sarvodaya**

You know something? Swami has given the simplest route to achieving *Sarvodaya*. He says LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL. Spend five minutes and analyse carefully the implications of this profound teaching of Swami. If you do, you will find, as I have, that this seemingly simple formula if adopted by all at least to some extent, CAN indeed bring a good measure of welfare to a good many. And, as a result, a good many of the world's problems would also get solved in the process. Maybe we will not have 100% ***Sarvodaya***, but **even 50% would give us a far better world!**

I hope you would agree that my earlier reference to the problems of the world was not out of place. Many people are of the view that devotion is all about the relationship between the individual and God. That is indeed true. **However, it must be realised that God is not to be seen merely in the physical form that He dons when He descends as an Avatar. As Swami constantly reminds us, we must see God everywhere in everything, all the time.** In other words, especially in today's world, we must be conscious of our relationship to Society and to Nature, which are aspects of God Almighty.

When we fall sick, do we not take steps to get cured? How then can we disassociate ourselves from the problems of Society and the ecosystem and not bother about finding solutions? This is what we are expected to stress as teachers here; this is what I do in my classes all the time, and it is on account of that I choose to discuss some of the issues facing us to, not to scare you but to stress that Swami's teachings are the only solution for humanity's problems.

That is what Krishna taught, that is what Gandhi understood and tried to popularise, though he was laughed at. Gandhi was not saying anything original; on the contrary, he was merely detailing the principles enunciated by Lord Krishna. Swami is giving us the same lesson directly, to each one of us, all the time. Should we not pay serious attention to it?

Think about it!

Jai Sai Ram.

## **A TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOGA RAO**

### **Kudos From Swami**

***“All of you know him as Colonel Joga Rao, but I know him as Karma Yogi Joga Rao!”***

These were the words with which Swami decorated Col. Joga Rao after presenting him ceremonial *kankanams* (gold bracelets) and a silver salver, in front of the vast concourse of devotees assembled in the Hill View stadium to celebrate Bhagavan's 65th Birthday celebrations.

Some people live with such courage, verve and an endearing joy of life that it is an inspiration to all around them. Colonel S.P. Joga Rao was one such person. His high-spirited personality and openhanded nature endeared him to everyone. His brilliance, commitment and integrity at work earned him plaudits from the mighty and the scholarly.

An eminent and vastly experienced engineer, Sri Joga Rao, will best be remembered for his yeoman contribution to the development of the Prashanti Nilayam and Brindavan ashram campuses and his close involvement in several of Bhagavan's service projects. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, a charitable trust under the guidance of Bhagavan, which has executed several mammoth welfare projects.

### **How Col. Joga Rao Came to Swami**

S P Joga Rao enjoyed a successful tenure as Chief Engineer of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL), where he was responsible for much of its construction and commissioning. He also served in the armed forces where he rose to the rank of Colonel, and had been posted at many places all over India. Later he started a Civil Engineering and Consultancy Company along with a host of experts drawn from various fields of engineering, construction and management which was quite a successful venture.

But, all this was just a training ground for the stupendous tasks he was to accomplish under the guidance of the 'Architect of the Universe'. Destiny was to crown his life with a long and sweet association with the Lord come in human form.

The divine call came in 1969. One day, Bhagavan visited the house of Sri Ramaswamy, a neighbour of Col. Joga Rao who was closely associated with service activities in Brindavan, Bhagavan's ashram at Whitefield, Bangalore. Joga Rao, though a devotee of Lord Krishna from his childhood, had his reservations about men in ochre robes. So, although his wife and he received an invitation to Sri Ramaswamy's house to have *Darshan* of Bhagavan he was reluctant to go. He had already been annoyed when a few days prior to

this, he found a photo of Bhagavan Baba in the altar of his house, which his wife had received from Smt. Ramaswamy. But, his wife persisted and so he went there.

Bhagavan spoke very lovingly to him and invited him to Brindavan. Baba's gentle and warm demeanour touched Joga Rao's heart and he was drawn to Brindavan soon after that. The devotional ambience of the *ashram* and the discipline there had a profound impact on him. Bhagavan received him very affectionately. During the conversation, He casually mentioned to Joga Rao to associate himself with the construction work of the college building at Anantapur. The passionate engineering professional in Joga Rao responded positively and that marked the beginning of a new chapter in his life.

### **An Intimate Relationship...**

In the *Nava Vida Bhakti* (Nine stages of devotion) outlined in the 'Narada Bhakti Sutra', the stage of *Sakhya Bhakti* is the penultimate stage before the final merger of the individual self with the Absolute. In this stage, the devotee experiences the relationship of an intimate friend with the Lord, sporting with Him and losing oneself in the bond of love with the Lord. Sri B N Narasimha Murthy in *Sathyam Shivam Sundaram V* says, Col. Joga Rao was privileged, to enjoy such a relationship with Swami. Recalling this unique relationship Sri Joga Rao had with Swami, Sri V. Srinivasan, President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations, India, recalls,

*"Col. Joga Rao would intercede, to the extent that it was possible to do so, on behalf of many devotees with Bhagavan, which sometimes earned him reprimands from the Lord. He took them with a smile and would say to Bhagavan Bhagavan was also tolerant because He knew that Joga Rao was not asking anything for himself but only for others."*

He was a man with a fondness for eating and more prominently, for feeding others. Dr. Voleti Choudhary, a cardiac surgeon in Swami's hospital, in an interview with Swami was witness to the Swami - Joga Rao relationship and this is what he narrates,

*"In our later interview, Swami's attention slowly shifted to playfully teasing the colonel, especially about his eating habits. Joga Rao mildly protested that he eats so much only because Bhagavan feeds him so much. I was very fascinated by the dynamics between Bhagavan and Joga Rao. Though he was 85 years old, Joga Rao responded to Bhagavan like a child being overwhelmed by the attention he gets from his loving parents."*

### **"Joga Rao, They Are Not Coming!"**

Sri Joga Rao was quite often at the receiving end of many of Bhagavan's "practical jokes". Sri B N Narasimha Murthy, currently the Warden of the Brindavan hostel, and who has been associated with Swami for more than four decades recalls an amusing incident,



*“When the document of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust was to be registered at Hyderabad in 1972, Bhagavan asked Joga Rao to coordinate all the related work apart from organising His visit to the city. It was obligatory that the members of the Trust be present at the time of registration. Therefore Joga Rao called up the Rajamata of Nawanagar who was at Bombay, to come to Hyderabad along with Sri Nani Palkhiwala and Sri Indulal Shah. The Rajamata conveyed to Joga Rao the same evening by telephone that she would be coming to Hyderabad with Sri Indulal Shah. She also informed him that Palkhiwala who had gone out of station would not be able to make it to Hyderabad. Since Bhagavan had already retired by that time, Joga Rao could not convey the message to Him.*

*When Joga Rao went to the post office next morning along with Sri Prasada Rao, then the State President of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations of Andhra Pradesh, he found a telegram sent by the Rajamata to Bhagavan confirming her arrival. When they met Swami and handed over the telegram to Him, He read it and said, **“Joga Rao, they are not coming!”***

*Puzzled and bewildered, Joga Rao read the telegram again and again. According to the telegram, what Baba had said was right! Joga Rao showed the telegram to Prasada Rao; they looked at each other in wonder and stood speechless. But during their lunch with Swami, He laughed and gave them the telegram again. It bore the same words they had read at the post office!”*

That was Baba's way of playing a joke on them! Yes, of course, the Rajamata arrived at Hyderabad with Indulal Shah on time and the registration of the Trust was completed.

### **Selfless Service – Joga Rao's Passport to Swami**

Col. Joga Rao once said to Swami, *“I do not know how to do meditation or sing bhajans or do penance, but I can only do selfless service.”* Swami promptly told him, *“That is why you are so dear to me; whereas everyone chants 'Sai Ram' 'Sai Ram', I call 'Joga Rao', 'Joga Rao' so often.”*

It was this selfless service and uncompromising zeal for excellence in work that earned him the confidence of Bhagavan. With Swami's guidance, he set about improving the amenities for devotees in Prashanti Nilayam and Brindavan. He plunged with enthusiasm into the task of planning and constructing the campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prashanti Nilayam, Anantapur and Whitefield.

At the age of 85, when most people would rather spend their time in quietude reminiscing about the sunny days they had spent, Joga Rao dedicated himself to fulfilling the declaration Bhagavan made on the eve of His 70th birthday in His discourse on the 22nd November 1990, that in a year's time a massive hospital would be constructed near Prashanti Nilayam, that would bring top notch medical care to the poorest of the poor.

### **Courage, Capability, Efficiency and Joga Rao**

Dr. Safaya, Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences since its inception, recalls:

*"I remember when in April 1991, he showed me the stretch of land, which the Trust had acquired for building the hospital and its campus, I felt utterly frustrated because before me was a completely desolate, uneven and even a bit hilly, semi-arid land of nearly 100 acres. To clear this area and to flatten it would take several years! We had very little time and Bhagavan had declared that the Hospital would be built and be functional by 22 nd November, 1991. I had a strong urge to run away and go back to Delhi. It was Col. Joga Rao, who convinced me that all would be done on schedule and he did it. It stands before all of us now as a living testimonial to his courage, capabilities, and efficiency."*

But, there were times when Joga Rao himself was racked with doubts about the completion of the Hospital project. In the summer of 1991, Bhagavan was at 'Sai Sruti', the beautiful *mandir* overlooking the scenic lake at Kodaikanal. In fact, the foundation work for the building was just commencing at the time Bhagavan left Prashanti Nilayam for Kodaikanal. Joga Rao came to Kodaikanal after a three day stay at Chennai for some work in connection with the Hospital project. Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden of the boys hostel at the Brindavan campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, who was sharing the room with him at 'Sai Sruti' says,

*"He looked very tired and went to bed quite early that evening after dinner. When I woke up around two in the morning, one of the lights was on, and I found Joga Rao sitting on his cot with his hands clutching the forehead, and eyes closed. I could make out that he was very uncomfortable. I sat up and asked him, "Sir, can I help you? You seem to have a bad headache."*

*"Yes, I have a headache; but it is a different kind of headache!" replied Joga Rao. "Can I be of any help, sir?" I persisted.*

*"None except Swami can do anything to cure me of this headache!" Joga Rao sounded very categorical. More out of sympathy for me than anything else, he continued, "How will the hospital building be completed before November? There are so many problems."*

*That was his headache! There was nothing I could do about it, but I felt overawed by his concern and anxiety over the work that was very dear to Swami's heart. He was working very hard to meet the deadline set by Bhagavan's declaration about the hospital on His previous birthday. With these thoughts hovering in my mind, I lay down and slept.*

*Next morning during the breakfast, Swami asked Joga Rao, "Joga Rao, you didn't have good sleep last night. Isn't it so?"*

*"Swami, You know everything," submitted Joga Rao.*

*"Why are you losing sleep over what I have promised?"*

*“Swami, sometimes I get worried.”*

***“Joga Rao, you have no reason to worry. Rest assured that the project will be completed on time. The land of Bharath is Yoga Bhoomi, Thyaga Bhoomi and Punya Bhoomi. Anyone undertaking any work in this great land with selfless intention will be successful without any doubt. Men, money and materials which are required for the completion of the work, will come by themselves. It is not only in the case of Swami, but it is so with anyone who is completely selfless!”*** declared Bhagavan. Those words of assurance cleared the clouds of worry and doubt from the mind of Joga Rao. Those who were witnesses to the divine scene in the dining hall in Sai Sruti felt truly blessed.’

