

HEART TO HEART

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Page No CONTENTS:

2	BETWEEN YOU AND US
3	SATHYA SAI SPEAKS
4	CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI - Part 9
6	CHINNA KATHA - Do Your Good Acts Here and Now
7	THE GIFT OF LIFE
16	THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS NEVER DESTROYED
17	INNER-VIEW OR INTER-VIEW
19	SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI
22	GITA FOR CHILDREN - Part 8
25	ETERNAL JOY THROUGH SERVICE
27	LIVING DIVINITY
32	THE DUCK
33	S.A.I.
34	QUIZ
36	SAI BABA'S HOSPITAL
38	PRASHANTI DIARY

BETWEEN YOU AND US

Dear Readers, Sairam and Greetings from Prashanti Nilayam.

It's summer in Prashanti Nilayam. Hot and dry, what with Swami not being here. There are only memories. Just as these words are being written, there is a big refreshing shower and lots of good memories flash in our minds. Memories of those beautiful *Darshans*; memories of all the beautiful gifts that Swami was bestowing on us all through the year; all the miracles that we have seen and the selfless love we have enjoyed.

Often with awe and devotion we watch Swami when He materializes gifts - a big diamond ring for one, a beautiful emerald for the other or an out-of-the-world sweet dish for the third one. But the most amazing gift that Swami has bestowed on some chosen few is the "Gift of Life" itself. And in this issue's *Cover Story* we bring you this most astounding facet of the extraordinary power that Sai is - ***the power to bring back people from death.***

Of course, it's nothing new. It has happened with all incarnations - be it Rama, Krishna, Jesus or Buddha. But why does God enact such eye-opening dramas from time to time? Why does He do it for some and not for others? Why does He not do it always? What is He trying to convey through these mind-boggling instances? We have shared some of our thoughts in the *Cover Story* and also given space to some very convincing explanations given by Mr. Howard Murphet. But still there is surely much more to it. Please feel free to share your thoughts with us on this and related topics at h2h@radiosai.org.

All our lives are in fact, His gifts, meant not for ourselves but for others just as He is for all of us. We are to be born again and again till we realize that we are here to bring smiles on the faces of others, to be His instruments of service and derive bliss there from. When you read Mr. Charles Penn's inspiring article in *Window to Sai Seva* Column, you will know a lot more about this.

Apart from this, you will find two spiritually elevating articles in the *Feature Articles* section and some soul-stirring stories in the *Miscellaneous* section. Do not miss the 'Prashanti Diary'; there are some lovely images of Swami's recent Kodai visit. As you see these, imagine yourself sitting in the darshan line and basking in the Love, Grace and Beauty of His beautiful form in the cool picturesque background of the Kodai hills. It is truly magical.

Before we leave you to explore this month's issue, just one happy news: The number of subscriptions for H2H and Radio Sai updates has reached a little over a thousand now and is still growing. It surely would not have been possible without your continued interest.

Let us live every moment in Sai,
In Sai Service,
SGH Team.

SATHYA SAI SPEAKS
The Real Nature of Man is Equanimity

The discovery of Truth—that is the unique mission of Man. Man is a mixture of *Maaya* and *Maadhava*; the *Maaya* (illusion) throws a mist which hides the *Maadhava* (God); but through the action of the healthy impulses inherited from acts performed while in previous bodies or through the cleansing done by austerities in this body or through the Grace of the Lord Himself, *Maaya* melts away, for it is just a mist which flees before the sun. Then *Nara* (human) is transformed into *Naaraayana* (God) and this *Bhuuloka* (world) is elevated into a *Prashanthi Nilayam* (place of tranquillity). The illumination of *Viveka* (discrimination) will remove the darkness which hides the Divine essence of Man. Today, man hopes to dispel darkness by the sword, the gun and the bomb, while what is wanted is just a lamp. How can darkness be swept away by darkness, hatred by hatred, ignorance by deeper and vaster ignorance? The very lust for victory promotes darkness. Leave all thoughts of conquest aside; strive to know the Truth and when that is known, false notions fondly held by you will fall off of their own accord.

See clearly the lovely image that is hidden in the rock. Release it from that stony prison, remove all the extra stone that is encrusting the idol—that is the task for you. Do not worry about *Maaya*; concentrate on *Maadhava*; you are certain to succeed. A tree on the Godhaavari Canal Bund will not go dry. It will have a crown of green, for its roots are fed by the underground water. Similarly, be a tree with the roots in perpetual contact with the flowing waters of the Grace of the Lord and you need not worry about drought.

-BABA

CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI - PART 9

(Continued from previous issue)

Hislop: This morning in the taxi from the airport, even the driver had marvellous experiences of Swami's *Leelas*. And the Bombay airport officers told other miraculous stories about happenings in their homes.

SAI: *Leelas* are occurring throughout India in tens of millions of homes. Swami keeps His hand down so that publicity about the *Leelas* will not spread. The rulers of the country know, but they keep it quiet. If the facts were to have publicity, millions would converge on Swami.

H: In the future, when millions of people crowd around Swami, our present chance of being close-by will then be gone?

SAI: Not at all. If Baba is pleased with a person he may still be close. That is Baba's will.

H: Only a relatively few are fortunate enough to see Swami and appreciate that it is God come within vision.

SAI: One sees a plane in the sky. He cannot see the pilot, but he knows there is a pilot. To see the pilot, he must buy a ticket. The Universe also has a Pilot. He is God. To see Him, the ticket is His Grace. This can be won by *Sadhana* of the various types. Underlying all *Sadhana* is love. The reality of all *Sadhana* is love. Without love, no *Sadhana* has any value. To win God's Grace, faith is necessary. Without love, there cannot be faith. That love is in the heart and arises spontaneously therefrom. Love is God. That love which fills the heart is Swami, Who is the resident of the heart.

H: What is one hundred per cent faith in God?

SAI: One hundred per cent faith arises from the *Atma*. Full faith is even. Through pain and sorrow, faith in God remains full. Milk may be compared to life. In the whey there is no oil. Butter has some remains of water - this is the good and the bad - the butter the good tendencies, the water the bad. When the butter is boiled, at a certain stage there is a bad smell. This smell is the remaining impurities being boiled away. But have faith and keep on during that period. Then the pure ghee is left. That pure ghee is wisdom. The end of wisdom is freedom.

H: Swami, something has happened here, water is around this box. These *saris* will get wet.

(Swami removed the cover of the box and those of us who were standing there could see that the edges of the saris were wet. The cardboard box with four saris in it was lying on a table at Dharmakshetra in Bombay. Swami had selected 96 saris for distribution to some lady volunteers, and of the 100 brought for His inspection, four were replaced in the box to be returned later to the merchant. The table was not close to any source of water, and Hislop, several other men, and Swami had been standing there from the time the saris were examined one by one, by Swami.)

SAI: The *saris* are weeping because Swami has rejected them. Now, I will take them.

H: Swami! How could that be? Does Swami say that inanimate objects have injured feelings and can weep?

SAI: Inanimate objects are also capable of feeling joy and grief. When the bridge towards Lanka was built by the monkeys so that Rama could march to Ravana's kingdom where Sita was held captive, one last mountain peak was carried to the bridge site. But it was too late. There was no need for it. At this circumstance the mountain shed tears of anguish, and news of this was quickly taken to

Rama. His compassion was great, and He sent word that the mountain should no longer sorrow, and that He would surely use it on a future occasion. In the *Avatara* of Krishna, it was this very mountain peak, the Govardhana Peak, which the youth Krishna, lifted on His finger to shelter the cowherds of Gokul from Indra's deluge of rain.

H: Swami! This great drama of Rama and Krishna and the mountain peak has been recapitulated here in Bombay on this day before our very eyes. The saris came and could not be used. They wept tears of anguish; and in His compassion Swami relented, and the rejected saris will be used, although not for the original purpose of making gifts to the volunteers. (*Mrs. Hislop and three other ladies were given the rejected saris*). It is the self-same drama of ancient days played again on this day.

SAI: Yes. And it is also the self-same Rama and the self-same Krishna who is here this day.

A Visitor: One sees oneself in a mirror. As one moves away from the mirror, the image becomes smaller and smaller. I sit here and look at Hislop. The further away I move, the smaller Hislop becomes. But Hislop is not smaller; he has not changed. Therefore, I cannot be looking at Hislop. But Hislop is certainly there. So what did I see when I thought I was seeing Hislop? And if Hislop is not that which I see, then what is Hislop? Do I, in some way or other, see a reflection of Hislop?

SAI: It is indeed true that you do not see Hislop. You see a reflection of Hislop, the reflection exhibits that particular form and characteristics. Then what is Hislop? Hislop is God. The image, the form is not God, but all forms together, the totality of all forms, can be taken as God. God is the reality behind the form. The world is there, but its reality is not seen. The reality is God. One may see the reality, that the truth behind every form is God. Once this perception arises, it is never lost. Although one sees the forms, he is always aware of the truth, the reality.

Visitor: There is an experience that I have. The scriptures name it as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. Pure consciousness only exists, consciousness without any object. After having had experience of that state of being, can one do anything to stem that loss?

SAI: It is like this. When rain leaves the clouds, it is pure, but becomes contaminated when it reaches the ground. That water may be purified by some technique, but it cannot be equated with the purity of the rain. In like fashion, you lose the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* state when duty calls you to your work. *Sadhana* will purify that worldly life, but that purified life is not the same as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

Visitor: Should I leave my work?

SAI: No. Just do the work. Not for your employers but for God.

Visitor: I will try to apply this lesson when I return to my home and my work.

(To be continued....)

CHINNA KATHA
Do Your Good Acts Here and Now

Once a poor man approached King Yudhishtira, the eldest of Pandavas. He was also called Dharmaraja because he always followed the path of virtue. The poor man asked the king for some help. Yudhishtira said, “Come tomorrow, I will give you what you want.”

