

## **HEART 2 HEART**

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## **BETWEEN YOU AND US**

When the economic reforms in the Indian economy got a thrust post-1990, a spin-off was the mushrooming of business schools in India. A recent statistic from the All India Council for Technical Education states that there are over 950 B-schools spread all over India. And every school is run as a business where they compete first for students and then for placements and all without exception charge very high fees. Perhaps, the sole exception in this dismal scenario is the School of Business Management, Accounting and Finance of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prashanthi Nilayam. Here you will find a curriculum at par with the best schools, a faculty very experienced and respected, and products shining in the industry but there is no placement service, no fees charged whatsoever from the students and an open admission policy based purely on merit.

But this is not what is special about this management school. What is really special is the integral education which is imparted here wherein character, values and ethics are given as much important as analytical and technical skills. Dr. Abdul Kalam had this to say about the education being offered in Prashanthi Nilayam on the 21<sup>st</sup> convocation of the Institute (22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2002) - *"...Is value-based education possible? Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has given an answer in the affirmative."*

This was vindicated in no uncertain terms when just a month later, in December 2002, when the Peer Team of the NAAC [**N**ational **A**ssessment and **A**ccreditation **C**ouncil, an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country], had come to Prashanthi Nilayam to evaluate the system of education being provided here. And this what they put on record - *"...The Peer Team feels that this Institute stands out as a crest jewel among the University Education System in the country and this model is worthy of emulation by the institutions of higher learning in the country and elsewhere, so that these benefits would be reaped fast and on the widest possible scale."* No wonder, they rated the University as A++ - the highest any university in India can obtain.

This year on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of August almost all the MBA alumni are converging in a grand get together labeled as "Reconnect". They will be paying homage to Bhagawan Baba, their alma mater, on His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday and also reaffirming their commitment and conviction in the role of values in personal and professional life on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their business school.

What is so special about the management students of the Sai Institute? Are they really able to apply values in real life situations in today's ruthless world of business? Are they as competent as graduates of other premier schools? Do they get good placements? And, does their special relationship with Swami help them in their management decision-making? To find answers to these and more, read this issue's cover story.

*Guru Poornima* celebrations this year in Prashanthi Nilayam was marked with an Inter-faith Conference where religious leaders from different religions spoke in the divine

presence – an enlightening experience for every devotee. Also, Swami’s discourse on the *Guru Poomima* morning about actions, results and God’s grace was truly inspiring. You will find a detailed report of all this and much more in the Prashanti Diary.

In this issue, we have two bhajans in the Sai Bhajans Virtual Classroom in response to readers’ requests. Also, ‘Conversation With Sai’ is much larger than before. You will also find seven articles in the miscellaneous section than the usual four or five and a more user-friendly archival page.

Before we leave you to explore the rest of the journal, please do not miss the Photo Album. You will find some beautiful pictures of Sai Krishna and also a nice article on Krishna by Sai in the feature articles section. *Krishnastami*, the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna, is just a few weeks away.

Dwell on the divine miracles of Lord Krishna, think of the beautiful moments you have spent with Sai and be always in the presence of Sai Krishna. Let your life be filled with love and peace.

Loving Regards and Sairam,

H2H Team  
In Sai Service.

## **SPIRITUAL BLOSSOMS**

### **Sathya Sai Speaks**

#### **The Remedy For Sorrow and Pain**

God is *Mahaashakthi* (Supreme Energy) and *Jeeva* (individual being) is *Maayaashakthi* (Deluding Power); He is the genuine, the individual being is but the shadow, the appearance, the delusion. Even I have to put on *Maayaashakthi* (deluding power) to come into your midst, like the policeman who is compelled to wear the dress of the thief so that he can get entry into the gang of thieves to apprehend them and bring them to book! The Lord cannot come down with His *Mahaashakthi* (Supreme Energy) unimpaired; He has to come with diminished splendour and limited effulgence, so that He can become the object of *Bhakthi* (Devotion) and Dedicated Service.

In this world which is impermanent and ever transforming, the Immanent Power of the Lord is the only permanent and fixed entity. In order to realise the eternal and the true, one has perforce to attach oneself to that Source and Sustenance. There is no escape from this path. It is the destiny of one and all, irrespective of age or scholarship, clime or caste, sex or status.