### **A Revelation In the End...**

In the end, as we all know, the Divine Will prevailed over all obstacles, and the magnificent edifice of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences that stands at Prasanthi Gram, about five kilometers from Prashanti Nilayam was inaugurated exactly a year after Bhagavan’s declaration, on 22nd November 1991, with four operations being conducted successfully on the very first day. Col. Joga Rao was to say later,

*“Baba plans each construction work as a simple project and gradually develops it after careful scrutiny. If He wants a project to be completed by a particular date, it will be completed by that time. That is the power of His sankalpa (Divine Will). There may be any number of problems, but the project will be completed by the date set by Him!”*

***“I have already received the highest honour....” – Sri Joga Rao***

It was this unshakeable faith in Swami’s divinity that allowed him to take up the implementation of Bhagavan’s project to supply pure drinking water to the water scarce district of Anantapur in 1994. The depth of his devotion to Swami can be understood from the fact that when he was offered a National Award to be received from the hands of the President of India in recognition of his services, he politely refused saying,

*“I have already received the highest honour from the Lord Himself. It would not be appropriate for me to even think of accepting any other award!”* That is truly Karma Yogi Joga Rao.

It was in these and many other ways that Joga Rao experienced the divine nature of Swami. The greatest fortune conferred on Joga Rao by the Lord was to be His friend and devotee when He is on earth in the human form. The wonderful relation that this engineer enjoyed with the Avatar is unsurpassed for its charming intimacy. He was privileged to be witness to that astounding incident when Swami revealed His true form to a select group of devotees at Ooty, on the day of *Mahasivarathri* in 1978.

On the previous *Mahashivaratri* in 1977, observing the difficulties of the mammoth crowd of devotees surging forward to have a glimpse of the *Lingodbhava* at Prashanti Nilayam, Bhagavan had announced that He would be cancelling further public celebration of the festival and that the devotees could celebrate the holy day in their own places from next year onwards. The next *Mahashivaratri* was on Thursday, the 7th of March 1978. Even as devotees were wondering where He would be on that sacred day, He went away to Ooty during the early hours of the morning of 4th March with a very small contingent of students and devotees. He left Ooty on the 7th and proceeded to Mudhumalai forest, which is on the way to Mysore. He broke journey at the guesthouse on the top of a small hill in the forest.

After breakfast, Baba walked on to the beautiful meadow in front of the guesthouse and posed for photographs with every member of the party. A Polaroid camera was used by a student to click the photographs. The photos were given to the members instantly. Finally, Baba asked the student to click His photograph. The lower part of His orange robe had been caught in the twigs of a bush. Before the camera clicked, Smt. Ratanlal rushed forward to set right the folds of the robe. Everyone was astonished when Bhagavan shouted at her loudly, "*Don't touch Me!*" and she retreated quickly. After the camera clicked, Baba held the photo coming out of the camera and gave it to Joga Rao. As he held it in his palm, the picture developed gradually. But what did he see?

**In the place where he had expected to see Baba's form in orange robe, there stood a young figure in the black and white photo. The form, which wore a white flowing garment, had three heads and six hands!**

Each arm was holding an insignia of Divinity. The lower left arm bent at the elbow, was resting on the back of a majestic young cow. There were four dogs in the background. The face in the centre was that of Baba! **It was the form of Lord Dattatreya as described in ancient Indian texts, the integrated form of the Trinity - *Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara!*** That was His real form! After all eyes had feasted on that incredible creation and all hearts had registered the rare revelation, the photo vanished. Bhagavan confirmed while speaking to the students at Brindavan the next morning that it was indeed His true form. He also clarified that Smt. Ratanlal would not have survived if she had touched Him then!

### **A Pair of Protecting Hands**

Another instance, when Bhagavan revealed His Omniscience and Omnipotence to Joga Rao was recounted to us by Dr. A. Sudhir Bhaskar, professor in the School of Business Management, Accounting and Finance at Bhagavan's University. Joga Rao was returning to Prashanti Nilayam after visiting some officials at Anantapur. But, even as they were hurrying back, they were caught in a heavy downpour. But, Joga Rao was eager to apprise Swami of all that had transpired and he prodded the driver on in spite of the reduced visibility. Just as they entered the Sathya Sai Taluk, their car entered

a ditch and to their horror they were being swept away in the current onto one side of the road.

It was precisely at this moment they experienced as if there was a big tug and the car was moving in the direction of the road as if being pushed from behind. **Joga Rao and another person seated in the back seat could see a pair of hands on the rear windscreen pushing the car to safety.** To continue the incident, the car miraculously started and the party reached the *Mandir* safely and Col. Joga Rao came to know that Swami had enquired about him before retiring for the day. When the colonel went to "update" Bhagavan, Swami straight away said, ***"Joga Rao you should not have instructed the driver to drive car in the overflowing road. What would have happened if the car were to fall into the ditch?"*** The astounded colonel could only mumble words of gratitude. Later that day he remarked to the co-passenger ***"If you do Swami's work perfectly, Swami will protect you"***.

This protecting Hand of Bhagavan was to come to the Colonel's rescue on many more occasions. Once, Joga Rao developed severe chest pain with all the symptoms of a heart attack. He was rushed to a reputed private hospital in Bangalore, where he was kept in the Intensive Care Unit. Meanwhile, during the afternoon *Darshan* at Prashanti Nilayam, Bhagavan told the students and a few elders who had gathered in the portico of the mandir, *"Joga Rao is not well. I have to go to Bangalore and see him."* The driver got ready with the car; His departure to Bangalore was imminent. Baba went into His room, came out after sometime and announced, *"I went and saw Joga Rao; he is alright. I sat by his side on the bed and he was upset that no chair was provided for Me!"*

When Joga Rao's son-in-law went to see him late in the afternoon, Joga Rao told him, *"Swami came here and blessed me. He sat on my bed since no chair was placed for Him."* A few days later, after Joga Rao was shifted to a suite from ICU, Bhagavan travelled to Bangalore and visited him in the hospital.

Another instance concerns his eldest daughter, who had to undergo a hysterectomy. The doctors were contemplating removing one of her kidneys as they had the apprehension that it may malfunction. Joga Rao went to Prashanti Nilayam and met Bhagavan. Even before he could utter anything to Baba, He said, ***"Joga Rao, there is no need for removing the kidney. Be assured that everything will go well."***

He also materialised *Vibhuti* for his daughter and gave it to him. When he went to meet his daughter in the nursing home the next morning, she was beaming with smiles; she said, ***"Father, please give me the Vibhuti. Swami came here last night and said that my kidney would not be removed and that He would send Vibhuti for me!"*** Needless to say, everything was alright thereafter.

### **The Simplicity and Large Heartedness of Col. Joga Rao**

Colonel Joga Rao's lively and charismatic personality and the close relationships he formed with those around him are the stuff of legend. Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, International Medical Committee, had these words to say about Col. Joga Rao:

*"He had child-like simplicity. Even though he was physically close to Swami, he would heartily talk and laugh with a child or old man, a millionaire or a poor servant, a scholar or illiterate with the same gusto and tempo. Even after having sumptuous lunch or dinner with Swami, he would not hesitate to invite himself for a tasty dish with devotees. His favorite was "pesarattu" (pancake made with whole green gram) from my mother. He used to joke 'I eat and Swami digests for me.' His favourite hobby was to feed his guests sumptuously with tasty dishes. He retained this zest for life even when he was physically ailing and bed-ridden and had to be physically away from Swami. Even then he would welcome devotees come to pay him a visit and regale them with his memorable experiences with Bhagavan."*

**The                      Singularly                      Fortunate                      Sri                      Joga                      Rao**

On 31st August 2005, Colonel Joga Rao shed his mortal coil to be one with his beloved Swami. Bhagavan lovingly sent a silk dhoti to drape over his body on its final journey. Many are the tributes that have been paid to this blessed soul. Sri C. Sreenivas who has for years been on the council of members of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, said of him,

*"The Grace, kindness and love showered and shown by Bhagavan to Shri Joga Rao in his long association will remain unparalleled. To be a recipient of Grace is a Blessing and good fortune. To have been a recipient like Sri Joga Rao was so rare and privileged that the Divine singularly chose to confer. His life will remain a memorable saga."*

In His discourse to the public on the occasion of his 70th birthday, Bhagavan said,

*"There should be many more karma jivis and karma yogis like Joga Rao in Bharat in the coming years. Everyone should become a karma yogi. That Karma gets transformed into Dharma. That Karma will sanctify human life."*

His life will always be a source of inspiration to all of us to dedicate our lives in the service of the Lord sincerely and selflessly.

**- Hari S and the Heart2Heart Team**

## "ADVAITHA DARSHANAM GYANAM - II"

### THE VISION OF THE NON-DUAL IS TRUE WISDOM

*In the August issue of H2H we had an article on the same topic. We elaborate a little more on the same theme in the current article.*

#### **"Koham" to "Soham"**

At birth every child cries "*Koham, Koham!*" which means "Who am I?" We all expect the child to cry and if it does not the doctor will make it cry. But Swami says, "*Why should the child cry? The child could shout, cough or sneeze in order to clear the lungs and breathe. The real reason for the cry is the Jiva's realization of its bondage. It is lamenting its rebirth, for it has once again fallen into this ocean of Samsara, and the cycle of birth and death!*"

*Avatars*, however do not cry at birth, which appear to be the sole exceptions! Our lives should progress so that at the end we exclaim "*So Ham*" or "*I Am That*". Kabir, the mystic saint of the 14th century says, "When I was born, I cried and the world laughed. **Let my life be of such worth that at the time of death, I laugh and the world cry!**" Unfortunately we live more like the king in the following example.

#### **Where are You Going?**

Swami tells the story of the court jester in the King's palace who used to ask stupid questions of the learned assemblies in the court. So the King dons him a dunce cap, which he has to wear, whenever in court. The King becomes old and then a sickness brings him to his death bed. The jester arrives on the scene and as usual asks the King a number of questions on his health. The King tells him that his time has come to depart. The jester offers to bring the royal chariot or the palanquin to take him to his destination. But the King tells him, "Neither the chariot, nor the palanquin, nor any elephants can take me there." The jester then asks "Oh King, where is this place you are going to?" The King has no reply and says he does not know where he is going. The jester is surprised at the King's reply. He says "Oh King, **even though you knew that you would have to go one day, you never tried to find out where you would be going? You are a bigger fool than me!**" So saying, he puts the Dunce cap on the King's head!!

Probably, we are all like this King, if we do not know our soul or our goal. In fact, we do not go anywhere at time of death; merely our state of consciousness changes. As Swami says, we go from one room to another. So we need to investigate these apparently different planes of consciousness to lose our fear of death and discover who we really are. In this light let's see what happened to King Janaka.

#### **Is This Real or That?**

King Janaka of Mithila underwent an experience which led to his realization of the *Atman* or his true self. He was sleeping in his palace one day and had a bad dream. In the dream an enemy has attacked his kingdom, and is pursuing him. Janaka flees into the forest, wandering for days, becoming very tired and hungry. At last he spies a ripe fruit on a tree, which he takes down with great difficulty. He is about to eat it, when an eagle swoops on the fruit and takes it away. A painful “Aah”, escapes his lips and he wakes up.

He finds he is comfortably sleeping in his palace. He is perplexed and starts to ask everyone “Which is real... that or this?” He cannot leave this enquiry alone to the point where the queen thinks he has lost his mind and calls the preceptor, Vashistha. Vashistha hears him patiently, and finally tells him, ***“Oh King, both the states are false, i.e. the dream state as well as the waking state. But the witness present in both the states is pure Awareness and that you are!”*** Prompted by his Guru’s teaching, Janaka realizes who he really is and merges into the *Turiya* stage of consciousness.

### **Our Different States of Consciousness**

Let’s get to know these states of consciousness to understand this story better. There are four states of consciousness: Jagrata (waking), Swapna (dreaming), Shushupti (deep Sleep) and Turiya (Samadhi) or the fourth state of consciousness. What man experiences in one state, is negated while in the next state, proving thereby that the first 3 states are relative states of consciousness. Commenting on this subject, Swami says,

*“Every human being experiences four states of consciousness in daily life. Without the Atma (or spirit), the waking state or experience of the phenomenal world cannot exist.*

*The objects and forms that are experienced in the dream state have a reality only in that state. They have no existence in other states. All the joys and sorrows experienced in the dream state are unique self-created experiences of the Atma.*

*In the third state of Sushupti, the experience of the waking and the dream states are absent. It is the state of deep sleep. It is because of Prajna that one is aware of continuity of Being in deep sleep state and experiences a feeling of bliss.*

*The fourth state is Turiya. This is a state of complete ineffable Bliss in which the Universal Consciousness alone is experienced. It is beyond description.”*

- Selected extracts from the Divine Discourse on 1-10-1987.