Bhima, Yudhishtira’s brother, overheard this promise. He at once called all the royal retinue for a sudden meeting. He announced that the next day would be celebrated as a day of victory. This sudden announcement created a great commotion. Everyone wanted to know what the victory was about and who had won it. The news reached Dharmaraja. Bhima was asked to give an explanation.

Bhima said, “We have gained a victory over death for twenty-four hours. Dharmaraja had asked a certain poor man to come tomorrow for receiving help. It means that Dharmaraja is quite certain that he will be alive for the next twenty-four hours. Is this not a victory?”

Yudhishtira realised how inadvertently he was taught a lesson. He sent for the poor man and gave him what he wanted. Act and live in the present. Never postpone to tomorrow whatever good you can do today.

-BABA

THE GIFT OF LIFE

"How dare you start on this journey, without taking a ticket from Me? Come down; do the task allotted to you. I order you to come to the Prayer Hall this noon and carry on with *Arathi*, as usual."

That was the command, the divine command of the Lord to Sri Seshagiri Rao, whose body and mind were 'ready steady set' for the last journey.

Baba did sound harsh. Yes, He appeared so unkind not only to the people around but also to the subject in question, Sri Seshagiri Rao, who was more than willing to shed his mortal coil after a fall and subsequent ill health, and had even started declaring aloud the eternal truths: "This body composed of the five elements is disintegrating into its components; I am being liberated!"

But Swami had different plans for this sage-like servitor who for 14 long years had tended the shrine at the old *Mandir* and later at the Prashanti Nilayam Sanctum Sanctorum with great dedication and love. Sri Seshagiri Rao just obeyed Swami's order and in the evening he was seen attending the shrine - the signs of illness were gone.

Six months later, this pious person fell ill again. His condition became worse and you could see that he was indeed suffering. His brother rushed in panic from Bangalore and requested Swami that Sri Seshagiri Rao be allowed to be taken to the Victoria hospital in Bangalore.

But, Swami had this to tell him, **"Do not worry at his present plight. I am allowing him to work out the suffering he has to undergo. After this, he has the chance to die peacefully and quite happily. Otherwise, I could have despatched him months ago, when he had a fall."** And that is exactly what happened.

Sri Seshagiri Rao recovered quite mysteriously in a month. He was hale and hearty and spent six weeks in bliss doing his chores in the shrine and spreading happiness around. And then suddenly one day, his health deteriorated and he took to bed. One evening Swami went to his bedside. Along with Swami was Prof. Kasturi, a great devotee and the first editor of *Sanathana Sarathi*. For what happened that momentous evening, let's hear from Sri Kasturi himself:

"Swami asked me to bring a cup of hot milk. Spoon by spoon, He fed him the entire cup, calling on him by name and telling him that it was his Baba that was feeding him! Then, He rose and moved; turning back while at the door, He looked at him and said, '**Now you can go!**' And, Seshagiri Rao obeyed within an hour! Baba knew when he had to come down and when he had to 'go'."

This is not one isolated incident in the life of Baba. We all know of what happened to Walter Cowan, the oft-quoted story of resurrection recorded beautifully by Dr. Hislop in *My Baba and I*. We will not go into details here about that incident because there are many more. For every incident we know, there are hundreds and thousands that we do not know. Sai's power has been working silently, selflessly and relentlessly all-round the clock, all-round the globe transforming people, uniting families, enlivening spirits and resurrecting lives, for He is the master of Time and destiny.

In the first week of August, 1953 in Puttaparthi, there happened another incident which, as Howard Murphet describes in *Sai Baba: Man of Miracles*, was as dramatic in its way as the Christ's raising of 'Lazarus' from the dead. The 'Lazarus' here was Mr. V Radhakrishna, about sixty years of age, a factory owner and well-known citizen of Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh.

He was in Puttaparthi with his wife, daughter, Vijaya and son-in-law, Sri Hemchand. The *Dasara* celebrations were on but he was there in Puttaparthi with a different mission - to ask Baba to cure him of his frightful gastric ulcers.

Two days had passed by in Puttaparthi and when Mr. Radhakrishna found Swami taking a stroll in the hall one day, he ran to Him and fell at His feet imploring Him thus: "Swami, I prefer to die. I cannot bear this pain anymore. Let me be merged in Your Feet." Swami lifted him up by his shoulders and in a comforting tone said, **"It is alright. The pain will soon subside,"** and sent him back.

Sometime later, Mr. Radhakrishna was attacked by fits, fell down and bit his tongue. Swami came immediately and placed *Vibhuti* on his forehead. His stomach was bloated. Swami sat by his side for sometime, patting his stomach. Before He left, He reassured everybody saying, **"Do not worry. Everything will be alright."**

The next day was truly a nightmare. The patient could not pass urine and his stomach became even more bloated. He was unconscious. A male nurse brought by Mr. K S Hemchand, the son-in-law, pronounced him near death after failing to find any pulse and making other examinations. There was no way of saving him, the nurse opined. And by evening the patient became very cold. The three anxious relatives heard what they thought was the "death rattle" in his throat and watched him turning blue and stiff. His stomach looked full enough to burst at the slightest touch.

Vijaya, and Mrs. Radhakrishna, went to see Swami. They told Him that Radhakrishna seemed to be dead. (Those days, devotees were very few and they had much greater access to Swami). But Swami just laughed and walked away into His bedroom. Crestfallen, the mother and daughter returned to the 'dead' man's bedside and waited and prayed. As if listening to their prayers, after a while, Swami came and looked at the body but did not say or do anything. The whole of the second night passed with the three fervently praying and anxiously waiting for any signs of life. But that was not to be. There were no signs. Yet, nothing could disturb their rock-like faith in Baba.

When the Venkatagiri Raja, a longtime devotee of Baba, offered to take Mr. Radhakrishna in his car to a bigger hospital in a town some distance away, Mrs. Radhakrishna firmly said, "We cannot do anything unless Swami commands us. Everything depends on Swami's will." She completely believed that somehow or other Baba would save Radhakrishna as He had promised that everything would be alright.

The whole body turned black. His nails turned blue. The night passed. No one slept. At about four in the morning of the third day, all the people around went away wiping their tears and all the three relatives began to weep silently. The body was more than ever like a corpse - dark, cold, quite stiff and beginning to smell. Other people who came to see and sympathise told Mrs. Radhakrishna that she should have the corpse removed from the ashram. But she replied, "Not unless Swami orders it". Some even went to Baba and

suggested that, as the man was dead and the body smelling of decomposition, it should either be sent back to Kuppam or cremated at Puttaparti. Swami simply replied, **"We'll see."**

When Mrs. Radhakrishna went to see Swami again - to tell Baba what people were saying to her, and to ask Him what she must do, He answered: **"Do not listen to them, and have no fear; I am here."** And further, He reassured her saying that He would soon come to see her husband.

Mrs. Radhakrishna returned and waited along with her daughter and son-in-law by the body. 10 minutes, half an hour, an hour passed, but there was no sign of Swami. There seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel and just when they were about to give up totally, the door opened and there stood Baba in His red robe, copious hair, and shining smile. It was then about half past two in the afternoon of the third day.

As soon as she saw Baba, Mrs. Radhakrishna broke down completely. Vijaya was also crying. They were like Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, weeping before their Lord who, they thought, had come too late. And Swami, as if there was nothing serious to it, said jokingly, "Is Radhakrishna having labour pains?" Everyone was silent.

"Let's see what the matter is," He said and walked into the room.

At what point is a person dead? Can anyone say? There are instances where suddenly a "corpse" will move; in fact, when Jesus received word that Lazarus was dead, He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

Anyway, to continue with the story, Baba gently asked the tearful women and sorrowful Mr. Hemchand to leave the room. There were only Swami and the dead man in the room and what happened inside only He knows. A few minutes passed, and the door opened and Swami beckoned all the three in. As they nervously walked in, they could scarcely believe their eyes! Was it true? Or, was it an illusion?

There on the bed Radhakrishna was looking up at them and smiling! Amazingly the stiffness of death had vanished and his natural colour was returning! All the three clasped Swami's Feet and washed them with their tears. Baba went over, stroked the patient's head and said to him, **"Talk to them; they are worried."**

"Why worried?" asked Radhakrishna, puzzled, "what happened to me?"

With a loud laugh, Swami replied, "Delivery."

Everyone laughed. It was a strange scene, laughter in the midst of tears.

Mr. Radhakrishna looked at Swami who was sitting near his head and said, "I'm all right. You are here."

Swami then turned to Mrs. Radhakrishna and said, **"I have given your husband back to you, now get him a hot drink."**

When she brought a tumbler of Horlicks, Swami Himself fed it to Radhakrishna slowly spoon by spoon. For another half an hour He remained there, gently touching Radhakrishna and strengthening the man He had 'raised'.

Swami then asked Vijaya, “How old is your father?”

“Sixty years,” she replied.

Then, Swami reminded them how, four or five years ago, Mrs. Radhakrishna once had told Him, “Swami, in my husband’s family, all his brothers died in their sixtieth year. Kindly save my husband.” And how Swami had promised her then that He would save her husband. Swami then turned toward Mrs. Radhakrishna and said, **“You have forgotten that conversation. But I have not. Today, I have given the gift of life to your husband.”**

Then Swami placed His hand on Mrs. Radhakrishna’s head, blessed the whole family and left the room.

After two hours, He was back. He asked Mr. Radhakrishna, “Radha Krishnayya! Where did you go?” He replied, “That place was very peaceful, very comfortable; very, very nice, Swami. Why did you bring me back? It was heavenly there.”