While proceeding along the road, you can watch your shadow falling on mud or dirt, hollow or mound, thorn or sand, wet or dry patches of land. You are unaffected by the fate of your shadow, is it not? Nor is the shadow made dirty thereby. It does not worry in the least where it falls or what it wades through. We know that the shadow and its experiences are not eternal or true. Similarly, you must get convinced that 'you' are but the shadow of the Absolute and you are essentially not this 'you' but the absolute itself. That is the remedy for sorrow, travail and pain.

Of course, it is only at the end of a long and systematic process of spiritual practice that you will get fixed in the truth; until then, you are apt to identify yourself with this body and forget that the body which casts a shadow is itself a shadow. The first step in spiritual practice is the adherence to *Dharma* (righteousness) in every individual and social act. The righteousness which is followed in relation to *Prakruthi* (objective world) will automatically lead on to righteousness in the spiritual field also; only you must stick to it through thick and thin.

## **CONVERSATIONS WITH SAI BABA - PART 11**

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

**Hislop:** Why does Baba have regular schools? Why not religious schools?

**SAI:** Religious schools would appeal only to the religious, whereas **Baba's task is to raise the general public into devotion and spiritual life.** One aspect of Baba's task is to reform education, and if that were impossible He would not have come. Now, having come, be assured the task will be accomplished, but not as fast as impatient humans would like. By an intensive T.V. campaign, rapid change could be accomplished, but it would be only temporary. God sees things differently to man and He knows that to start early, drive slowly, reach safely is correct. The change that Baba is bringing about may be through slow methods, such as His colleges, but the methods will be effective.

**H:** What should we do about young people to correct their character and behaviour?

**SAI:** A child is bound to touch a hot lamp until once burned. Young people are without balance and they want immediate results. For example: yesterday there was a marriage here. The young man wanted a son at once; he did not wish to wait for nine months. A *Guru* (so-called) comes into view, and the young people flock to him, hoping for quick Self-realization. But, once disappointed, they turn away and, in the process, gain some caution and patience.

A small story: a young man of very poor parents graduated with a B.A., mainly because the teachers were fed up with his many failures at the exams. His parents were now proud and said, 'We will find you a wife'. The boy replied, 'I will take only a B.A. girl, for I am a B.A.' Mother said, 'We cannot afford servants for a girl who will come from her room at 9 a.m. We need a wife to help with the housework.' The son replied, 'It is my needs that matter, not yours. Do as I wish or I will leave'. The parents capitulated and secured the desired wife. The boy told his friends, 'I am now happiness itself.' Three days later he said to his wife, 'My dear, arise now and make me coffee'. She replied 'My dear, I am B.A., same as you. Please arise and get coffee for me!' Now the boy proclaimed to all that life had become black and all was unhappiness and misery. Thus, from total happiness to total misery in 3 day's time.

This behaviour of the young is typical because they have not been taught to respect and revere their parents. Their behaviour in the spiritual direction is similar. How can there be any spiritual light until the inside is clean? Inside work is quiet inquiry and discrimination. After the inside is clean, outward disciplines may have some value.

**H:** Young people nowadays say how can they respect their parents, when the parents engage in wrong actions?

**SAI:** Young people do not realize how their parents worry. No matter how faulty the parents, they wish only the best for their children. At the very least, the children can honour this and also realize the sacrifice, care, and love given to the child to keep it

alive and give it a chance for life. These factors must be appreciated and honoured even though the parents have faults. **Only by honouring the parents will the children's children honour them. A clear case of action and reaction.**

**H:** Swami, if the parent says one thing and the *Guru* says another, to which order should the child give preference?

**SAI:** The parents who give the body come before God.

**H:** Parents come before God, Swami? That is surprising.

**SAI:** For people in the worldly sphere, that is true. For young people leading a pure spiritual life, God comes first of all.

**H:** Swami, these young college students who are in Swami's college here, they have first class education, the highest examination scores and so on. And they are also building an inner character of strong morality. Will not these students become the leaders of India? Their fine education will get them positions, and their strong morality will sustain them?

**SAI:** This is the purpose of Swami's college.

**H:** Then in 20 or 30 years we should look for a great change in the Indian nation.

**SAI:** Twenty years? In ten years.

**H:** But Swami, in 10 years they are still in their late twenties. People come to power in the late thirties, in their 40's and 50's.

**SAI:** In India people reach positions of power and influence earlier in life. Even now there are a number of examples throughout the nation.