### **Our Glorious Inheritance**

Our ancient Rishis conferred upon us the title of “*Amrutasya Putraha* - Children of Immortality”. This is the truth of our Atmic nature which is present in one and all. It is latent and has to be made patent in us. What a glorious



title for all of us to emulate and live up to! This is the “fundamental I,” - the truth about the Atman and our immortal nature, which Swami tells us very often. He gives several examples and analogies to drive home this precious point.

- The Sun shines by its own light, while the moon shines by the borrowed light of the sun. The sun is thus symbolic of the Atman, while moon represents the mind. **When the sun is shining, there is no darkness of ignorance, only illumination.** Hence the sun is not conscious of any darkness nor is the sun aware of the nature of darkness or ignorance. For the sun ignorance is non-existent. Similar is the nature of the Gyani. He does not see dualities, sorrow, joy, etc.
- Suppose a person has never tasted sweetness on his tongue. How does one explain it to him? We begin by saying, ‘sweet’ is that which is not sour, not salty, not pungent, not bitter, etc. (‘Neti, Neti’ ‘Not this, not this’). Even then the person will not understand the taste of sweetness. It is only when he puts some sugar on his tongue, that he will appreciate sweetness. He then exclaims “Now I know what sweetness is” Swami calls this practical knowledge - **tasting the sugar (experiencing who you are), rather than depending on all types of explanations found in books.** The Atman is similarly arrived at by the process of “Neti-Neti”. Bookish knowledge will not yield this result or Darshan of the *Advaitic* Knowledge. The Grace of God alone will redeem the *Sadhaka*.
- The screen (Atman) is not affected by the picture (the world) projected upon it. All kinds of things are seen in the picture, but the screen is unaffected. Another important point is that the screen can exist without the picture, but the picture needs a screen to display it. We get engrossed with the picture, and so, **when the picture is seen, the screen is not visible, and when the screen is seen, the picture disappears from our consciousness!**
- When a man climbs a tree to get at the fruit, his shadow also climbs a shadow tree to grab a shadow fruit. **The analogy being that for one pursuing spiritual goals, the shadowy, or illusory worldly goals are also met in the process.**
- When several pots filled with water are placed in the moon-light, each one reflects the moon in its pot. The pot with water is compared to the individual and the moon is the Atman. The reflected moons are many, but the real moon is in the sky and it is One. **The moon in the sky is unaffected by its several reflections. Thus, our real self is untouched by what happens in the world.**
- There is Akash (ether) in an empty pot. This appears as different from the Akash outside the pot. When the pot breaks, the two Akash

become one. Identification with the body (pot) creates separateness and multiplicity, while the Atman is One without a second. **Giving up body consciousness means breaking the pot.**

### **The Crux...**

We can take so many similar analogies from Swami's discourses. But the point is this - the transience of our worldly life and the permanent nature of our true self. Can you see other themes? We close with another passage from Swami,

*"To get rid of demonic qualities, man has to embark on self-enquiry: "Who am I?" Scriptural scholarship is of no avail in this enquiry. Athmic bliss can be realised only by recognising that the same spirit dwells in all beings. This realisation can be gained only by spiritual enquiry. Conning the slokas of the Bhagavath Geetha will not rid a man of his sorrow. The transformation must take place within."*

- Divine Discourse on 24-3-1993

Think about it! We will deal with this further at a later date.

- **S. Suresh Rao and  
the Heart2Heart Team**

## **SERIAL ARTICLES**

### **THE DIVINE STORY OF SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI - Part 10**

**(Continued from the previous issue)**

#### **ACT V**

*Years pass. Baba completed nine years of stay in Venkusa's Ashram. One day, Venkusa summoned Baba. The Guru knew that the time had come for him to give up his body. He instructed Baba to proceed to the river Godavari, adding that Baba's future would be shaped there. Baba did as He was told.*

*One day, Baba was seated in a garden in the village of Dukheda in Aurangabad District. At that time, one Chand Patel of Yelaganga District came there in search of his horse that was missing. Patel saw Baba and asked Him about his horse. Baba told Patel where the horse could be found. Patel found the horse, exactly where Baba had predicted it would be, and from that moment became an ardent devotee of Baba. In order to have the constant proximity of Baba, Patel invited Baba to his house. Baba went with Patel but did not stay with him. Instead, Baba kept moving around but from time to time visited Patel.*

*Once, Patel went to Shirdi in connection with the marriage of his nephew. Along with his relatives, Patel also took Baba with him. Baba who went to Shirdi in this manner, later stayed there permanently.*

#### **SCENE 1**

*One day, Baba was sitting under a neem tree and is about to eat. Destitute people lined up before Him and beg for food. Baba got up and distributed the food He had. From then on, distribution of food became a daily routine for Baba.*

*Years pass. Baba becomes old. The people of Shirdi revere Him and daily take Him out in procession. One day, at the end of the procession, Baba is with His devotees gathered around Him. He then speaks to them.*

BABA: For My devotees, there will never be any shortage of food and clothing. You don't have to strive too hard for those.

A LADY IN THE GROUP: You are my God. Bless me, and please sanctify our lives, Baba!

BABA: Acquire Knowledge of the Self and worship the God in you. Then alone would your life be fulfilled.....The body is a temple of God, and a pure mind is the sanctum sanctorum. God is the In-Dweller. As is the mind, so is the destiny.....Yes! Therefore, always chant the Name of God. Your life would

then be pure and sacred. God's grace can easily be earned via *Bhajans* sung with love, by reading the scriptures with understanding, and by worshipping Him with true devotion. Knowledge without experience is useless. I prefer your Love to worship. Do you know why? Because devotion is contained within Love! Love is Truth. Devotion without Love drives man away from God.

## **SCENE 2**

*Baba is in His dwelling place. He is rather unwell, and has severe bouts of coughing. He is surrounded by loyal devotees, men and woman. One of them, a lady name Lakshmi Bai who served Baba with great devotion for many years, is unable to bear the sight of Baba's suffering. She calls out to Him. Baba who till is sitting, now lies down.*

**To be continued**

## **GITA FOR CHILDREN**

### **PART 12**

Continued from the previous issue....

#### **CHAPTER - 6**

1. Continuing His Discourse on *Atma Jnana* or the Knowledge of the Self, Krishna says to Arjuna, 'I am now going to tell you something about attitudes, and the regulation of the Mind. People use the word Mind Control but I prefer the term Self-regulation as the word Control worries many people, especially when the Mind is involved. Let Me start with attitudes first.'

2. 'Going back to the *Karma Yogi* (a spiritual seeker on the path of action), let us ask what precisely should be his mental attitude. A true *Karma Yogi* will never be concerned about the outcome of what he is doing nor aspire for the fruit of action. Totally focused on doing his duty, he would always have the feeling that it is the Lord's work that he is doing. On the worldly plane, he might actually have a boss who is giving the orders. He might also get a salary but for him, all those are purely incidental.'

3. Arjuna asks, 'Krishna, does that mean the *Karma Yogi* ignores his boss and does what he thinks is his duty?'

4. Krishna replies, 'How can that be? There is a King and he gives an order to his Minister. The Minister has to obey, as long as the order is in conformity with *Dharma* of course. The King plays a role in God's Drama and so does the Minister. Yet, while doing his duty to the State, the Minister quietly says, "Lord, I am doing this for Your pleasure!" There is nothing to prevent the Minister from silently offering his work to God, nor is it in conflict with his duty.'

5. 'To continue, the true *Karma Yogi* has no craving for neither success; nor does he become depressed when there is a failure; he accepts both success and failure with perfect equanimity. Never a castor-oil face for him! He always says, "It is all Lord's Will. In God's play, there is never any failure, and everything happens the way it is supposed to. I am merely His instrument."'

6. 'Since there is no hankering after success and all that, there is detachment and a spirit of renunciation in the *Karma Yogi*. So you see, you do not have to wear ochre robes to renounce! He alone is a true renunciate who has given up attachment and desires, and not the one who wears saffron-coloured robes and is called a *Sannyasi*.'

7. 'In other words, it is not the dress but the mental attitude that is important. A *Sanyasi* (renunciant) who is worried where his next meal is going to come from is no *Sannyasi* at all. On the other hand, I would give full marks to a

*Karma Yogi* if he follows the Principle of *Karmaphala Tyagam* or giving up the desire for the fruit of action.'

8. 'Arjuna, you must carefully note the spirit in which I am using the word sacrifice. You know about *Yajnas* (sacrifices), don't you? The sacred fire in the *Yajna* to which offerings are made is also called the sacrificial fire. What I am trying to drive at is that sacrifice and offering are the same thing. In the traditional *Yajna*, offerings are made to the physical fire, and what is offered are material objects. The sacrifice of a bad habit say, can similarly be looked upon as an offering made to the fire of Knowledge or Wisdom.'

9. 'Let Me now turn to equanimity. I have already told you that the man of Wisdom can be distinguished by his equipoise. Ever calm and gentle, he cannot be easily ruffled.'

10. 'The same is in fact true of a *Karma Yogi* also. That is because he accepts every happening as ordained by God. Thus, his mental attitude slowly conditions him to an attitude of equanimity in its own way. Whereas the *Sankhya Yogi* (a spiritual seeker on the path of wisdom) acquires equipoise through enquiry and by overcoming delusion, the *Karma Yogi* allows equipoise to grow over him in due course by training himself to accept everything as a gift of God.'

11. 'At the end of it all, a true *Karma Yogi* is hardly distinguishable from a *Sankhya Yogi*. Now do you see that it is really not necessary to split hairs and make a big fuss about the difference? The paths may appear different but the end result is the same. Just that some may find one path easier than the other – that's all.'

12. 'Yoga literally means union with God, and a *Yogi* is one who becomes united with God. Now why is union with God so important? Because true happiness or rather Bliss is union with God, that's why!'

13. 'May be I should digress here a bit and say something about happiness. You will agree that no one in the world would want to be miserable, even for a moment. Even a mad man would not have such a desire!'

***To Be Continued....***

## WINDOW TO SAI SEVA

### THE SPECIAL 'SHANTHI SCHOOL' IN KUWAIT

#### FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Imagine if destiny ordained your family with a child with special needs. A child who even after receiving your love and attention for 6 yrs can barely recognize you! ....or a child who forgot everything that you taught just 5 minutes ago in a trice! ...or a child who never learnt to write and can barely speak because his hands or mouth would not coordinate with his brain ...

How would you feel? Apart from the love you feel for your child, sometimes you might feel confused, sometimes frustrated, and at times in dire need of support. But imagine a case where the mother of a family, apart from taking care of her normal children, volunteers herself to take care of a special child and spends most of the day with this special child...giving the child the special attention and love that the child desperately needs...caring for him with the same love and concern that she does for her own child...and making miracles happen. Calling such selfless volunteers as angels will not be an overstatement, you will agree.

No wonder, the parents of one such special child wrote in a letter to the Sai volunteers in Kuwait,

***“When God could not be everywhere, he made Mothers. But when he wanted to spread hope and love, He made Guardian angels like you ALL.”*** Further, in the letter, the parents told the volunteers how their child had now ***“grown to newer heights on your wings of love”***.

We are talking about the **Shanthi School for special needs children, set up and run in an amazing fashion by Sai devotees in Kuwait**. This has been going on for seven years now and we knew about it only when we saw the pictures and read the inspiring stories of the mentally challenged children in an exhibition in Chaitanya Jyoti Museum. This had been organized by the Sai Organisation of Kuwait during the Guru Poornima Celebrations in Prashanthi Nilayam as part of Swami's 80th Birthday celebrations.