It seems later, Swami confided to Sri Kasturi, “His children are still young. He did not even write a will. He has yet to perform the marriages of his children. That’s why I saw to it that he was brought back. The extra years of life that I have given now I shall deduct from his next birth.” What meticulous attention to correct the calculation of life span!

Next day, Mr. Radhakrishna was strong enough to walk to *Bhajan*. On the third day he wrote a seven-page letter to one of his daughters who was abroad in Italy. The family stayed a few more days at Prashanti Nilayam, then with Baba’s permission returned to their home in Kupam. The gastric ulcers and complications had vanished forever.

Aeons have passed by. Civilisations have emerged, grown and perished. Man, Nature, Science - everything has changed. But if there is one thing that has remained constant it is God. His love, His compassion for humanity, His concern and His impeccable glory. Another startling episode that amply demonstrates this happened in Prashanti Nilayam, just two decades back and it stands as a testimony to the inscrutable and infinite power of Sai. This time it was a young student, a research scholar staying in the hostel in Prashanti Nilayam.

One person who was a witness and totally involved in this whole incident was Mr. Narasimha Murthy who was the warden of the hostel then. And this is what he narrated in the Divine Presence of Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall on the 1st of November 2004:

“It was the month of October, 1985, the sixtieth birthday celebrations year. In the early hours of morning, I was woken up. One of the PhD Scholars was a chronic asthma patient. He was unable to breathe. We rushed him to the Puttaparthi General Hospital. The boy’s name was Narayan Sharma. He was from Bombay, a classmate of the current warden of the hostel, Sri Shiva Shankar Sai.

By the time we took him to the hospital, the body had become cold and blue. There was a lady doctor who attended on him. There was no pulse, no breath. Dr. Chari, the Medical Superintendent of the hospital then, rushed from his home. He also checked him up and informed all of us present there, 'He is no more. The boy is dead.'

It was approaching six in the morning. You could imagine the plight of the warden when such a thing happens. I did not even dare to go to the *Mandir* and submit to Swami what had happened. It was Dr. Chari who walked to the *Mandir* and submitted to Swami the whole episode. Swami said, **“Nothing will happen to him. He is fine”**.

Swami, then materialized *Vibhuti* and gave it to Dr. Chari and said, “Apply it on his chest and put hot-water bags on his back.” Dr. Chari returned and the *Vibhuti* and hot water bags were applied.

Yet, we were in a state of fix. We did not know what to do as there was no pulse, no breathing still. The body was still cold and blue. For all practical purposes, he was dead. The doctors then told me, 'Mr. Narasimha Murthy, now it is your turn to go and report to Swami.'

It was 6.30 in the morning. I walked up to the *Mandir*. I reported to Swami. Swami said, **“Nothing has happened to him.”** In fact, He gave me a thermos flask filled with hot coffee and said, “Go and give it to him.” I was bewildered.

I returned with this flask to the hospital. When I reached the hospital, the lady doctor looked at me with the flask and asked, 'For whom is this coffee?' I could barely say anything. I just very reluctantly showed the patient.

Her face became completely expressionless. But there was a sense of, “Mr. Warden, you have lost your brain.” These were her unspoken words.

I did not know what to do with the coffee. The body of Narayana Sharma was covered with a white sheet. Only his toes were seen. And then suddenly, we saw movements! His toes were moving!

We were overjoyed. And then the lady doctor, with great joy, went up to the boy. The boy could not open his eyes, but the toes were moving. And she put her finger at the nose. Slowly, the breathing was coming back. And then, she whispered these words into his ears, “See boy, Swami has sent coffee for you. Please take it.” One spoon of coffee was fed into his mouth and he took it in!

Then, slowly spoon by spoon coffee was being fed into his mouth. The lady doctor checked him again. The pulse was returning. Confident that the boy is back, she was connecting the BP apparatus to the boy's arm and just then Swami arrived with late Sri V. K. Narasimhan, the editor of *Sanathana Sarathi* at that time.

Hearing Swami's voice, the boy slowly tried to open his eyes. Swami came near the boy and said, **“What boy! Everybody said you are dead. Still you are alive!”** The boy looked at Swami. His face was expressionless.

Then Swami asked all the three doctors present there, Dr. Chari and two lady doctors, “Was he dead?”

All of them said, “Yes, Swami. He was dead.”

Then He asked one of the lady doctors, “How do you say that he was dead?”

“Swami, according to us, there was no pulse, no breathing, no heartbeat; the body was cold and blue. Going by medical science, that is death.”

“Then how did he come back,” He asked.

“Swami, You are God. You can do anything.” The lady doctor replied.

The drama of Lazarus was re-enacted. Only the venue was different.

There were about 50 classmates, who had assembled outside the General Hospital. They had come hearing that their friend has made his exit from the world. Swami looked out of the window. All the boys looked very sad.

Swami then looked at me and said, “Go and tell them what has happened here.” Swami confirmed that He had brought back the boy to life.

And then Swami materialized a kind of brownish chocolate and gave it to the boy. The boy immediately put it into his mouth. After returning to the *Mandir*, Swami materialized three bottles of tablets and sent them to the hospital with detailed instructions as to how these tablets are to be administered.

The boy was soon in the hostel busy with his research. And he completed his PhD.

For an incarnation, it is sheerly His powers, His inner strength which achieves everything and nothing else. Instruments are only superfluous. There is nothing that is impossible for him”, the warden concluded.

Now let’s move on to something which happened in the nineties. It is the story of Mr. Venkateswaran, a long-time devotee of Bhagavan who now resides in the Prashanti Nilayam ashram. This is what he has to tell about his miraculous 'return':

"It happened on the afternoon of 1st October, 1994. Along with students and some guests, I was inside Trayee Brindavan (Swami’s residence in Bangalore). While Swami was speaking, I felt a sudden tightness in my chest. I began to sweat profusely and felt strangely breathless.

Three quick pinches of *Vibhuti* from my pocket, followed by a chant of 'Sai Rama' three times was all I could muster before leaning on the person in front of me. I was slipping into darkness. I then saw an orange robe in an ocean of light.

This was followed by a vision of my inert body lying on the floor. I could not believe it! I felt so free, so utterly free.

Then a voice in the distance echoed, 'Get up! Your Sai Rama has come, get up!'

My hazy memory does not recall what happened next, but I was informed later that immediately after I had passed away, a physician sitting nearby had examined me and found no vital signs. With some difficulty this was conveyed to Swami who was sitting on the *jhoola* [swing] in the front. Our Merciful Lord stood up immediately, picked up His silver tumbler, and walked to where my body was.

He poured some water on His fingers and let it trickle into my mouth. Then, He said the words that I have just quoted: **'Get up! Your Sai Rama has come!'**

My inert body jerked and my eyes opened to see Bhagavan. Looking at all those seated around, Bhagavan firmly asked, **'What other miracle do you want? Venkatesh was gone, and I brought him back.'** I was helped back into my room."

In fact, Swami gave him another lease of life when in 1999, a full five years after his resurrection, He blessed him to undergo a heart surgery at the modern temple of healing, the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. Not only that, He made a special visit to the Hospital, materialized *Vibhuti* and blessed him profusely before his surgery.

Mr. Venkateswaran is still doing fine and dedicates his time in the ashram doing Swami's work.

Resurrections may not be as common a phenomenon as Swami creating *Vibhuti*, rings, chains, etc., but time and again, Swami has brought people back to life whenever the situation demanded it. We know how Swami 'raised' Subbamma just to keep His promise and fulfill her last wish. For those, who have not read this thrilling episode in "*Sathyam Shivam Sundaram*", here is a brief account:

"Subbamma was the person most anxious about Swami's 'health' when He was a young boy and most worried about the hundreds of pilgrims who gathered at Puttaparthi. Baba even now says that the grinding stone in her house was always busy, preparing chutney (an Indian dish) out of the heaps of coconuts that the pilgrims offered. She was grinding almost eight hours of the day! She had immense love and devotion to the Lord and Baba had said that He would satisfy her one desire... to have the *Darshan* of Baba in her last moments. And this is how he fulfilled it.

It was in the fifties. Subbamma fell ill and was taken to Bukkapatnam. But in spite of her illness, she came over one day in a bullock cart to see the Prashanti Nilayam (the new *Mandir*), which was then under construction. She was soon bedridden and could not move; her condition worsened and Baba was away in Bangalore!

Subbamma, in her delirium, talked about Baba and the vision of Shirdi Sai Baba which she had been privileged to see, of the manifold *Leelas* of the Krishna she had witnessed, and, when she came to, her talk was about the same incidents and the same Person. She was in the midst of relatives who did not have much sympathy with these sentiments, for they felt that her love for the strange little miraculous Boy had taken her away from attachment to her kith and kin. So, they told her that her Baba was a hundred miles away, and it would be better for her to concentrate her failing attention on men and matters nearer and closer. But, her Faith did not falter.

Meanwhile, Baba left Bangalore for Tirupathi, where He spent some time with a few devotees. Of course, Baba knew that Subbamma's soul was struggling to free itself from the mortal coil, and that she was rolling in her deathbed at Bukkapatnam. The people around her announced that she had breathed her last.

But, some peculiar glow on her face, made them nervous to take the body to the cremation ground. A few wiser persons shook their heads when it was suggested that she

had died. They advised patience, and admonished the relatives; 'The bird has not flown yet,' they said.

How could that bird fly, even though the door of the cage was lying open? She must have the *Darshan* and she must wait until Baba comes. And, Baba too was hurrying towards her bedside. He left Tirupathi by car, and arriving at Puttaparthi, proceeded to Bukkapatnam, three full days after the first announcement of Subbamma's end!

Her eyes had lost the glint, she was placed on the floor and people were evincing an uneasy impatience. Baba sat by her and in a low voice called out, "Subbamma," "Subbamma," just twice and no more! Then, to the wonderment of everyone crowding around, Subbamma opened her eyes!

She extended her hand towards Baba and grasped His palm firmly and began to stroke it lovingly; Baba put His fingers to her lips; her mouth opened a little, as if she knew that Baba was giving her something to slake the thirst of the soul.

From the fingers of Baba there poured into her mouth the Immortal Ganga and Subbamma joined the ranks of the Released!

What a deliverance! Can anything better than that! Swami knows who deserves what and when.

Some people might ask why does Swami resurrect this individual and not another? Why does He save some people from serious illnesses or from near-death situations and not others? Why does He use His powers only for some and not others?

To this, Howard Murphet gives a beautiful explanation in *Sai Baba: Man of Miracles*:

"Perhaps, in the same way one might ask why Christ did not cure all the sickness around him in his day. And why was Lazarus the only one He called back from the tomb? Did Jesus - and did Sai Baba later - make a special effort against the power of death for a greatly loved family of close devotees? Maybe, but I think there is more to it than that.

When Jesus was informed that Lazarus was sick he made the enigmatic remark: 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby'. So what would normally, under ordinary conditions, be a death-dealing disease may be an occasion for the glorification of God through the works of a God-man.

Then, too, there is the profound and complex question of *karma*. To what extent is the specific ailment or the approach of death *karmic*, and how far should the Godman interfere with the patient's *karma*?"

So, that probably gives the answer. The bottom line is this: God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. He can do anything. He is not in the business of displaying His powers at every opportunity. There must be a very sound reason for Him to do anything. He knows our past, present and future. He knows what is good for us. And He makes no mistakes.

Unaware of anything beyond the present and the past of the current life, we sometimes complain. But the solution does not lie in complaining but surrendering everything at His lotus Feet. Because He is ever ready to help. He stands at the doorstep of our heart waiting

for a small opening just like the sunlight which eagerly enters a dark room and brightens it by way of even a small slit at the door.

So let's open our hearts to Him. Let's Trust Him. For, with Him by our side, nothing is impossible.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS NEVER DESTROYED

Rising from the Ashes

There is something in our human spirit that can never be destroyed. How do we live from that place within us, at a time when the fires of destruction have challenged our peace of mind? The world's sages say that if we connect ourselves to the highest qualities of human excellence, we may live in harmony. [After a spate of recent wildfires,] on many areas of our local hills there is nothing to see but rock [and charred homes]. Somehow those rocks remain imperturbable. In the months ahead I shall seek to connect to the qualities of forbearance, fortitude, patience, and courage—to that firmness of spirit which, like those rocks, stands strong in the face of adversity. I shall try to avoid depression over the devastated landscape by recognizing that life is a cycle, and that beauty will inevitably be formed anew.

When I walk along our hillside paths and come across the bodies of animals that seem to deny the lives that once thrived within them, I shall try to remember that when I speak harshly, I allow the fire of hatred to burn another. When I hike into an area to find contemplation and solitude, I am instead overcome by the loss of green and shade once given by the trees. I shall try to remember that when I ignore the suffering of another, my heart dries up, loses its ability to give the shade of comfort to my neighbor in need, and I become less than human.

At midnight, when I awaken, agitated by thoughts of a friend's selfish behavior, and lie there smug in self-righteousness, I shall try to remember that the faults I see in others are my own, and that when the fire of anger burns in my heart, health of body and inner peace are burned with it.

The next time someone asks me to do something I don't feel like doing, something that will give happiness to someone or make another life a little easier, I shall try— remembering the firefighters who risked their lives for us—to help, in spite of overwork and exhaustion. If someone attempts to control or manipulate me, I shall recall the wild blaze leaping over the hills, and realize that the greedy flames of human tyranny have no real hold over anyone, that a universal power controls our world. The next time someone tries to take over my life, I shall try to withhold panic, and remain calm, unaffected, and secure.

When it is possible once again to drive into the canyons, there to stare in sadness at our impure streams, I shall try to recognize that sorrow comes from clinging to desire— a desire for life to be other than it is. Instead, I will try to cling to the Creator rather than the creation, which is forever subject to death and decay. I shall try to remember that to rage at life for all that has happened out there, to rage at the arsonists, or at any misfortune, is to be burned by the futile inferno of ingratitude, bitterness, fear, and thwarted desire—attitudes that have no lofty place in the grand scheme of our universe.

The heart of our areas still stands. Here, where people tread so many different paths to reach the spirit, we have come together for a few days, forgotten our differences, and touched one another. We have experienced a new joy, a feeling that we are here on earth to help each other, that we need each other, and that through danger and crises, we come to unite, share, and realize that none of us is really alone.

—Joan Englander

(from the Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA, July-Aug 2004)

INNER-VIEW OR INTER-VIEW?

Dr. Sara Pavan

“When and where was Bhagavad Gita taught? On the battlefield, to solve a mental crisis. It is when such crises affect man that the Lord starts His mission of instructions. For those who have realised the goal there is no need; for those who have known neither the goal nor the path, have neither the thirst nor the yearning, it is of no use. The instructions will be useful only to those who are hesitant, affected by doubt with their minds unsteady and wavering, but who are conscious of the higher power and feebly desiring to make the contact. They are either ignorant of the technique or afraid of the consequences if they pursued; it is to such half-eager, half-apathetic devotees that I talk.” -- Baba.

Life itself, for most of us, has assumed the nature of a battlefield and we are stressed out. The art of living is to handle stress without distress and we need to be resourceful to stay afloat and face the challenges with confidence. The most important resource of all is inherent in all of us, Self-confidence through Self-awareness. Without this knowledge we become mere victims of every adversity. By learning to surrender all our dreams and aspirations to His Divine Will, with absolute trust in His Wisdom, (*“Your Will Lord, not mine”*) we may be able to free ourselves from disappointments and failures. Thus we become fully aware of our true nature - that each one of us is an expression of God’s Will, mere instruments. Only then, with our ego and bondage reduced, will we be free from anxiety, fear, blame or grief! To acquire this level of unconcern is not possible without the guidance of a *Guru*, an enlightened Master, who will show us a realistic and practical way. We are blessed to have our beloved Sai as our Divine *Guru*. He communicates with us at many levels and gives us guidance through interviews, dreams and inner-views.

INTERVIEW is at the physical level and such opportunities are rare. Swami can inquire, discuss, teach and instruct on any matter, at *Darshan* as well as in the interview room, alone or with a group. His instructions may be direct or indirect, and directed towards a particular individual or the group as a whole. He may Himself bring up a subject for discussion and give His guidance in a simple and direct manner. However, on conflicting matters and differing viewpoints, Swami could, at times, appear ambiguous. He is Omniscient and therefore needs no information from us to be kept informed. And yet, He makes such inquiries to appear as if He is seeking our help to acquaint Himself with these matters! Swami fully knows the level of purity and innocence of each individual, especially the motive in seeking His answers.

Swami is a pure reflection of our own inner thoughts, a perfect witness. We have to be extremely careful and alert when speaking with Swami, especially when we try to interpret His remarks or observations. He knows our own hidden agenda only too well and generally does not interfere with our plans, because we will learn better and faster through our own mistakes and personal experiences. He may guide us on important matters and help us look beyond our limited thinking. However, on important matters He may intervene and give us an opportunity to revise our plans. Swami will never put us into any situation, which is beyond our ability to handle. At the spiritual level there is no hierarchy, because Swami’s relationship is direct.

Swami can grant interviews through dreams too. Interpreting what Swami says in His physical presence, at times, is hard enough. These dream interviews can be even more difficult to

understand, although it is reassuring to know that Swami does not appear to anybody in dreams without His will. Dialogue with Swami in dreams must be considered as interviews too. We must understand the context of such an interview and use our powers of discrimination to ascertain if the guidance was strictly for the individual alone. Opportunities to converse with Swami are not easy to come by, let alone dreams. His reasons for granting us interviews are entirely His. We cannot rationalise or categorise them. It is generally accepted that Swami intercedes whenever a sincere devotee is desperate. Often He solves the problems of devotees by His mighty Will (Omniscience and Omni-will), without any external contact.

INNER-VIEW is to have contact with Swami through our inner windows, the mind-intellect-intuition, for guidance. It is the inner vision that is important and that alone is true and sacred. We lose sight of the One Reality, of our own Truth, because we pay attention only to the impermanent outer vision and forget completely the permanent inner vision. God's Mission is to restore this sacred inner vision. Through spiritual practice (*Sadhana*) we can develop the proper spirit of inquiry (*Vicharana*), discrimination (*Viveka*) and detachment or freedom from bondage (*Vairagya*), the three 'V's for victory.

Swami says, "*Seven-tenths of Sadhana is Vicharana*". Well, one may conclude that most of our spiritual activities - *Bhajan*, study-circle, *Seva* etc. - may just be preparation for *Sadhana*, to soften our hearts for spiritual transformation, just as bending an iron rod is made easier after softening it in the fire. There is no other plane in which we can transform ourselves than in the earthly plane. Hence, our entire life, with all its varied activities, must be spiritualised and experienced with our awareness of Swami's presence. The greatest breakthrough occurs when we undertake all activities as worship and offer them to Him.

We begin to realise and experience God speaking to us in so many ways - books, discourses, incidents etc. - God speaks through all of them. We begin to look or listen properly without merely seeing or hearing superficially things that are only pleasing to us. We begin to accept the uncertain ways of God and take everything as lessons or tests while applying the three 'V's in our Inner-view. The three 'V's become part of our continuous meditation. We recognise that our own Ego and Desires, acting like shutters, are preventing us from having our Inner-view with the divine. Unlike the Interviews or dreams, Inner-view gives access to Him all the time. It may be said, one is 'living with God' when one can constantly communicate with the Sai within, the **Real One**!