We had decided on that day itself that we will share this story with all our readers. For it is a story of great inspiration...it is a tale of the power of love... a testimony to what can be accomplished by willing hearts full of selfless love .... of how miracles can happen if we are sincerely committed to God and good work.

Before we further tell you in detail about the activities that go on in this special school, their methodology, their philosophy of care, etc. let's go right to the beginning...how the school came about in the first place.

### ***The Beginning***

Due to the expense of schooling in Kuwait, parents of low and middle-incomes find it impossible to find schools for their children with special needs. Seeing this opportunity for service, the Kuwait Sai Centre opened the School for Special Needs Children as a service project, dedicated to their beloved Sai, in 1998. It had 5 students and 12 volunteers then and was actually located in the living room of a volunteer's home.

In order to cater to the increasing demand of such children with Special Needs, the school was shifted to a more spacious location in an area called 'Shaab'. The house was offered free to the school by a generous Kuwaiti gentleman Mr. Hussain Al-Qattan. This made it possible for the volunteers to enroll more children. This new location was inaugurated by the then Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Mr. Prabhu Dayal in 1999. However, as the owners were to renovate the house, the school had to be shifted to another location in a rented apartment in a place called 'Salmiya' to sustain its activities. The school presently has 18 children and 16 volunteers.

### **What is the Volunteers' Attitude and Approach?**

*'Every day and every interaction with these children taught me values such as patience, compassion, selfless love and more than anything else a positive attitude to life. I have learned to live every moment as God's special gift without complaining about things that I do not possess.'*

This is what a volunteer, Sister Vidya Saigopal, of the Shanthi School has to say. And this is kind of response you will receive from any volunteer who is working in this school. It is not only this positive attitude that has made this school a success but also the volunteers' training ability, skill and commitment which has done wonders. And how do the volunteers pick up the skills to train these special children?

The school is very professional in its approach. It actually trains its volunteers regularly through workshops to help build their skills to handle the children in the best possible manner. Training programmes are conducted by professionals for these volunteers who come from diverse backgrounds, in various fields, including Psychiatry, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy.

### **Why and How Do The Volunteers Work?**

Professionals and volunteers work tirelessly out of their love for these children. And the **only reward they expect smile on the face of the parents when their little one utters his first word or takes her first step.**



With 16 volunteers and 18 children the volunteer-child ratio, as you can see, is very high. This enables excellence in care and quality time to be given to the wards. One has only to learn how the volunteers' positive attitudes shape this model institution.

*"I see God in these children," one of the volunteers says, "I feel that I could be of use to someone at the end of the day. I am thankful to Bhagavan Baba for having provided me an opportunity to serve these children and thereby transform myself to be a better individual."*

Every volunteer has, in fact, something similar to narrate. Sister Meera Bala, who has been associated with the school for quite sometime now, enthusiastically tells us,

*'When I was a little girl of 10 years I used to be really scared of seeing a mentally retarded boy walk down our lane. My family members used to dissuade us from even standing in the balcony when this child passed by. How ignorant people were those days... Now thinking back I feel, **if only I had the education about children with Special Needs, I could have been a friend to him and thus made his childhood enjoyable.** I strongly feel that everyone in this life should be educated about children with Special Needs from an early age. Strangely from the first day of inception of this school, I have never once looked at the children with any fear. On the contrary I just love being with them.*

***Personally, I feel I am very fortunate to be working with these special children of God. They are so full of love and affection and there is never a dull moment with them around. A hug, a smile, and a whole lot of love are all that they expect from us. Strange though it might sound, I have a lot to learn from their unconditional love, egolessness, their innocence and the enthusiasm with which they attend school.***

*Though their attention span and level of retention is low, the children never shy away from learning whatever is taught to them. The classroom comes alive when we have music, dance and party sessions. Every day is a learning process for us volunteers too. We have been trained by specialists, and teaching methods range from flash cards to puzzles, audio-visuals, speech therapy, computer aided programmes, vocational skills and academics. **Oh! How I miss them when we close school for three months in summer.'***

### **Methodology and Philosophy Of Care - Who is a 'Special Child?'**

Children aged between 4 and 16 who have conditions such as Down's syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy and other learning disabilities are admitted to the School. They are assessed with professional help before admission, to decide their level of ability and their requirements and are then placed in different groups. The morning begins with Prayers (and smiles) for these very special children and the lessons are taught based on a structured curriculum.

### **What does the School Do?**

Anybody who visits the school will see that the School offers the children opportunity to realise their full potential and to make them as independent as possible in daily life. Here they learn, they share, they respond and most importantly, they blossom. Essentially Love is the primary medium of instruction. And this is their key to success.

**Gross motor activities** such as running, throwing, catching, jumping are encouraged in the children through group activities. A range of fine motor activities are also carried out by the children to foster eye-hand co-ordination and facilitate the development of small muscles.

**Skills to enable the children to be more independent** are taught through steps like brushing the teeth, washing, feeding, toilet training, personal hygiene, grooming etc. **Children are also encouraged to use all their senses** - visual, auditory taste, smell, and touch. **They are encouraged to solve simple puzzles**, gradually moving on to more complex cognitive skills such as problem solving and logical thinking. **Reading, writing and arithmetic are taught through conventional methods. Teaching aids such as video films and specially designed computer programs are used to reinforce what is taught the conventional way.**

**The volunteers teach art and crafts to the children as part of the curriculum.** The children participate in an Inter-School Drawing competition conducted by The Khalifa School (a private school for Children with Special Needs) and regularly win prizes every year in such events. **They are also given wholesome encouragement to perform cultural activities.** For example, during the celebrations of Bhagavan's birthday by the Kuwait Sai Centre, the children usually perform small skits on stage and this has always been a highlight of the stage programs. The audience looks forward to their performance every year.

**The children also are trained in vocational activities such as making candles,** greeting cards and a variety of other handicraft items. These were recently exhibited in the "Educare" exhibition organized by the Kuwait Sai Organisation at the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum in July 2005.

### **And Field Trips...**

**Shanti School aims to inculcate in each child, an appreciation of his or her own unique abilities. To relate to the world around them and then be accepted by society is an important step.** This important aspect is covered through educational field trips organized throughout the year. These efforts have been more than amply rewarded through the satisfaction and joy of parents, and more importantly, the love showered on the children. Some of these special children have been able to achieve better skills in their thinking activities and believe it or not, they are in the process of joining schools for normal children!

## Celebration of School Day

The Shanti School celebrated its School Day on 18th May, 2005 to showcase the talents of these children who performed to an audience. Under the divine guidance of Bhagavan Baba and the efforts of the volunteers, the children gave a moving performance. The audience was amazed, and warmly appreciated the special talents these children are endowed with. The School Day was attended by dignitaries presided by the Chief Guest Ms Nadia, a prominent Kuwaiti philanthropist and included the Principals of other Indian Schools in Kuwait. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ramachandran - father of a student Sanjana - spoke eloquently of how his child has remarkably progressed to take care of her own basic needs, within a short span of time.

Meena and Leslie Noronha, the parents of Calvin, wrote a moving letter to the teachers after seeing Calvin perform on the School Day. We have already mentioned a small excerpt of this letter in the beginning of this story, here is the whole letter for you now.

*Dear Teachers,*

*This is a note to say "THANK YOU" for all that you have done and are doing for our child. The words "Thank You" convey our Gratitude, love, prayers, blessings and best wishes to you all.*

*Congratulations on a wonderful show on the School Day. It was a magnificent and memorable occasion for us. Seeing our child perform on stage, made our eyes water and hearts swell with pride. This was possible only because of your efforts. We thank you very much. Your patience, love and painstaking efforts were evident during each moment of the "Show".*

*Our child Calvin has grown to newer heights on your wings of love. When God could not be everywhere, he made Mothers. But when he wanted to spread hope and love, He made Guardian angels like you ALL.*

*Wishing you all happy Vacation!*

*Thanking you. In appreciation and Gratitude,*

*Yours sincerely,  
Meena & Leslie Noronha  
(Calvin's Parents)*

*31st May 2005*

With Swami's Grace, the school hopes to expand and increase its strength in the days to come with the objective of spreading love and providing quality care to these special children. They know it is not going to be easy but they are not deterred, as one volunteer says,

*'We would not like to give up our attempt - but be confident as each day passes. It is a test, a challenge and so we need to grow and learn with each child and learn to meet his or her special needs.'*

***When the student is successful, the teacher is successful. We are both learners and there is great joy in learning. It is a bond which can never be broken.'***

Really inspiring, isn't!

If you know of similar things happening anywhere, please write to us at [h2h@radiosai.org](mailto:h2h@radiosai.org).

## TRANSFORMATION IN A MEDICAL CAMP

### *A tale on the transforming power of love....*

By Dr S K Upadhyay, MBBS, MRCOphthal Honorary Professor of Ophthalmology, Consultant Ophthalmologist, London *This is an excerpt from Dr. Upadhyay's article "Quality: Not Quantity" from the compilation volume "Sacrifice is the Hallmark of a Doctor."*

### **A Moving Experience from Nepal**

Sometimes medicine and surgery are not required for a cure. **You need to transform the surrounding people who may be the cause of suffering not the disease itself.** One camp was held up in the mountains in Nepal. Everyday a very large number of people came to the camp from long distances. **Some travelled 2-3 days and brought the patient on their back or on improvised stretchers.** The camp was located on a small flat area surrounded by snow peaked hills. The amenities were very basic, and with no electricity on the campsite, a generator was arranged. We took operating microscopes and all diagnostic tools etc - this attracted large numbers of crowds. **Everyday the number of patients would increase as people would go back to their village and talk about the love and care, new glasses, free medicine, clothes and food they had received.**

### **An Unusual Visitor**

On one occasion when our volunteers were struggling to control the crowd and pleading with them to be in a queue there was a commotion. Everyone wanted to be first when suddenly something happened. All those who were trying to push each other to be in the front moved away. For a few seconds there was absolute silence. A man wrapped in a white sheet covering his face with a cloth walked in. The crowd parted and gave way in the same way when the Red Sea parted and Moses walked through. The volunteers were surprised.

**Someone started shouting that this man should not be here, he was a leper.** But the volunteer who brought him from the village did not listen and carried on towards the registration desk. The poor man was shaking with fear and hiding his face. He was in tears when I asked him why was he so scared. With great difficulty and sadness he said, ***"Can't you see I am a leper, a social boycott, no-one comes near me. Villagers forced my son not to contact me, and that is why I live outside the village, a self imposed exile."***

### **Social Outcast**

He was living in shame and fear, as if it was his fault. This is the curse of ignorance, false beliefs and myths in society. **He was reassured and was told that there is nothing to be ashamed of or to fear, as God will take care of him.** He was examined and then a volunteer took him, cleaned him

up and he was given some clothes. After an hour he was brought out for another consultation with an English colleague, and an **English priest who was volunteering his services in the camp, helped him to sit down in full view of the crowd holding his hand and offered him a cup of tea.**

Someone from the waiting crowd leaped forward and said, *"Don't you see he is a leper, you are offering him tea, touching him and sitting next to him. You will get the disease, he should not be here."* We replied, ***"Sir, for us everyone is the same. We treat everyone equally and this is a treatable condition. He needs support and love, not neglect. You should not be afraid. None of the doctors, nurses or volunteers are afraid of contacting the disease."*** It was difficult to convince them. He was looked after well and the volunteers made a temporary shelter (tent) for him.

### **Befriending the Friendless**

During our stay in the camp the man stayed very near to the campsite and the volunteers took food for him, sat with him and talked to him. Initially he wanted to end his life due to the humiliation and insults that he faced, but this was a new experience for him. He felt a bit happier, shared his story on how he was under pressure from the village and his son and daughter-in-law who had left him. **Now suddenly he found hope and was able to face the challenge of the disease.** We talked to him about Mother Teresa's Leprosarium and how proudly the lepers are engaged in their craftsmanship there. We also told him about our Swami and His famous saying, *'Why fear when I am here'*, and also the power of prayer. He was given Swami's picture, his medicines and *Vibhuti*.

### **Departure after 9 Days**

Finally the day of our departure came. We were packing and the villagers also were sad. For them these 9 days were like a festival, something new. **Doctors, for them, were people who were unapproachable and they found this a new experience. They could talk and communicate with us and they had seen a new caring and loving side to medicine.** Though free, quality was not undermined. Packing was almost finished; volunteers and some villagers were helping us bring the luggage down the hills to the road where the coach and truck were waiting. A couple approached me and asked if I could spare a few minutes.

### **Family Reunion**

We started talking. I was surprised to find that they were the son and daughter-in-law of the leper. They had tears in their eyes and with great difficulty the son said, ***"Doctor, I was ignorant and afraid of a few villagers who said that if I lived with him they would not talk to me or invite me for social functions. But the team has opened our eyes"*** We could not believe our ears. Swami says, *"You do the right thing and I will take care of the rest"*. What a transformation!!! We were all worried what would happen to the old man when we left. But God had different plans.

## **First Experience of God's Love**

**It was a sight unforgettable, the son holding the father's hand.** Father was crying, son was crying and there were hardly any eyes without tears, tears of Joy! The old man suddenly turned and said, ***"I have heard of God but this is the first time I have experienced His Grace and Love - through you all. May God bless you."***

We may have operated on many people and given thousands of prescriptions, but this healing is the sum total of Swami's teaching. **Serve the poor as if you are serving the Lord. See God in everyone, then you won't have any reservations and the Love will flow from Swami through you.** He has declared that He is 'The healing principle in all the doctors. *Vaidyo Narayana Hari.*'

## **PRASHANTI DIARY**

### **Chronicles Of Heaven On Earth**

#### **Aug 27, 2005: Krishnashtami Celebrations in Sai Kulwant Hall**

##### **THE MORNING PROGRAMME**

The day of Krishnashtami dawned with a cool, holy and serene atmosphere. The entire hall was well decorated to celebrate the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna. A lot of activities were squeezed into this morning's programme.

After the lapse of a couple of years, Swami permitted a procession of decorated cows, a traditional feature of the Krishnashtami celebrations, to start from the Gokulam to Sai Kulwant Hall, a distance of over a kilometre. A few selected students dressed up as cowherds were leading the cows. These students (laconically termed as "cowboys") had been practising for a couple of days the art of gently leading cows by the noose without causing any pain to the cow. Leading the procession was our dear Sai Gita, Swami's pet elephant, looking majestic after being decked out in all her finery. With a keen eye and sense of occasion, Sai Gita really relishes this role as "procession leader" and zealously guards her position of *seva* to Swami. Sai Gita was accompanied by the Nadaswaram Group and the *Vedam* chanting boys. After the *Vedam* Boys came the *Bhajan* Boys and then the line of the blessed cows tended by two "cowboys" each. Needless to say that this unique procession gave great joy to the denizens of the town of Puttaparthi as it traversed the main street of town from the Gokulam to Sai Kulwant Hall (SKH).

While this unique and colourful procession was vending its way to SKH, Swami had already given *Darshan* in SKH and had gone on in His car to the next agenda of the morning - *Bhoomi Puja* or 'earth breaking ceremony' of a Lakshmi temple coming up next to the Gayathri temple in the Ashram. Under a canopy on the selected site, a priest had prepared the selected ground for the consecration ceremony. After Swami arrived, He blessed the *puja* materials and also some cement that would go into the construction of the temple. A good crowd that had collected at this site were thus doubly blessed - having not only Swami's divine *Darshan* but were also witness to this sacred and unique temple consecration ceremony.

After He had finished with this ceremony, Swami's car returned to SKH to find the Gokulam procession already waiting for Him. Swami blessed bananas, apples and other assorted fruit so that they could be fed to the cows. Never one to miss an opportunity, Sai Gita went up to the dais trumpeting loudly in ecstasy so she could be fed by the divine hand. And the Ocean of Compassion obliged, feeding her apples to her heart's content.

While this love feast was going on between Swami and His pet elephant, the Ashram received an important visitor - Sheikh Nahayan, Minister of Education of the UAE. The Sheikh had landed at Puttaparthi airport in a chartered jet and was received at the airport by two members of the Central Trust. He was



driven down from the airport (in Swami's car) straight to Sai Kulwant Hall with the 10 or so members of his party. Swami gave his entire group a personal audience that lasted for more than an hour and it was late - after 10:45 AM - that Swami finally retired to Poornachandra.

#### THE EVENING PROGRAMME

The evening programme featured talks by 2 speakers, after a short music programme. The music programme began with the *sloka Vasudevasutam Devam*....following this we had *Brahma Kadagina Padamu, Adharam Madhuram, Chella Gaalilo, Madhura Mohana Ghana Shyama*....

The first speaker of the evening was Dr. M. Sainath, lecturer in the Department of Physics and the second speaker was Sri Shashank Shah, a II Year M.Phil. student in the School of Business Management.

Dr. M. Sainath spoke about the journey from the gross to the subtle, from the world without, to the world within and from the force to the Source. He elaborated on the evolutionary path of humans as expounded by Bhagavan. He said that we begin as animals devoid of any discrimination or wisdom and then move on to the devil who is steeped in infatuation and sensual pleasures. Finally we evolve to the human being who adheres to Truth and *Dharma*. He narrated a beautiful story from the life of Tukaram to illustrate the transitoriness of human life. In response to a disciple's query on the Saint's calm demeanour, saint Tukaram informed the disciple that he had only 7 more days to live. After the initial shock had worn off, the disciple accepted in full measure the inevitability of death and also attained calmness in contemplating the Lord, and being devoid of all worldly connections. Saint Tukaram then told him that he was always aware of the transience of human existence and hence was always in peace and calm. Dr. Sainath also related many of his other experiences with Swami to exemplify His role as the Guru and also how he used the same incident to give different teachings to different people.

Sri Shashank Shah spoke next on the commonality between the *Poorna Avatars* - Krishna and Swami. Starting from Krishna *leelas* right from His birth all the way up to the big battle of Mahabharatha, he compared the similar lives of these different *Avatars* and used these parallels to state that they are one and the same - Sai Krishna.

#### **Sept 1: Krishnashtami Drama by the Post Graduate Students of the SSSIHL**

In celebration of Krishnashtami, the graduate students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) presented a drama using several incidents from the life of the *Avatar*.

Using the Janmastami celebrations as a background, the drama depicted a group of devotees gathered in front of Lord Krishna's temple. During *prasadam* distribution, the priest recollects the glory of Lord Krishna and narrates the Govardhan incident. In this incident, the child Krishna chides his parents and elders for worshipping Lord Indra and instead convinces them to

worship the Govardhana Hill. This naturally infuriates Lord Indra and he sends down incessant rains. In order to save the villagers, Krishna lifts the Govardhan Hill with His little finger.

The next incident they depict is that of Arjuna and Duryodhana, both coming to ask Lord Krishna for His help in the upcoming war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Lord is asleep and Duryodhana waits for Him at the head, while Arjuna waits at His feet for the Lord to wake up. The Lord arbitrates that Arjuna would have the first choice, as the Lord saw him first when He woke up. Arjuna then picks his choice of the options - He picks the Lord Himself, leaving all His armies to go to Duryodhana. Needless to say Duryodhana is very happy at this outcome, but the moral is clear. With the Lord beside you all obstacles can be surmounted.

To illustrate how the Lord always comes to the devotee's rescue, they next related the story of Romarishi, a story that Swami Himself has oft times narrated in His discourses. The Pandavas in their travels during their 14 years' exile come one day famished and exhausted into a forest. Looking for food, Bheema notices a fruit and shakes it from the tree but is unable to lift, or even move the fruit. Meantime Romarishi, who is making the fruit grow through his *tapas*, senses that someone has intentionally shaken the fruit from the tree, is enraged and vows vengeance. Krishna appears before the Pandavas and promises to protect them. Seeking out Romarishi, He is talking with them when the Pandavas appear on the scene. Krishna then falls on the feet of the Pandavas. Seeing this Romarishi also seeks their benediction and thus the Pandavas are saved from his anger.

The drama ends with the students depicting that the Lord Who promised that He would come back when *Dharma* is in crisis in *Dwapara Yuga* has now come down as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in *Kali Yuga*. His way is not the destruction of evil, but the transformation of the lost ones.

### **Sept 3rd & 4th: Sai International Conference On Ideal Healthcare For All**

On Sept 3rd and 4th a big group of 900 medical personnel from a total of 27 countries, gathered in Sai Kulwant Hall for a medical conference. The conference was well organised and was very fruitful. A detailed report is featured as this month's cover story.

### **Sept 7 & 9: Ganesha Chaturthi Celebration**

On the morning of Sept 7, there was a simple but serene *Ganesha Chaturthi* celebration in Sai Kulwant Hall. After giving *Darshan* Swami sat down and listened to the *Vedam* chanting for a few minutes. Then the boys sang some Ganesha *Stotrams* like *Mudaakaratha Modakam*, *Sree Mahaganapathy Stothram*, *Shree Ganesha Stothram*, *Pandurangashtakam*, and *Sai Mahadeva*. Though a departure from previous years, in the sense there was no divine discourse, still the joyous singing filled everyone's hearts to the brim with joy on this holy day. The students had an eventful morning as they do worship in their hostel in the morning to Ganeshas that they have made from earth before coming to SKH.

Three days after this event, on the evening of Sept 9th, is a programme that the students look forward to all year - the Ganesha Immersion Day. On this (usually the third or the fifth third day after *Ganesh Chaturthi*) the Ganeshas that the students and other different groups have fashioned from bio-degradable materials are brought in a colourful and exuberant procession to Sai Kulwant Hall on floats so that they could be blessed by Lord Sainatha Himself.

Many and varied are the Ganeshas that are on display. The boys really channel their energies and let their creative juices flow in full measure to make an eye-catching, attractive and enchanting Ganesha. All different groups vie in a friendly fashion to make their version more attractive and their float more unique so that they stand out. Using a background of varying themes some fashion their Ganesha as a charioteer, some as a musician in a float of musical instruments, the Hospital staff show Ganesha as a healer, some use floral motifs, but each and every float is a work of art representing the many hours of sustained co-operative effort of a group of boys.

The floats all line up in Sai Kulwant Hall so Swami can drive by and see them all. After Swami has seen all the floats, He takes His seat on the dais and then calls the different groups to come up one by one and take His blessings. Each group comes up in order before Him, singing *bhajans* all the while, and He blesses one and all patiently, always with divine smile. They circumambulate the temple and then go back to their floats. Then the floats leave the SKH premises one by one, to the raucous shouts of '*Ganapathi Bappa Morya*'. The boys then take the floats to a deep tank just outside the city where they are immersed and thus the Ganeshas fashioned out of earth are dissolved and 'return back home'.

Swami waited patiently for these boys to come back after the immersion ceremony and then started the *bhajans* and the distribution of *prasadam* to one and all so that these boys would not be left out. Only the Lord pays such thoughtful attention to all these details. Hence it is said that living with God is true education.

### **Sept 8: Distribution of Clothes to the Ashram Workers**

On the afternoon of Sept 8 was organised a function that is dear to the Lord's heart - giving clothes to the workers who are employed in different capacities in the Ashram - as cooks, gardeners, cleaners and so on. The Ashram owes a lot to all these unsung and unheralded people who quietly serve one and all.

These workers were seated in the centre of Sai Kulwant Hall with the gents on one side and the ladies on the other. After Swami gave *Darshan*, He made a gesture that only He is capable of. He had His chair brought to the centre of Sai Kulwant Hall so that it was stationed right amidst all these devotees who serve Him so well. After going around these workers giving His blessings, He asked that a mike be brought. He then asked these workers who wished to do so to come up and speak a few words. Quite a few overcame their initial shyness and stood up in front of all and spoke well since they spoke from their

heart. All expressed their gratitude to Swami and some related how He had come to their family's rescue time and time again. A few expressed their gratitude by singing *Bhajans* to which the audience enthusiastically joined.