TRANSFORMATION

Both interviews and inner-views help us in our transformation. Without God's (Sai's) Grace on one hand and our Effort on the other (triple 'P's - Purity, Patience and Perseverance), our refinement and self-transformation would be extremely difficult. With transformation we experience expansion of love and freedom from bondage. Narrow ideas that nourish selfishness and fear will vanish. Swami says, "*Everything is Reaction, Reflection and Resound.*" Interview gives us encouragement and strengthens our faith. This must be followed by Inner-view without which we can hardly transform ourselves. May our Inner-view, like the radar scope, help us see beyond our limitations. May we be blessed to be worthy recipients of the Grace of Sai.

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

**THE DIVINE STORY OF
SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI - Part 6
(Continued from the previous issue)**

SCENE 6

Prayer-room scene again. The lady is now busy with worship. In the process, she looks for the *SALIGRAMAM*.

LADY: [Mutters to herself] The *SALIGRAMAM* ought to be here! Where is it? [calls out to her sister.] Bhavani!

BHAVANI: Coming sister.

LADY: What happened to the *SALIGRAMAM* that is supposed to be here? Did you take it?

BHAVANI: No sister. Let us search over there.

They both search for the *SALIGRAMAM* but in vain.

LADY: [Mutters to herself.] What could have happened to it? It is so strange! *SALIGRAMAM* is most sacred. What could have happened to it?

SCENE 7

The playfield again. Krishna has lost the wager, and Young Sai now has the sacred *SALIGRAMAM* that Krishna thinks is just a white marble. However, Krishna realises that it is important and that his mother would be looking for it. So he tries to persuade Young Sai to give it back, so that the 'marble' could be restored to its place in the *Puja* room.

YOUNG SAI: Hey Krishna! According to our bet, this white marble is mine!

KRISHNA: This is a magical marble. It has to be placed in the altar. Otherwise, my mother will scold me.

YOUNG SAI: I told you right in the beginning: If I win the marble, I will not give it back. It is now mine!

KRISHNA: [Threatens] Will you return it or not?

YOUNG SAI: I will not return.

KRISHNA: Or you going to give it back or not?

YOUNG SAI: I tell you: I will not return.

KRISHNA: Give it back [tries to snatch the *SALIGRAMAM*].

YOUNG SAI: [Resists and shouts] I will not, I will not, I will not....

There is a scuffle and a big commotion. The noise attracts the villagers, and many people converge on the scene. One of them is Krishna's mother.

KRISHNA'S MOTHER: What's going on?...Let me find out.

Krishna's mother notices that Young Sai and Krishna are engaged in a scuffle.

YOUNG SAI: I will not give it back.

YOUNG SAI: I will not give it back; I will not give, I will not give...

KRISHNA: Are you going to return it or not?

YOUNG SAI: [Defiantly] I will not return, not return, not return,not return,....

KRISHNA'S MOTHER: What's all this fighting? Have you come here to play or to quarrel?

KRISHNA: [To his mother] Mother, this fellow has taken my marble and is refusing to return it.

KRISHNA'S MOTHER: [To Young Sai] Boy, give it back.

KRISHNA: Look mother, it is in his hand.

K's MOTHER: Boy, let us see; show it.

Sai shows.

K's MOTHER: Oh my God! That is *SALIGRAAMAM* and not a mere marble!.....(to son) Why did you bring it here? I was so scared when I found it missing. I was searching for it all over the worship room. (To Young Sai) Boy, it is not a marble but a very sacred object; it is *Siva Lingam*. Be a good boy and give it back.

YOUNG SAI: No, I will not.

K's MOTHER: I say give it back!

YOUNG SAI: I will not give it back.

K's MOTHER: Give it back you fellow!

YOUNG SAI: I will not give it back.

K's MOTHER: [Slaps Young Sai left and right] Give, give you fellow, give, give, give back...

Sai refuses to part with the *SALIGRAAMAM*, and swallows the *Lingam*!

K's MOTHER: Oh my God!.[To Young Sai; continues slapping] Open your mouth, open,...open,.....

Sai opens His mouth. The lady looks inside. She does not see the SALIGRAMAM, but the whole Universe inside, just as Yasoda the foster mother of Lord Sri Krishna once saw when she asked Young Krishna to open His mouth. She swoons.

A LADY IN THE CROWD: Such a sacred *Siva Lingam*, and how this boy has polluted it! Can there be a stranger thing?

ANOTHER LADY: If our children associate with this fellow, they would all get spoilt!

FIRST LADY: Behaviour depends on upbringing! Let's go from here.

(To be continued)

GITA FOR CHILDREN PART 8

(Continued from the previous issue)

32. Arjuna asks, ‘Krishna, can you tell me some more about the *Avatar*?’

33. Krishna replies, ‘Yes I can, but right now since time is short let Me just say that in whatever way people adore Me and relate to Me in that very same way I respond. Thus, to a child I am a child, to a woman I am a woman, to a man I am a man; but when I am alone, I am God!’

34. ‘People wonder: “Why did God who is Indivisible, create diversity in the Universe?” Well, that is for the purpose of staging My Cosmic Drama. You would have noticed, Arjuna, that people are very different in their aptitudes and attitudes. Some like to paint, some like to sing, some are interested in sports, some hunger for power, some are mad about business, and so on. All this diversity is needed for making My Drama spicy! Thus it is that there are good guys as well as bad guys!’

35. ‘Talking about My Drama, let Me now add a couple of more remarks about when I make My appearance. You see, people normally tend to forget God, especially when there are plenty of worldly attractions. But if the *Avatar* happens to be around, His Divine Attraction draws millions to Him like a magnet, and this way many many people start thinking about God, at least part of the time.’

36. ‘They come to Him with all kinds of doubts to start with, but once they see Him, they are straightaway captivated. And when He talks to them, they are instantly charmed and begin to transform. In short, the *Avatar* initiates God-consciousness on a large scale, which in subsequent years grows substantially.

37. ‘The *Avatar* also provides many opportunities to devotees to redeem their lives by serving Him in many ways. He gives “tasks” to many and people plunge into these tasks in order to please God in human form. Actually, God does want any of these things; but He pretends that He wants this or that done, so that people could sanctify their lives.’

38. ‘Just to give an example, in My earlier *Avatar* as Rama, there was a need to build a bridge across the ocean. I could have easily created such a bridge with a mere wave of My hand. But I did not. Why? Because I wanted to give the *vanaras* or monkeys accompanying Me a chance to do service. In fact, you might remember that even a small squirrel came forward to help in this mighty project. What contribution can a mere squirrel make? But God does not evaluate in terms of quantity; He cares only for the spirit in which service is done, and thus it is that the squirrel became eternally famous by winning the Grace of God. Remember! One teaspoon of cow’s milk is far preferable to a barrel of donkey’s milk!’

39. ‘All this sort of thing happens while the *Avatar* is around. But after the *Avatar* withdraws and as the years pass by, man begins to forget again, and one more trip down becomes necessary for Me!’

40. 'Arjuna, being close to the *Avatar* confers one priceless advantage. Proximity helps one to watch closely the *Avatar* in action and learn innumerable lessons from Him. This is because the *Avatar*'s life is always His Message. As has been said, "Living with God is true education!"'

41. 'Let Me now revert to the business of action and inaction. Normally, these words are used in a purely worldly sense but that is not correct.'

42. 'Let us say there is a hyperactive businessman. He might be very busy all the time, chasing money of course. However, a Wise man will not see all this as action; rather, he would describe it as inaction! Why? Because for the Wise that alone is action, which is performed in a selfless manner and as an offering to God.'

43. 'Perhaps this would make clear to you that though *Yogis* might seem very passive and "inactive" they actually are very active in a spiritual sense. Let Me explain with an illustration.'

44. 'Let us say there is a *Yogi* who is deep in meditation. You would think this man is utterly inactive and frozen, giving a good imitation of a statue! Not correct!! You see, even while meditating, this *Yogi* spreads sacred vibrations all around him. People get drawn to the *Yogi* on account of his goodness, and when they are in his proximity, they experience badly-needed calm and inner peace, at least for some time. The *Yogi* is hardly conscious that he is doing this; yet what he is doing is valuable service and therefore counts as action in the spiritual sense, valuable action in fact. Tell Me, how many are there who can render the important service of making people experience calm and peace?'

45. 'The two important points you must note regarding actions are: firstly, they must be totally free from ego, and secondly they must be done with Love. In fact, as the saying goes, true *Karma* is *Prema* made visible! If action is performed in this spirit, then automatically there is no thought of reward; it is this sacrifice of the desire for the fruit of action or *Karmaphala Tyagam* as it is called, that would ensure eternal escape from rebirth.'

46. 'Over the ages, people have devised various methods of making offerings. Some build a sacred fire and offer material objects to that fire. This is OK for a start, but what is preferable is to sacrifice or offer or give up, call it what you will, one's undesirable traits, like bad desires, for example. Make this offering in the Fire of Knowledge.'

47. 'Knowledge or Wisdom is the greatest and most purifying fire that one can think of. Physical fire can burn only material objects whereas the Fire of Knowledge can burn even such subtle entities as bad qualities.'

48. 'There is nothing greater than Absolute Knowledge for that alone gives a glimpse of the Oneness that is God. It is Knowledge alone that will generate Constant Integrated Awareness or the capacity to see God everywhere, in everything, all the time.'

49. 'Once you are able to see God everywhere, even the traditional ritual involving offerings to the fire would manifest as a part of the Cosmic Loop. That is to say, you would realise that the one who is making the offering is God, the object offered is God, the fire to which the object is offered is God, and the ultimate receiver is also God. In short, everything is by God, for God and of God! That is the awareness that true Knowledge would bring to you.'

50. 'Arjuna, without Knowledge, you would be reduced to a bundle of doubts. Therefore, seizing the Sword of Wisdom, slay ignorance, before you embark on battle.'

(To be continued)

ETERNAL JOY THROUGH SERVICE

Charles Penn

From Bhagavan flows the wisdom of the Universe. Tuning into the “Path of the Lord” is a blissful experience that all can enjoy. With the sound of *Om* constantly with you, seek His lessons, reach Upwards and pluck the ripening fruits from the Branches....

Sai Baba has told us, again and again, that “**Service to others is service to self**”. All have felt the blissful glow that surges through oneself when even the smallest act of good towards another is performed. While mediating on the 23rd January, 1966, and feeling deeply in tune with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I asked Him to tell again of this secret to inner happiness and just a few moments later, I was writing the words flowing through the universe from Him.

“See the tall tree, over there; one branch has young tender leaves on the extreme tips. Look also at the blossoms that are lovingly bestowing smiles upon all who pass along that path below. The flowers, shall we say in their “worldly ignorance” are, without charge, performing a beautiful service. The blossoms have given special attention to their colourings, to their tender shape. Look! They even give off a gentle sweet perfume. A perfume naturally sweeter and more exotic than any to be found in a container is being given away to any bird, bee, insect or person. Even the ants from that far away hill have been invited to enjoy the sweet nectar of the blissful flowers that bloom in the sunlight.

One could say that the flowers are surely ignorant of Life. For whoever heard of a living thing going to so much trouble just to smile all the day upon anyone that looks; or freely offering honey from the tender lips, or taking the trouble to close up shop each night folding the soft petals, just to protect the good free things for yet another day of giving –only to find in a short time that the young petals lose their energy to hold on. And then to see them, one by one float to the side walk to be trampled on by the same folk that took all those smiles with a mere glance, and enjoyed the wafting sweetness in a few seconds. Or to see the honey supply, so lovingly prepared diminish as the bees and ants and humming birds gathered it up, until all was gone.

Yes there, Charles, you have a natural example of giving to the very end. Right up until life itself, for those blossoms has been taken away. And what is the use, what is the gain?

The tree, with its green leaves and sweet blossoms was brought into the world by the Divine for but one purpose: to serve. It was given a life span, as we can call it. The tree itself has what a mortal would call a long life, for seldom do you see a tree die of old age; a tree does not know what is meant by “old age”. It may perish due to neglect, air pollution, soil pollution, and even through having too much food. Yes, take the tree with shallow roots. Come the gentle rains, it thrives. But give it too much rain and the earth holding the shallow roots softens. The roots with too much water cannot maintain attachment to the sand, or gravel, or the dirt of the field or side walk.

And so, Charles, all must learn a deep lesson from this. Those who give and continue to give find eternal joy, peace and love. They have the fruits of the good earth bestowed upon them, or perhaps we should now say to seekers, the fruits of Good Heaven. One can always find more to give. For, goodness multiplies, it has no end, no container large enough could be found once goodness starts to flow. Be of SERVICE to others, for that is giving yourself to Me. For each unit you give, I will

repay you thrice. Nay I shall repay you tenfold. Try me and you will see. I say to those who know the joy of giving, "Look back!" Yes, look back and see how each time you felt that nothing but a miracle could save you, keep you alive, fill your larder, save your son, stop a disaster –has not that miracle happened! Divine Guidance is always at the side of the Giver. Yes; I will give to those always at the side of the Giver. Yes; I will give to those who give of themselves, untold joy and bliss, and what is more I will lead them by the Hand along those petal strewn paths to Eternal joy.

Now, on the other side of the coin, observe yourself whenever you start to take. There is a little joy, by comparison. You may take through sheer necessity but never will one gain by taking. I do not have to labour this point. The thief who takes has the whole of the police force out, endeavouring to put him in prison. There is also that other force that will get Him much faster than any mortal force! He will find that everything automatically turns against Him, His loved ones, and His own mind. Only the Divine knows how to forgive a thief.

Then there is the Hunter who takes the lives of life loving, roving animals. That hunter must watch His every step, for the forces of the Jungle or the plain are all turned against Him. Even creatures he is not hunting are aware that here is someone they must keep away from. Yes; all the forces are pitted against the hunters of life.

Every deed performed, do it in My Name. Every person who passes near your Path, give them the sweetness of your smile. Give freely the nectar of your cup of happiness, of kindness, of blissfulness. Give the warmth of your love. Extend your hand, as I extend mine to you.

When you see the petals of Life falling away understand that this so, that you did use those hands for Good, all your life. When you appear to see your petals fall on to Path below do not feel sadness but joy. The Joy that you gave was given to you to be used in good grace, in good service. The artist, the performer, the singer, who gave hours of joy to great and small audiences must know that the moments were given to lighten the hearts of others. Talents are not man-made! Most of all I must stress again and again that the service must be considered as full reward for earthly activities. Do not look for more-should you receive encores, bless each one and enjoy those additional moments upon the stage of life. All are artists and all are star performers, in My eyes! After you have received the blissful glow from services given, then I shall give you Happiness for all Eternity. What more can you ask! Only the Giver and only the Server can walk the Path in Bliss.

Take these words, Charles and GIVE them away. Each is precious. No pearl from the sea, no gold from the hills, no gem from the mine can give the joy earned from giving and serving others!"

Written at the Lotus feet of the Divine Lord from words floated through the Universe by His Light. All can tune into the flow of Wisdom, for His words are for all peoples of the world. Listen to His sweet voice; the source of the stream has no limitations.

(Article from Sanathana Sarathi, July 1966)

LIVING DIVINITY

Talk given by Prof Anantharaman in Swami's Presence on 19th October 2004

Respected elders, brothers and sisters and my young friends.

During a very significant speech in 1981, Swami spoke about the 'eight flowers of worship'. Out of these He said that *Ahimsa*, non-violence, is the most important. Swami's concept of *Ahimsa* is far beyond the connotations of not causing physical harm. His concept of *Ahimsa* is not causing harm in word, thought and deed!

I would like to commence today with an offering of such a flower at the Feet of our Lord.

Albert Einstein, the famous physicist, was once asked whether it is possible for him to explain Divinity in scientific terms. He said that it is conceivable but it would make no sense; it would be like explaining Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the form of an air pressure curve. We have the same kind of a problem in speaking about Bhagavan's Divinity. The Living Divinity cannot be explained in metaphors or examples; the limited cannot comprehend the unlimited; no form can contain it; the wayward cannot measure the stable; or the now measure the ever. We can only repeat the words of Sir Isaac Newton who said after enunciating the principle of gravity "I feel like a little boy playing with the pebbles on the seashore while the ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me".

Bhagavantham tells the story of how in the early years Swami once materialised a beautiful sapphire and stuck it on the statue of Shirdi Sai next to him. Bhagavantham was not only a staunch devotee but also a renowned scientist. The scientist in him wondered how the sapphire stood there without any ostensible means of support defying all laws of gravity. He started chuckling to himself, "Here I am accepting the principle miracle of the creation of a sapphire and I am questioning the secondary miracle of the sapphire defying the laws of gravity. Surely one who creates matter can also transcend the laws of matter."

A Malaysian devotee once told me the story of how 20 miles from Prashanti Nilayam his car stopped for want of gas. This was his first visit to Prashanti Nilayam and it was late evening. He was naturally concerned; he prayed to Swami, "Swami, make this car move forward to Prashanti Nilayam this evening." He prayed, asked the driver to start, and the engine stuttered and they started moving to Prashanti Nilayam. Next day the grateful devotee told Swami at *Darshan* time, "Swami thank you for the Grace of moving this car to Prashanti Nilayam without gas." Swami looked at him and said, "But that was not your only problem." Puzzled he went back, filled gas in the car, started the engine and turned the wheel. The wheel just locked and a mechanic was brought who found out that there was a broken tie-rod end. There was no way this car could have travelled 20 miles with or without gas. How many of us have travelled in cars with our broken tie-rod ends fixed unbeknown to us by this cosmic welder.

On this forum, several devotees in the last few days have shared their experiences of Swami. Each one of us have received this benediction from Swami if only we know where to look for it. Some of these we know; many like the Malaysian devotee we do not know at all. Howard Murphet, whose books have brought more foreign devotees to Swami than any other writer, calls all these 'parables in action'.

Whenever Swami materialises something, blows into something and creates something else or cures an affliction, He is in fact demonstrating these 'parables in action'. Their purpose is not to make us richer, or to cure an affliction but to demonstrate to us and instruct us in the science of being and in the art of living through the demonstration of His Omniwill.

I would like to share with you one such parable, one of many that I was privileged to have. I would like to share with you not the experience but the education behind the experience - it was like learning at the Feet of Divinity.

As an international corporate citizen, I had moved from country to country and finally moved from continent to continent. As the story I am about to tell has a lot of political implications, I seek your indulgence not to name the country where this took place as some of the people involved are still alive today. This country was a totalitarian military state and had had 3 major coups. There were 3 ethnic groups in the country - Muslims with political clout; Christians with economic strength; and tribal leaders who had their own axe to grind. Because of recent struggles there was a distrust of foreigners, particularly Asians. There was no constitution in this country and there was complete anarchy. I had heard of friends who had been taken away in the middle of the night and were never heard of since. There were summary executions - this was the order of the day. You could see bodies tied to automobile tyres and set fire to at the end of the streets; the stench of burning flesh and vulcanised rubber quite often rent the air. This was the background of the country where we wanted to introduce Swami's concept of Education in Human Values. We organised a conference of secondary school teachers and in order to give a big PR event to this incident, I was given the responsibility of inviting the wife of the president of this country to inaugurate the session and preside over the first day. I went and met the president's wife, she listened patiently and ultimately said that her office would get back to us as to whether she can preside or not.