Swami then distributed a pack consisting of a pant and a shirt to the gents and sarees to the ladies. All received a watch from the Divine Hands. Many wept copious tears on receiving this token gift from the divine hands.

Truly the Lord only gives, gives, and gives. This brings to an end this month's instalment of these chronicles. So till next time, all of us at Heart 2 Heart wish all of you the very best.

## SWAMI AND ME

### HE IS THE WIND BENEATH OUR WINGS

*By Sri Shailesh Srivastava  
(Teacher)*

#### **God Fearing vs. God Loving**

It was the first day of the CBSE exams. The external invigilator was rather tense, and was pacing up and down the examination hall in the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School. The tension eased after sometime, as the examiner realized that there seemed to be no student who appeared perturbed or interested in malpractice! There was no sign of any pressure from the school staff too! This was certainly a new experience for the invigilator who hailed from another school. In fact, he wondered how people could be so afraid. Were they already afraid of him? No, he had not yet shown his strictness. Oh! So they must be really God fearing, he concluded. Surprised by this revelation, the examiner looked at one student and said rather sarcastically, **“Oh! All are very God fearing in this school!”** Spontaneously the student looked up at him and said, **“No Sir, God loving!”**

#### **Sai Student – An Experience Unparalleled**

Yes, this is what distinguishes students in the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School from many other schools. Love for God becomes a part of their very nature. Yes indeed, they have lived and spent their childhood in the company of the Lord. **Every experience, however big or small, joyous or sad, is in some way or the other, linked to the Lord.** He becomes a part of their lives. They love Him, they move with Him, they admire Him, and they laugh with Him. They cannot but help being attached to Him. He verily becomes a part of them.

We have read of how sage Vyasa did not get peace of mind even after writing the eighteen *Puranas*. It was sage Narada, who advised him to write the ‘*Bhagawatham*’, the stories of the *Leelas* (Divine Sport) of the Lord. Immersing himself in the reminiscences of the Love and the *Leelas*, the powers and the pranks of the little Lord, the sage finally found peace of mind. We have read how Parikshit attained liberation just by listening to the stories of the Lord.

Indeed it is difficult even for the sages to develop attachment and experience the love of God. Oh! How fortunate indeed are the students who have spent their childhood with the almighty Lord. **Even without their knowledge, they have developed a Love, which would only sprout and grow as they grow old.** Will not the nostalgic memories of their childhood days spring up from deep within?

Like many others, I have had the most rewarding opportunity, experience and privilege, to serve in the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, for more than 12 years. After completing my post graduation at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, I joined the school as a teacher in the department of Physics. As I look back at the years gone by, I can see how I have grown in all ways. Through the maze of experiences, I can still see a few, which stand out, and I will share some of these with the readers.

### **Career Guidance from Swami**

A 12<sup>th</sup> class student very keenly wanted to continue his education at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. But in an interview, **Bhagavan instructed him to join a Medical Course outside and not the B.Sc. (Bachelor of Sciences) Course at SSSIHL.** In spite of repeated pleading and prayers, Bhagavan did not permit him to continue with B.Sc. Swami even assured him that He would get him a medical seat. This boy finally left and much to his dismay, he did not secure a medical seat that year. Of course, one reason was that he was not well prepared for the entrance exams. **He therefore sat and prepared one full year and wrote the medical entrance exams once again.** He was not confident of getting a seat and he felt that he should rejoin the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning for the B.Sc. Course.

He came for the B.Sc. entrance test and I happened to meet him. He told me the whole story and sought my advice. Coming to know of Swami's instruction, I told him not to lose heart and that he would certainly get a medical seat. However, since it was difficult to understand why exactly Swami had asked him to leave the previous year, we felt that there was no harm in trying for the B.Sc. Course at the Institute. If Swami willed, He would take him into His Institute, or else he could go for the Course in medicine. I told him to tell the truth when asked in the interview.

Some time later, I learned that he could not get a seat in our Institute and he was disappointed. A month later, this boy suddenly came to meet me. **The medical results had come and he had not got a seat!** The second list was also out and his name did not figure in it. Very disappointed, his father decided to make him join a B.Sc. course in some other college. He would also prepare at the same time, for yet one last attempt at medicine, in the coming year. Just in case he failed again, he did not want to lose another year. He came to Puttaparthi and asked me what he should do. His father had already filled in the form and spent Rs. 2000 on it.

### **No Backup Solution With God...**

As I prayed to Swami, I told him that I would advise him only if he would follow it, for it could be difficult. He agreed to it. I told him that by joining B.Sc., he would be going against Swami's assurance of a medical seat. With God there is no backup solution, for there is no failure! **When one surrenders completely, God automatically helps.** I told him to sit at it and prepare for the Medical entrance exams and also to leave the B.Sc. course. Even as I told

him, I felt a bit nervous and shaky, but he agreed. How could he afford to lose one more year...? One more year...but in case...by chance... if he does not get a medical seat...?

Finally, the debate settled and he surrendered to the Lord. No ifs, no buts. He went back to his parents and informed them of his firm resolve to stay in Puttaparthi itself and prepare one more year for the Medical entrance exams. The parents finally conceded to his strong determination and sense of surrender. Well, God was moved as He always is! The boy suddenly disappeared from Puttaparthi and later he wrote a letter to me. These are its contents:

*“Sir, two days after I decided to stay in Puttaparthi and prepare for my exams, my mother rang up and informed me that **the University had again put up the first list of candidates selected for the Medical Course, and my name was on the top of it!** I had to leave urgently as the last date for enrolling to the course was fast approaching. Can anyone ever explain this Sir? I am ever grateful to Swami once again.”*

### **How The Spiritual Ambience Promotes Learning**

Many of the external practical examiners as well as teachers of other schools, where I have gone as an examiner, ask about the daily routine of the students in our school. **When I inform them that even the X and XII class students study compulsorily only 2 hours a day, they all express surprise.** *“How is it then that your students are able to do so well with so less time for studies? We make students study 4 to 6 hours and yet they do not do so well.”* After some thinking, all came to the same conclusion. Apart from the Blessings of Bhagavan, **the daily Spiritual routine and the Divine vibrations are conducive for a healthy development of the body, mind and the spirit. When the mind is at peace, the students can grasp quickly.** The routine that Bhagavan has prescribed, water the very roots of our existence and so the flowers and the fruits automatically blossom and ripen.

### **The Students' Renown**

I once met a Professor from I.I.T (Indian Institute of Technology), Chennai, at the Institute's Physics Department. He was all praise for our students who were working under him. **“Sathya Sai students stand apart. They have the determination to pursue and they achieve”,** he said. Truly, it is Bhagavan's Love and energy that takes care of the young and pure hearted students. It is this energy, which takes them through the vicissitudes of life and makes them reach great heights.

Therefore, it is that almost all the toppers and the gold medallists at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning are the students who have studied at Bhagavan's school.

***“I am only a Stealer of Hearts”***

We have had numerous occasions to take part in extra curricular activities and have had interesting experiences too. I still remember different science and human values exhibitions held in the school that were blessed by Bhagavan's visit. On two separate occasions, Swami was asked to put His hand into a Burglar alarm. **Every time Swami put His hand inside the alarm, it failed to ring and we were disappointed.**

Swami asked someone else to try it out. It worked and the alarm rang. This happened a few times, in two different exhibitions. Swami chuckled, as all were surprised and said, ***"I am not a thief."*** Somebody added, ***"Swami is only a Chitta Chora – stealer of hearts!"***



## **SAI SYMPHONY AND SAI STATEMENT**

*By Dr. Choudhury, a cardiac surgeon currently serving in Swami's  
Super Specialty Hospital in Prashanti Nilayam*

Over the decades we have all heard, seen and experienced the invincibility of Swami's words. I want to share a photographic testimony to that by relating the following personal experience.

### **Sai Symphony Orchestra Takes the Stage**

It was September 21<sup>st</sup> 2005 afternoon, the eve of *Gurupoornima*. The Sai Kulwant hall was filled to capacity and bursting at the seams and the crowd was overflowing into the adjacent walkways. There was an air of expectation and soon some fifty musicians arrived, 59 musicians to be precise. 34 on strings, 11 on woodwind, 8 on brass and 6 percussionists from 18 countries, from Argentina to the United States of America, were seated in a semicircle with the conductor facing them and ready to play. The back drop to this visually striking setting was a series of ceiling to floor hangings of larger than life colourful pictures of the various instruments they were playing that day.

*Veda* chanting started to everyone's delight and Swami gave a beautiful *Darshan* and settled in His chair, commanding the entire gathering just with His radiating presence. After receiving Swami's blessings the conductor started the programme. These conductors as a breed are very lively and full of energy but, Klauss Maurer is one of the most dynamic and animated I have ever witnessed. The result was a soul stirring symphony reverberating in the hallowed Sai Kulwant Hall in the presence of the ultimate musician our Avatar Sai.

### **A Musical Paeon of Praise**

The Sai Symphony Orchestra performed six favorite compositions of western audiences. The programme opened with Mozart's overture to the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, music conveying the musicians' excitement and anticipation at being able to prepare and offer music at Swami's Divine Lotus Feet. Next, Beethoven's *Symphony No.7*, the last movement, conveyed the power of determination to face and overcome life's every challenge.

The *Italian in Algiers Overture* by Rossini was fitting for this *Gurupoornima*, as the audience could hear in the piccolo (the tiny flute), a musical representation of the young Krishna as He would steal butter (the hearts of the Gopikas) and play with His friends. Dvorak's two *Slavonic Dances* expressed a hearty and earthy strength and faith. Moving back to Beethoven and his *Symphony No.5*, last movement, the audience felt in the music an exuberant declaration of victory over adversity. The programme closed with the Jimenez *Boda de Alonso*, a piece with strong Spanish rhythms, expressing the musicians' happiness and gratitude in being able to perform for Swami.

The feedback I received from the musicians was that they worked together in a spirit of perfect - unity in diversity. First and foremost during the six days of concert preparation was the musicians' joy in being able to work in a spirit of love for the music and love for God. Although many languages were spoken, the universal language of the heart, hearts full of love, united the musicians and made the concert preparation so successful.

As if the power of the music has pervaded the ethereal sphere and melted the clouds above, there was a tremendous downpour in the middle of the concert as a most welcome background to this drought prone district. The rhythmic impact of rain on the roof seemed to melt with the music rather than being a noisy distraction.

### **Swami is Most Pleased with the Conductor**

After the conclusion of this memorable symphony Swami was so moved, He held Klaus's hand in His, in a most affectionate way and materialized a pendant and personally hung it around Klaus's neck to the deafening applause of the gathering.

Since I retired from active practice of Cardiac surgery five years ago, two of my most enjoyable activities are traveling around the globe sharing my personal experiences of Swami and photography. Swami Himself is a most fascinating Subject for any photographer and the icing on the cake is the very colourful activities that regularly take place in His presence. That afternoon was no exception and I was enjoying the music and having lots of fun with my newly acquired digital SLR camera. Suddenly I could see Swami beckoning me towards Him in my camera lens and I was quick and fortunate enough to shoot the gesture. **Before I could realize, quite a few people brought me to reality saying discretely, "Swami wants you." Very perplexed I walked over to Swami and He asked me to take some pictures of Him with Klaus.**

### **Capture the Divine Conductor**

Being in the spotlight in front of thousands and with unsteady knees, I started to shoot instinctively rather than with any imagination. Luckily my camera has a quick enough recovery time to keep up with my trigger happy nervous finger. In the middle of shooting some half a dozen pictures in what felt like eternity, Swami decided to turn to the other side so the devotees on the other side also can see and experience my flight. So I had to quickly walk over to the other side and shoot another half a dozen shots. To my utter relief Swami raised His hand putting an end to my excitement, as I have just managed to overcome my uneasiness and actually was enjoying the *Avatar's* command.