A couple of days later, as I was driving to work I found that there was a big black limousine that was following me. I was concerned because this country had a fearsome secret service system. I made some enquiries with a contact that I had in the government and I learned that an enquiry had been ordered against me. As there was a lot of religious strife in the area in which we were living probably meeting the president's wife the previous week had triggered off a suspicion that our's is might be a religious institution and therefore needs to be followed. In the meantime the wife of the president had declined our invitation. My contact in the government confirmed my suspicion that I was in fact the target of an investigation and said that people were being taken away in the middle of the night never to come back; he strongly advised and cautioned me that I must quietly leave the country. The Indian Ambassador who I consulted one day before the event confirmed this and also strongly advised me to leave the country. I was very concerned and left for home a day before the function.

The day of the conference had come; in order to protect my identity they did not announce my name - they announced me as a spokesperson. My job was to talk about EHV and introduce the speaker of the day who was Victor Kanu. But in view of the religious sensitivity I was advised that I should make no mention of Sai or of the institutions which He heads. With great trepidation I climbed the stage; as I went up I found the same secret service agents who had followed me sitting in the first row - my steps faltered. I started with a silent prayer to Swami, but very soon I threw caution to the winds. Instead of talking about EHV, I spoke about the Author of EHV; I spoke about Swami; I spoke about *Sanathana Dharma*; I spoke about Hinduism; I spoke about

everything I was advised about not to speak. I had decided that if I was to go down I would go down with the Name of the Lord on my lips.

The talk was over and I went back home. Thoughts of being picked up and being incarcerated were very much in my mind. I was at home and the phone rang at 9.05 that night. I was certain that it was someone trying to tip me off to leave the country - but it was a friend of mine. He asked me whether I was watching the television. I said, "Why would I watch the television - I am waiting to be picked up!" The television in this country was totally controlled by the government. 9pm was prime time when every single set would be turned on. I turned on the television - I could not believe my eyes. There was full coverage of the morning's programme; my whole speech was telecast; my name and occupation were mentioned; my anonymity was over. Not only that but there was a full presentation of that morning's function; nothing about EHV, but all about Swami, His Teachings, and Hinduism. Swami was presented as an Eastern Messiah. All this happened in a country that was very much opposed to religious activities. It was mind-boggling. I did not know what was happening. The entire prime time news was only about this morning's presentation and covered all that I was advised not to speak about.

Next morning my contact in the government telephoned me. He said something strange is happening here. There was a handwritten ledger on the report that said I must be investigated and this ledger was serially numbered. When he went to that ledger that morning he found that the particular instruction that said I must be investigated was completely missing, but the ledger number continuity was maintained! There was no way that anyone could have torn the paper; only this particular instruction had completely vanished.

And there was more; within a week the Secretary of Education in the country called me and asked me whether I could give a write-up on EHV so that it could be introduced to the country's secondary schools.

More wonders; the Teachers Union, normally a very militant body, invited me to talk to them and they set up a conference which became the focus for introducing EHV at secondary school level in that country. This was the first country outside India to have formally accredited EHV in the secondary school system.

What was happening here? This was not mere materialisation or curing an affliction. This is something that broke barriers. This is something that completely changed the ethos. This is something that created a new order of things. What was Swami trying to convey here? He was only trying to convey that His work will always be done and that His Will will always be supreme. As He said three days ago

"Why does the sun rise; why do the stars hide their splendour in the day and show themselves in the night? Who ordered air to be around us all time; why do these streams roar and gurgle? I created the world with one word at My pleasure; I made mountains rise and with one word I placed knowledge upon mankind."

Sir Arthur Eddington the famous physicist said that the world is a wave of thought. Every law of nature, every action and reaction, every parable and happening that you hear in these forums is a witness to the vital vibration of His Divinity in the gross, subtle and causal cosmos. Swami once wrote,

"I move in the outer space. From those lofty heights I go to the devotee, first as thought, then as fragrance and then as light."

Sai experience is a combination of that light, of that thought and of that fragrance. You have seen here the world come to Swami - I have seen Swami go to the rest of the world. At a UN conference at Osaka, Japan two years ago, I saw 10,000 delegates give a standing ovation to a group of Japanese children performing a ballet on the values of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti* and *Prema*. In probably the most popular square in Spain every Sunday devotees sing songs of peace and harmony watched by residents and visitors.

During a skiing holiday in the Austrian Alps my wife and I attended a *Bhajan* session at a little hamlet of 200 people, in the middle of nowhere where 20 Austrians who had never stepped out of Europe performed *Bhajans* and held a workshop. When out of deference to them my wife chose to sing a German song the leader said "No, in Sanskrit please". In the forests of West Africa, I have seen native tribes commence their daily meeting singing the song "*Ore Baba, Ose Baba*".

And at a Sai retreat that I attended a few years ago in Argentina at the time of the Kosovo crisis one young adult asked a question, "If Sai Baba is raising human consciousness why are the children of Kosovo being murdered?" Pat came the answer from another young adult, "When Hitler's hordes roamed through Germany the world kept quiet; they did not even shed a silent tear. But when the children in Kosovo were being murdered the world roared back." That is how Sai Baba is elevating human consciousness - slowly and imperceptibly the world is turning into a golden age.

Swami told Howard Murphet that the golden age was coming. Howard Murphet then asked what work would Prema Sai do? Sai said "He will have plenty of work. Prema Sai will elevate human consciousness to Divine heights. Not only will there be a lot of work but He will also need a lot of help."

What kind of help, wondered Howard Murphet; then he remembered the story of how in a time of great flooding a man stood on top of his roof to escape the waters. When the water was rising higher the man prayed to God to save him. Soon a man came in a boat and asked him to get in. The man said "No, I have prayed to God and He will come and help me." Soon the waters rose nearly to his feet. Then another man came in a helicopter and dropped a rope. The man said "No, I will not come with you; I have prayed to God and He will help me." The laws of nature soon took their course and the man drowned. He went to heaven and asked God why He did not help him in his time of need. God said "I sent you a man with a boat and later, when you refused him another man with a helicopter...but you did not accept that help." The man understood; God is in everybody and He needs a million hands to help Him.

In establishing this, Swami has been saying that His Life is His message. He has been living that message particularly in the last 15 months. Ever since the drama of His fall He has been living one particular message - that He is not the body. Over 2000 years ago at another time and in another place in distant Jerusalem another cosmic being allowed Himself to bleed on the Cross in order to establish to the children of Israel one facet of reality. Everyday, Swami has been establishing with perfect equipoise the same facet of reality to all of us that 'I am not the body'. The reality that 'I am God'; the reality that *Brahma Sathyam Jagat Mithya*. It is for us to accept or reject this reality.

It's rather like the search for the Holy Grail. There is a lot of wealth and fame and pain in the so-called materialistic success story that I myself tried to follow 30 years ago. But in the evening of my life, like Percival (a Knight) I have come to the Fisher's King to ask Him; "Where does the Holy Grail lie?" The Grail serves the Grail King who lives in the innermost recesses of the castle. When Percival received this answer his search was over. The Grail King is a symbol of man's inner God.

Knowing this truth, it is glorious to be alive today - not only to be alive but to be aware that God is physically here is a privilege that millions never had! The only gratitude that we can offer for this privilege is to lay down our lives as flowers at His Lotus Feet. Sai Ram.

(Prof Anantharaman worked as the CEO of a Transnational Business conglomerate based in Switzerland, an adjunct professor in several business schools including the Harvard Business School and is currently a faculty in the School of Business Management at Puttaparthi)

THE DUCK

A beautiful message that proves a loving point!

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner.

As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck. Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was shocked and grieved. In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen." Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help." She whispered again, "Remember the duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's he finally couldn't stand it any longer. He came to Grandma and confessed the he had killed the duck.

Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing. But because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Thought for the day and everyday thereafter:

Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done, the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, debt, fear, hatred, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc.). Whatever it is, you need to know that God was standing at the window and He saw the whole thing, He has seen your whole life. He wants you to know that He loves you and that you are forgiven.

He's just wondering how long you will let the devil make a slave of you. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness, He not only forgives you, but He forgets.

Go ahead and make the difference in someone's life today.

S.A.I.

In the darkest of nights,
I seek a light that I cannot find.
I have searched the deepest oceans, lowest valleys,
Highest peaks and darkest alleys.

I feel so insignificant in such a large place,
Where more can I seek?
Where is my light?

I pause for a moment,
As I gaze at my reflection,
I see a shimmering light,
Illuminated by the moon so bright.

My eyes close gently, as I hear a voice inside saying
“Look deeper...look deeper.”

I have discovered something inside me,
I feel so large in such a small place.
Happiness surrounds me, Love flows through me,
I am complete.

I have found my SAI,
See All Inside.

- Sai Youth from New Zealand

QUIZ

1. Vajrayan was the sect of which religion?

- a. Buddhism
- b. Jain
- c. Hindu
- d. Jew

2. Who in Greek mythology is a mythical monster, half-serpent and half-woman?

- a. Delphyne
- b. Alope
- c. Circe
- d. Electra

3. In which language is the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs written?

- a. Urdu
- b. Hindi
- c. Sanskrit
- d. Gurumukhi

4. What is the most important religious leader in the Church called?

- a. Missionary
- b. Bishop
- c. Priest
- d. Preacher

5. What are the words "Good news" called in Christianity?

- a. Sermon
- b. Realisation
- c. Gospel
- d. Confession

6. In the Muslim religion what is a pilgrimage to Mecca called?

- a. *Hijra*
- b. *Hajj*
- c. *Haji*
- d. none of these

7. In Judaism, what is the collective name for the five books of Moses, that contain God's words?

- a. Torah
- b. New Testament

- c. Bible
- d. Old Testament

8. When was '*Bhagwat Dharm*' (Bhagwat religion) spread mostly?

- a. Maurya's period
- b. Gupta's period
- c. Kushanas's period
- d. Satvahan's period

9. In Judaism what is the golden box called in which two pieces of stone were kept upon which the Ten Commandments are written?