After *Bhajans* were over I was waiting near the Ganesha temple and one of the two boys who constantly accompany Swami, approached me very innocently and said, **"Sir, Swami has told the conductor that He will give him tomorrow morning the copies of the photos you took this**

**afternoon**". And before I could really surmise the situation he discretely disappeared.

It slowly started to dawn on to me the details of the predicament. This is Puttaparthi, not Bangalore or even Ananthapur. The pictures are in my memory card, it is 6.30 in the evening and where am I going to find a colour printer that can accept my memory card and print quality pictures worth showing to Swami. **In these incriminating situations I used to panic but nowadays I start saying "Sai Ram"**.

### **Desperate Search to Fulfill the Divine Wish**

At this juncture I ran in to Rajesh, a computer engineer in the hospital and explained my problem. Rajesh remembered that a camera shop across the Ganesha gate possibly can help me and to my utter relief he decided to show me the place, which I would have never found myself through the labyrinth of staircases that one has to negotiate to reach any shop located beyond ground floor. The owner was very nice but he himself did not have the capability, but directed us to try the shop next him on the same floor.

Though the other shop was next door on the same floor, we had to renegotiate the same steps down and ascend another set of twisting, turning steps and finally landed next door which is an internet facility that I used to frequent and print some of my correspondence on a primitive black and white printer. Little did I realize that in the past few weeks he has installed a latest inkjet color printer and he also happened to have a high quality 11'X14" photographic paper. With that advanced technical help it was a breeze to printout two true to colour pictures of Swami and Klaus. With utmost joy and literally floating in the air I drove home with the two pictures in a neat brown envelope.

*Gurupoornima* morning dawned nice and cool from the rain the day before. On the way to the ashram it dawned on me: **how am I going to present the pictures to Swami with thousands of devotees** and also He has a pretty tight schedule, as I recollected from my previous *Gurupoornima* experiences? Again I muttered "Sai Ram" many times during the whole morning.

Swami again gave an excellent *Darshan* and showered us with a one hour discourse. He was standing unaided for the first 45 minutes. Then He blessed a book release and moved around the veranda blessing a few devotees and then lighted the candle for the remarkable "*Aditya*" (Sun-God) decoration erected by the Italian devotees.

I was discretely following Him with my camera in one hand and the brown envelope in the other. As He was about to enter in to the interview room I impulsively stretched my hand with the envelope and said "*Swamy, photos*". With a twinkle in His eyes, He stretched His hand and I gave Him the first picture. He was very pleased and immediately said, "*Pen, where is a pen*".

I gave Him my pen and supported the photograph and He signed ***“With Love - Sai Baba”***, in both the pictures. This all happened so quickly and I still don’t know where I mustered enough courage to ask Him, *“Swamy, do You want to give him the pictures, or you want me to”*. He said, *“You give him the pictures”*.

Of course the rest is history. **When I finally located Klaus in the afternoon rush and gave him the pictures, he was visibly moved and speechless.**

## **SAI WORLD NEWS**

### **ST. LOUIS MAYOR HAILS SAI BABA**

The city of St. Louis, (pop. 350,000) nestled in the heart of America, in the state of Missouri, gave the world its first skyscraper, and served the world's first ice-cream cone. The famous poet T.S. Eliot and the playwright Tennessee Williams, among many others, are well-known residents of this "Gateway to the West" city.

The city has already come to your notice, as last issue we covered the meticulously planned medical camp that was held in June and which received much praise from the city authorities. Now St. Louis has heralded another first for the world. This is because its **Mayor, Mr. Francis G. Slay, has proclaimed September 11th to be celebrated as Sri Sathya Sai Baba Day in the city.**

How did this come about? The Sai Organisation was holding a Public Meeting on that day to inform those attending about Swami, His Life and Mission. The Mayor had been invited, but then gave his apologies as he was out of town. However, he conveyed to the Sai Organisation that from thereafter Sri Sathya Sai Baba Day would be held every year in St Louis, in recognition of Swami's humanitarian work.

An official Proclamation was made by the Mayor to honour this City Day celebration. Please read the Proclamation; it is certainly a most respectful homage to our Beloved Lord.

### **OFFICE OF THE MAYOR - CITY OF ST LOUIS**

#### **PROCLAMATION**

**Whereas,** The City of St. Louis has been apprised that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is celebrating his 80th Birthday; and

**Whereas,** Sathya Sai Baba is one of the most revered spiritual teachers in the world today whose life and message are inspiring millions of people throughout the world to turn God-ward and to lead a more purposeful and moral life; and

**Whereas,** Sathya Sai Baba was born as Sathya Narayana Raju in Puttaparthi, a remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India. At the age of fourteen, he proclaimed his mission: to bring about the spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence; and

**Whereas,** Throughout his life work, Sathya Sai Baba has established an educational system which includes primary and secondary schools and an accredited university, offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees with no fees to the students. He has also established four hospitals, two of which provide advanced tertiary care and The Sri Sathya Sai Organization; and

**Whereas,** The City of St. Louis is pleased and honored to recognize Sri Sathya Sai Baba for all of his humanitarian work and extends best wishes to him for good health, peace and happiness as he continues his journey along life's path.

Now, therefore, I, Francis G. Slay, Mayor of the City of St. Louis, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2005, as:

**“SRI SATHYA SAI BABA DAY”  
IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS**

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the seal of the City of St. Louis, this 11th day of September, A.D. 2005.

## **NATIONAL AWARD FOR SAI SCHOOL TEACHER**

The 5th of September is celebrated as “Teacher’s Day” all over India every year. It is to mark the birthday of the second president of India, Sri Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a noted educationist, a great scholar and diplomat, and above all, a great patriot and teacher par excellence.

In fact, when he became the president of India in 1962, some of his students and friends requested him if they could celebrate his birthday, the great educationist who made no secret of his passion for teaching, replied that “Instead of celebrating my birthday, it would be my proud privilege if it is celebrated as Teachers’ Day.” And that’s how every year Sep 5th is celebrated in all the schools and colleges of India as “Teacher’s Day”.

Very aptly, the Department of Secondary and Higher Education of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, has chosen this day every year to reward the best teachers selected from primary and secondary schools from all the states of India. In the year 2003, one of the recipients of this prestigious “National Award for Teachers” was the Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prashanti Nilayam, Sri Y Sivaramakrishnaiah. This year it was the turn of yet another teacher from the same school, Sri K R Vedanarayanan, 43, from the Department of Sanskrit to receive this award from the President of India, Sri A P J Abdul Kalam.

According to the communication from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, this award is presented to the school teachers *“on the basis of their academic efficiency, desire for improvement in Education, genuine interest in and love for children, involvement in social life and reputation enjoyed in the local community.”*

The award distribution ceremony this year was in the Vijnana Bhavan, New Delhi and presided over by dignitaries of the Union Government which included the President and the Minister for Human Resource Development. When Mr. Vedanarayanan went up to the podium to receive the award from the President, Dr. Kalam expressed immense happiness on learning that he is from Prashanti Nilayam and with a congratulatory pat on his shoulder said, **“So you are from the abode of Peace! You are so fortunate!”**

Later, when Mr. Vedanarayanan had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, Sri Manmohan Singh had these words to say, **“Please convey my respectful pranams (obeisances) to Bhagawan Baba. I think of Him always”**. The Sanskrit teacher, who has been associated with Swami’s school for more than two decades now, says, there is magic in the “Sai” name, for, the moment the important persons present there knew that he was from a “Sathya Sai Institution” they congratulated him profusely on his good luck.

The award consisted of a ‘Certificate of Merit’, a Silver Medal and a Cash

Prize of Rs. 25,000. But ***“More than any of these awards, I feel the greatest reward for me is the opportunity to chant Vedic hymns in front of the very Origin of the Vedas – The Veda Purusha – our Beloved Swami Himself!”*** says the expert in chanting Vedic hymns, whose association with Swami dates back to 1968 when he came for his first *Darshan* as a 6 year old young lad. The memory of that holy Thursday day is ever fresh in my memory, the proficient Sanskrit teacher adds.

A familiar figure in Prashanti Nilayam who has been leading the *Vedic* chants in the Sai Kulwant Hall ever since Swami asked for *Vedic* hymns to be chanted during *Darshan* time, Mr. Vedanarayanan, further says, *“If we secure our grip firmly at His Lotus feet, everything else will automatically be added on to us. This is my firm belief.”*

Good luck to you, Mr. Vedanarayan, and that is our belief too as Lord Jesus centuries ago said, *“Seek the Kingdom of God and everything else shall be added unto you.”* Cordially yours,

**- The Heart 2 Heart Team.**



## **IN MEMORIAM: SRI AJIT HAKSAR - AN EXCEPTIONAL DEVOTEE**

### **Sri Ajit Haksar's Attainments**

Sri Ajit Haksar was a giant in the arena of Indian industry, prolific in his attainments in the business world. He was the President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industries; President of the Associate Chamber of Commerce and Industries for India; Chairman of the Indian Institute of Technology; member of the board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India; member of the board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Management and ten other such prestigious positions. But more importantly, Sri Ajit Haksar was a longtime devotee of Bhagavan Baba, highly respected and appreciated in the Sai family.

It was at Imperial Tobacco Company where he made his lasting mark in the business world, serving as Chairman there for 14 years, transforming that company into 'ITC', a world class enterprise, synonymous with a multitude of commodities. He was also prominent in facilitating the entrance of the Suzuki car manufacturer into the Indian market, under the Maruti label.

### **His Journey to Sai**

Truly, Sri Haksar was a professional par excellence in his field. But when did he first come to Swami? How did that happen? We tell you the story of his journey to Swami in His own words from his book *"Sai Baba - Manager Divine"*. He says,

*"On the suggestion of my sister-in-law, we went on a pilgrimage in January 1973 to Shirdi, as a thanksgiving following our daughter's wedding. On returning from our visit to the shrine of Shirdi Sai Baba, I opened my book to read on the flight from Bombay to Delhi, to find an inland aerogramme typed letter signed (if my memory serves me right) by a "well-wisher", thanking us for the visit and with a prayer that we receive the blessings of Shirdi Baba. The source and reason of the letter were puzzling but it was soon forgotten.*

*In June 1973, while we were in Bombay again, my wife suddenly took ill, in her weakened condition had a bad fall, suffered serious injuries and was admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital where she stayed for over three weeks. While she was at the hospital, somebody she did not know, whose name she still does not know or recall, came to her room to inquire how she was and gave her a copy of Howard Murphet's 'Sai Baba—Man of Miracles', saying she should read it as it would give her comfort."*

### **The Divine Effect**

Over the next few years through books and meeting Sai devotees the impulse to see Swami grew. This was realized in 1981, when he and his wife were blessed with an interview,

***“The exhilaration of being with Sai Baba and feeling His aura is indescribable”*** he recalls. *“Since 1981, at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba, I have had more to witness and learn than in the three previous decades as a manager—learning with deeper understanding about life, living, working, and people seen alike as human beings.*

*Had I had the good fortune earlier than I did to sit at His Lotus Feet, there is much in my working life that I would have done differently. It would have been more self-fulfilling and satisfying. Sai Baba, pointing out that God has given human beings a mind, unlike animals, lays great stress on having an enquiring mind and asking questions as the best way of self-learning and developing a sense of discrimination.”* In Service of the Lord

Moving on, Swami invited him in 1986 to help in the setting up of the Institute MBA Programme which began that year and he served on the MBA Board of Studies where his business acumen was greatly prized. Often Swami would ask him to deliver lectures at the Summer Course for students and one of those fortunate to be present remembers how Sri Haksar captured all those assembled in admiration of his charismatic personality and powerful presence.

### **Eulogy from Colleagues**

Later, Bhagavan appointed him to the committee overseeing the Sai International Centre in Delhi. In their tribute to him when he passed away recently, the other committee members said,

*“His contribution in the Seva, spiritual and educational activities of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's movement has been of an exceptional order. His role in the Committee appointed by Sai Baba to develop the Sai International Centre as a global centre for Human Values will stay as the crown jewel in his long and brilliant career.*

*As a colleague, he was a pillar of strength with unflinching adherence to our heritage 'Satyam Vada Dharmam Chara'. **We, the Committee avoided taking any major decision without his presence in our midst because his inputs were always based on the highest moral values.** We will miss his wisdom, his clarity of mind and above all his insistence that all our actions must be worthy of our great heritage. His near and dear ones, friends and colleagues would do well to cherish Ajit as their role model, be it at work or at play.”*

### **His Personal Feelings**

Let's listen to Sri Haksar describing his feelings for Swami so beautifully in his book where he says:

*“We have been beneficiaries of His healing touch. We have been recipients of His kindness. We have been witnesses of His miracles. But, none of these compare with the power, wonder and the glory of His love. Every visit to Brindavan and Prashanti Nilayam recharges our batteries, with a yearning to*

*receive Baba's Darshan if the gap between one visit and another gets prolonged. **The first sight of Baba, as He comes out of the mandir to give Darshan, instantly raises the spirit, fills the being with joy and creates a sense of euphoria.***

***Seeing Him move with the tune and play the cymbals with perfection when Bhajans are being sung is pure enchantment; to hear Him lead and sing Bhajans is to be transported into ecstasy by the resounding vibrations that bring tears to the eyes and goose-pimples on the skin. The slight touch of His hand over the head to bless is like a spark of bliss going through one's whole body. The degree of the majesty of all this is indescribable, and what is indescribable, has to be personally experienced. Baba says: 'Come, see, feel, experience.'"***

Let the memory of this great soul inspire us to improve ourselves to be an effective instrument in His hands.

**- The Heart2Heart Team.**

## **GET INSPIRED**

### **WHEN AMERICA TURNED ITS LIGHTS OFF**

Thomas, an eight-year-old boy, sickly and partially deaf, was far behind his classmates in academics. The teachers were unhappy with him because he was slow to pick up the subjects and his classmates made fun of him. Thomas lived in an unkind world. But he had a mother who was happy to be with him. A mother who would sit with him each evening at the kitchen counter and listen to how bad his day had been.

One day, Thomas came home with a letter from the headmaster of his school. He was expelled because his learning ability was too poor. His mother did not fuss much about the letter. She knew he was slower than most others, but she believed Thomas could learn if lessons were taught to him with love. She worked on teaching him herself at home. It began to work. Soon Thomas started inventing several new things, a lot of them were unworkable in the beginning.

When Thomas finally died, the whole nation of the United States of America honoured him by switching off the lights throughout the entire country for one minute. This is the Thomas whom his headmaster expelled from school because his brain worked slower; the one whose classmates laughed at.

This Thomas was Thomas Alva Edison, inventor of the light bulb and phonograph. He was, in fact, one of the most prolific inventors of the 20th century holding a record 1,093 patents in his name. The teasing classmates were part of those who honoured Edison when America turned its lights off to commemorate his death.

**There is something beautiful about every creature of God, and particularly so about every human being. Who are we to criticise a person created in the image and likeness of God? Let us learn to discover beauty in every person we meet!**

*- Moolyasudha, June 2005.*

## **PUT THE GLASS DOWN TODAY**

Once a professor began his class by holding up a glass with some water in it. He held it up for all to see and asked the students, 'How much do you think this glass weighs?'

'50gms!' '100gms!' '125gms' the students answered.

'I really don't know unless I weigh it,' said the professor, 'but, my question is: what would happen if I held it up like this for a few minutes?'

'Nothing' the students said.

'Ok what would happen if I held it up like this for an hour?' the professor asked.

'Your arm would begin to ache' said one of the students.

'You're right, now what would happen if I held it for a day?'

'Your arm could go numb, you might have severe muscle stress and paralysis and have to go to hospital for sure!' ventured another student and all the students laughed.

'Very good. But during all this, did the weight of the glass change?' asked the professor. 'No' replied the students.

'Then what caused the arm ache and the muscle stress...? Instead, what should I do?'

The students were puzzled. 'Put the glass down!' said one of the students.

'Exactly!' said the professor.

**'Life's problems are something like this. Hold it for a few minutes in your head and they seem OK. Think of them for a long time and they begin to ache. Hold it even longer and they begin to paralyze you.** You will not be able to do anything. It's important to think of the challenges (problems) in your life, but **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT** to 'put them down' at the end of every day, before you go to sleep. That way, you are not stressed, you wake up every day fresh and strong and can handle any issue, any challenge that comes your way!'

Remember dear friend to PUT THE GLASS DOWN TODAY!  
That is life!

- Source Unknown

## **TEST YOUR SPIRITUAL QUOTIENT**

### **QUIZ - 1**

First, five questions for you on milestones in the divine life which took place in October.

1. "I am no longer your Sathya. I am Sai. *Maya* has left; I am going." When did Swami say this?

- a. 1945
- b. 1939
- c. 1940
- d. 1960

2. When was the General Hospital at Puttaparthi founded?

- a. 1979
- b. 1956
- c. 1966
- d. 1949

3. When did Swami begin *Grama Seva* – service for the villages?

- a. 1997
- b. 1988
- c. 2002
- d. 2000

4. When did Swami unveil the new Shirdi Baba statue at Hill View stadium?

- a. 2002
- b. 1999
- c. 1989
- d. 1978

5. When did Swami begin the *Veda Purusha Saptaha Gnana Yagna* which takes place during *Dasara* Festival?

- a. 1987
- b. 1982
- c. 1974
- d. 1961

### **QUIZ II**

Now five more questions to test your knowledge of the five major religions.

1. What is the symbol of the Zoroastrian religion?

- a. The Wheel of Dharma
- b. The Sacred fire
- c. Aum

d. The Cross

2. The founder of the Jain religion is known as 'Mahavir' (Lord). What was his name before that title was given?

- a. Prahlad
- b. Kartikeya
- c. Vardhamana
- d. Nandivardhana

3. In Judaism how was the baby Moses saved when Pharaoh passed a law that all new born Hebrew males will be killed?

- a. He was hidden in a cave
- b. He was hidden in a basket floating on a river
- c. He was hidden in a forest
- d. He was hidden on a farm

4. In Christianity, who are the writers of the four Gospels?

- a. Matthew, Daniel, John and James
- b. Mark, James, John and Luke
- c. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- d. Peter, Luke, James and Mark

5. In Islam, 'roza' means fasting. How many days do Muslims fast for?

- a. 10 days
- b. 20 days
- c. 25 days
- d. 30 days

## ANSWERS

### QUIZ I

1. ANS: c 1940. Swami continued to say to his sister-in-law: "I am going, I don't belong to you, *Maya* has gone and My *Bhaktas* are calling Me. I have My Work and I can't stay any longer. Give up all your efforts to 'cure' Me. I am Sai. I do not consider Myself related to you." It was a momentous declaration that heralded untold blessings for our world.

2. ANS b 1956. It was Swami's first hospital and at the time of inauguration He stated that *"The patients who come here benefit by the spiritual vibrations that fill the air in Prashanti Nilayam. There are also many who will be satisfied if drugs are given and injections administered. Their faith in grace is not yet strong. So a hospital is required for them."*

3. ANS d 2000. Swami announced that students and staff would take part in *Grama Seva* during Dasara 2000, thereby adding a new and powerful dimension to His holy mission of service to those in need. Swami explained to them that the *Grama Seva* should not be performed as "service to others" but with a feeling of giving to their own parents.

4. ANS a 2002. Since then, visitors to the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum who are regaled with beautiful statues of Jesus, Shiva, Krishna, the Buddha, Hanuman and Zoroashtra in the Vidyagiri Stadium can now see the Lord's previous body also.

5. ANS: d 1961. This festival is celebrated for the welfare of humanity and all of Prashanti Nilayam resounds with holy chanting for days on end. In previous years Swami would perform *Abishekam* to the Shirdi Baba idol with a miraculously appearing flow of *Vibhuti*. (Please see H2H Oct 1 2003 for our cover story on this event.)

## QUIZ II

1. ANS b The Sacred Fire. "*Offer your desires in the sacred fire and emerge great, grand and godly.*" This inscription, one of Swami's comments on the Zoroastrian religion, adorns the Sarva Dharma Stupa in Prashanti Nilayam.

2. ANS c Vardhamana. He was the last of the 24 *Tirtankars* - the 'rafts' which help to carry Jains across the ocean of *Samsara*

3. ANS b He was hidden in a basket floating on a river. He was found by Pharaoh's wife and brought up as a prince, unaware of his Hebrew origins. Later, when he found out that he was a Hebrew he led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. You can find the story in the Old Testament of the Bible.

4. ANS c Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four were disciples of Jesus and so were able to write first hand accounts of His life which are contained in the New Testament part of the Bible.

5. ANS d 30 days. Every year in the month of Ramadan, all Muslims fast from first light until sundown, abstaining from food and drink. The fast is regarded principally as a method of self purification.



## THE HEALING TOUCH

### THE STORY OF RUTA

#### RUTA - HEARTY AND SMILING

***This is the story of Ruta Ramoliya, a cardiac patient from Gujrat, who was operated in SSSIHMS, Bangalore. Reg No: WS 00120665, Reg on: 19-Nov-04***

Ruta, a sweet and tender 5-year old from Surat, a town in state of Gujrat (West of India), was an apparently healthy child. Though she did not put on much weight, nobody who saw her then would ever say that she was not healthy.

At the age of one, one day, suddenly she fell ill with a high fever and a severe cough. A local doctor there prescribed her some medicines. But the medicines had least effect. Her condition remained same even after continuing with the medicine for 3-4 days.

The worried parents returned to the doctor. The doctor now ordered some blood tests and an X-ray. It was only when the X-ray was taken that Ruta was suspected to be suffering from a heart ailment. She was then referred to a paediatric specialist, who ordered an echocardiogram. **The echo test was done and the diagnosis was confirmed. Ruta had a hole in the heart.** This was further confirmed in a free medical camp conducted by a cardiologist.

Ruta's family and relatives were shattered at this diagnosis, to say the least. They could scarcely believe that their sweet daughter, who was just 5 yrs, could have a heart ailment. **Ruta's father, working in one of Surat's diamond polishing companies, earned only Rs.3,500/- per month and he had two other kids to look after. There was no way he could afford the cost of treatment.**

Just about this time, Ruta's parents remembered seeing Swami on the television channels, Sanskar and Astha, but were not aware that a super specialty hospital exists. In fact, it was by chance that Ruta's father met a friend, whose relative had been operated on at Swami's Hospital. Very soon after this, Ruta along with her parents was in the hospital. She was examined thoroughly and put on the surgery list.

In August, 2005 Ruta received the invitation for surgery. She was admitted and operated on in early September. The hole was closed successfully. She recovered very well and was discharged.

Before Ruta left the hospital, her parents said that **in Ruta's entire stay in Hospital, while receiving so many injections, while enduring a number of blood tests and experiencing so much pain, this little 5 year old girl did**

**not call out or cry for an instant. It seemed as if a Divine power had taken away the feeling of pain from her.**

Now that Ruta is hail and hearty, what does she want to do when she grows up? What are her parents' plans for Ruta?

The parents of Ruta, with deep satisfaction on their faces, say, *"Even at home, we would not be able to give the kind of loving service the doctors and nurses have given her. Our aim will be to give her a good education. **When she grows up a little more, we will tell her about the 'Jeevan daan' (gift of life) she received at this Hospital. We are certain that, with God's grace, she will go on to become someone this Hospital would be proud of.**"*

As of now, unmindful of all her parents are talking about, Ruta is all smiles...

## **HOSPITAL STATISTICS**

### **PUTTAPARTHI SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL**

*Cumulative Statistics from 22nd Nov 1991 to 31st Aug 2005.*

Heart Surgeries: 14,950

Cath Procedures: 15,674

Urology Surgeries: 27,053

Ophthalmology Surgeries: 26,721

CT Scans: 4,259

### **BANGALORE SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL**

*Cumulative Statistics from 19th Jan 2001 to 31st Aug 2005.*

Cardiac Surgeries: 5,678

Cardiac Catheterisation: 11, 109

Neuro Surgeries: 5,089

CT Scans: 16,422

MRI Exams: 18,920