- a. Ark of the Covenant
- b. Jewellery Box
- c. Ornament case
- d. *Hazratbal*

10. Who leads the prayer in Islam which is followed by a sermon?

- a. Maulana
- b. Qazi
- c. Imam
- d. Mullah

11. What was Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion born as?

- a. Hindu
- b. Sikh
- c. Muslim
- d. Christian

12. In which language is the *Quran*, the sacred book of the Muslims written?

- a. Arabic
- b. French
- c. Persian
- d. Hebrew

13. What name was given to the city of Yathrib by the Prophet Mohammed?

- a. Mecca
- b. Medina
- c. Jerusalem
- d. Ajmer

Answers to Quiz

1 A, 2 A, 3 D, 4 B, 5 C, 6 B, 7 A, 8 B, 9 A, 10 C, 11 A, 12 A, 13 B

Dear Children,

This article on Swami's General Hospital at Puttaparthi is written exclusively for you..... read this and tell us what you think by mailing us at h2h@radiosai.org.

SAI BABA'S HOSPITAL

Next to Sai Baba's ashram in India is a small Hospital. Sai Baba had it built many years ago to take care of all the people in the ashram and the surrounding villages when they were sick. A few years ago He also built a large, very modern Hospital near the ashram where people can go to have special operations done by expert doctors from around the world. For his 75th birthday in November, Baba gave us all a present by opening another large Hospital near Bangalore in India.

Can you imagine how sad it would be if you or someone in your family was sick but you had no money to see a doctor or buy medicine to make you well? Many people in India, and other countries too, are very poor and have no money or insurance to pay to see a doctor or go to a hospital when they get sick. Sometimes the doctor is very far away and they must walk or carry the sick person, sometimes for several days, to get help.

Sai Baba wants us all to be happy and healthy. That is why He has built these Hospitals and that is why there is never any cost to be treated at any of His Hospitals. All medicines, visits with the doctor, and even the surgeries are free!

The doctors, nurses, and volunteers in Sai Baba's Hospitals work very, very hard to help all the people who are sick. Sometimes, when there are special festivals at the ashram or we are celebrating Sai Baba's birthday, huge crowds of people come to visit. Sometimes doctors and nurses who are visiting the ashram from around the world are allowed to volunteer in the small Hospital to help take care of the many extra people.

It is never fun to be sick, but if you are - what a blessing to be in a Hospital where the doctors can go directly to Sai Baba to ask for help if they are not sure how to best take care of a patient. Sai Baba, who never went to medical school or even college, always knows exactly what should be done with any patient to make them better. Sometimes He makes *Vibhuti* for the patient to take as medicine.

I have been very lucky to have the chance to volunteer as a nurse on several of these occasions. I have had many interesting experiences and have learned many things.

The most important thing I have learned is that the most powerful medicine is one that we always have with us - LOVE! Sai Baba wants us to use all our knowledge and training - our heads and our hands - to take care of people. However it is the love, understanding, sympathy, and compassion - our hearts - that can help people feel better and actually get well more quickly. Perhaps you remember when you were small and fell down and hurt yourself. Sometimes a kiss by your mother or father on the spot that hurt was enough to make you forget the pain and send you back to your playing. That is an example of the healing power of love.

Once I helped to care for a young man who was a patient in the General Hospital. He had come to India from a different country to go to school. When he came to the ashram to celebrate Sai Baba's birthday he became very sick. He was in a small room by himself so that none of the other patients would catch what he had. The doctors and nurses were very busy and would bring him his

medicine and food and then hurry back to work. His family and friends were far away and couldn't afford to buy airline tickets to come and see him. He was very lonesome and felt very sick.

On the wall above his bed was a picture of Sai Baba. This young man spent most of his day just looking at that picture. When he felt strong enough he would stand on his bed and carefully dust it. One day he noticed that some *Vibhuti* had materialized on it! He showed the doctor when he came to visit. Soon everyone in the hospital had heard about it and wanted to see it too. Before long his room was filled with people who had come to see the *Vibhuti* and visit with the young man. He was very happy to have so many new friends and quickly was feeling better and was always smiling. No one got sick from visiting him either!

Perhaps you are thinking of becoming a doctor, nurse, dentist or veterinarian someday. It takes many years of studying and hard work, but your heart already knows how best to make people (and animals!) feel better with love! Do you have a schoolmate or friend who is sick? Maybe you could get permission to visit them and play a game or help them catch up on schoolwork. If that is not possible, maybe you could send them a note or call them and let them know that you care and that they are missed. If your mom or dad is not feeling well, you could help them by keeping your younger brothers or sisters entertained, cleaning up the house or making a simple meal. Just knowing that you love and care about them will make them feel better right away. Even if you cannot think of anything else to do, you can always ask Sai Baba to send His love through you to them. The best part is - whenever you make someone feel better - YOU feel better, too!

(article by Rose Roof from SAI WORLD, Fall 2000, Vol 20, Number 4)

Dear Reader,

This issue of Prashanti Diary contains a vivid description of Swami's recent trip to Kodaikanal in the month of May from the view of a devotee sitting in the *Darshan* lines. Accompanying the article are some beautiful photographs. We are compiling a more descriptive story of the Kodai trip, including the experiences of people fortunate to be Swami's guests, which will appear in the next issue....don't miss it!

DARSHAN IN THE EMERALD HILLS

Swami at Kodai

Kodai conjures many an image in the devotee's eye. For it is here where our Lord relaxes in His 'playground', dotes on His children and pampers them with special attention. In the emerald hills, Sai has a special twinkle in His eyes and bewitched by His Love many come to be blessed by the Creator of all the wonders around them, rejoicing in the splendour of the cool hills. For if Nature Herself can renew the tired human spirit, then surely the blessing of the Lord Himself will be so much more, the Creator of all that is.

It is with such thoughts that devotees make their upward journey and eagerly approach 'Sai Sruthi', the Lord's residence. Firstly, one has to walk along the charming lake-side to arrive at the morning *Darshan*. The water is lit up by the rising sun and the encompassing trees seem to hold all in a silent benediction. The lilies in the lake open up as one walks by, as if to give a greeting. One cannot help but feel a special excitement.

As one nears Sai Sruthi one glimpses the line of ladies on the other bank and then the men's line comes into view. It is certainly a happy throng who await their turn to go inside. When the lines are allowed inside, some are seated under the green roof and some under the open air.

When *Bhajans* begin all attention is focused on the Holy Vision. There He comes....onto the balcony. Our Lord turns first one way for sometime...to see and to be seen. Then He turns the other way until all have been assured of His benign gaze, His Love and Protection. Sometimes His hair blowing in the wind necessitates sweet attention from His hand. The flowers below offer fitting accompaniment to the devotees' vision now bursting with love and yearning. He raises His hand to bless one...He raises both hands to all! Oh, we are so happy!!

Is that not enough? No! For then He walks down the ramp, slowly but surely...100 Divine paces. This occurs on the ladies side and from there (as the days pass), Sai blesses some deserving devotees. One lady calls out, "Swami, I am sick, please help me". Sai rewards her with a golden necklace and her previous downcast air is permanently banished by His shining Love.

On another day, a lady strains to hold up her baby to Him. Sai's hand blesses the little one - golden light flashing to his golden hair. One lady asks for a blessing of her *japamala*. Swami refuses and instead creates a unique ring - a wide band encrusted with small diamonds set with 8 square larger rubies.

Having left the ramp Swami then enters the golf cart and comes past the devotees. He is delightfully close - so much so, that seemingly all can give Him their letter; all receive His glance and all feel His Love. Swami is so close that the daring ones can easily touch His Feet,

despite remonstrations from the attendants. Swami is so close that all feel “Sai is here only for me!”

There was one group interview for an Iranian family. They relate afterwards how Swami has accepted their boy into His school. (This child is called Sathya and led the prayers last year at the festival of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday held in the Sai Kulwant Hall.) How they were able to hold Swami’s hand for ten minutes inside the Interview Room and how they had indescribable feelings while doing so.

Bhajans are held in the hall in the afternoon, but it is a difficult matter to get inside due to special seating allocation! But our Lord does not disappoint those waiting outside and comes to light up those hearts that are beating only for Him. Is not a second’s vision of Him enough!

Our Lord’s compassion creates two special mornings for those less fortunate brothers and sisters; *Narayana Seva*. Hundreds throng the ashram waiting for the blessing which only He can give. Only He can arrange such a perfect example of Love in Action; a demonstration for the whole world of how we should conduct ourselves. Swami comes to bless the *Narayanans* and oversee the distribution of *saris*, *dhotis*, blankets and food that will remain a cherished memory for all who took part.

The second of these *Narayana Seva* days took place on May 6th the death anniversary of Easwaramma. Of course, our Lord gave His nectarine Discourse which dealt with the holy nature of Motherhood.

One feature of Kodai is the many trips our Lord makes in the car. We do not know where He is going - we only want a glance from Him. He seems ever ready to oblige and seemingly all are rendered blissful by His smiling face as the car passes by.

But all good things must come to an end. And so one leaves with so many impressions in mind. The hills, the lake, the rain, the cool temperature, waiting for Him. But the heart thrills with its own impressions of how He came and made life sweeter in so many ways. How just by Him passing by one could live happily for the whole day. How even one brief second’s *Darshan* was enough to meditate upon and derive bliss.