**H:** Do these students realize their destiny and the great responsibility to the world that they will carry?

**SAI:** The students say that when they grow up they will do as Sai wills. These young men will occupy positions in every area of the Indian society, as the positions become open. Wherever they go they will influence and change society for the better. Corruption and such problems will sharply diminish. Their influence cannot but express itself. Right now, 80 per cent of the parents of the students have had their lives changed because they observe the effect of Sai on the characters of their children. The parents are content. They say they will not interfere and that their children should follow the guidance of Sai. *(pointing to a young student from Hong Kong )*. This boy will speak tomorrow. *(A number of students were gathered around the door of Swami's dining room, as He was having His evening meal).*

**H:** *(to the student)* Have you prepared your speech?

**Student:** Swami is my voice. What He says will form into words in my mouth and will be spoken.

**H:** You are saying that you make no speech preparation whatsoever? Surely the first idea must be in your mind so you can get started. Tell me what you have in mind to say.

**Student:** I do not make ideas. Only by the prompting of Bhagavan, who resides in my heart, do ideas come to mind. He is God and there is nothing else but Him.

**SAI:** *(to Student)* Speak now.

**Student:** Swami's being is pure beauty. His eyes tell me to watch my thoughts, watch my actions, watch my words, watch my heart. His smile is like a beautiful rose whose fragrance fills the garden of my life.

**SAI:** *(to Student)*: How do you know Swami is God?

**Student:** *(is silent)*.

**SAI:** *(to Hislop)* Go ahead. Ask him some questions.

**H:** How does one know that Swami is God? It is not very clear.

**Student:** Swami gives a person the power to know Him.

**H:** How do you mean?

**Student:** When the three *gunas* are in balance, *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* - when those three qualities or characteristics are in balance with each other so that the person is balanced, when that happens by means of discipline, devotion and duty, then Swami is pleased to give the power to know that He is God.

**H:** When does that happen? At an early age, or later on?

**Student:** Age is not the important factor. The balance of one's nature is the important thing and this is by the practice of duty, devotion and discipline.

**H:** What is the destiny of man?

**Student:** His destiny is to realize that he is the embodiment of God.

**H:** Do girls have this same destiny?

**Student:** There may be some difference, but really both are the same. When Swami is at the girl's College at Anantapur, the boys here at the Brindavan College realize that He is omnipresent and that He is still here, even though He is at Anantapur. They know that if their devotion is strong enough He will come back to Brindavan. The girls are the same. They know that Swami is omnipresent and that if their devotion is strong enough, He will visit Anantapur College in His physical person.

**H:** What is your career? What are you going to do in life?

**Student:** I will do that which Swami tells me to do.

**H:** No plan to do anything? No wish to do this kind of work or that kind of work?



**Student:** When the correct plan comes, Swami will guide me into the work that is my correct duty in the world, just as He has guided these older boys standing there who have now taken up careers in the University.

**H:** This is a strange idea to people in the world. The world over, young men arrive at their own decision as to a career, and then try for success in that career by applying their full energy.

**Student:** They did not know about their career until some inner prompting told them. Until that time they did not know. The same for yourself. Until Swami told you to be President of the American Sai organization, you did not know about that.

**H:** That is for sure! I certainly had no such wish or idea prior to Swami saying so. But you are so sure that Swami is God. Many people come here and go away not believing that. Their circumstances and early influences have bent them another way and so they are not able to see Swami as you do. How about them?

**Student:** Some trees grow up straight towards the sky, some are bent and twisted by stormy weather. It does not really matter. Even the most twisted person will come to know Swami as God.

**H:** How can you say that? How will that happen?

**Student:** It cannot do other than happen. Swami, as God is the Resident of each person's heart and the irresistible strength of this fact cannot but eventually make itself known.

**H:** You are so sure about it. But you are just a boy, just starting to experience life. Suppose a full grown, widely experienced man comes to you and says, 'I tell you that Swami is just a man, an extraordinarily intelligent and powerful man'. What would you say?

**Student:** Swami has taught us not to rely on the experience of another person, but to trust in our own experience. My experience is that Swami is God, and your experience is not mine.

*(To be continued)*

## **CHINNA KATHA**

### **Who is the Greatest?**

*This is a beautiful little story narrated by Swami on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999 in Prashanthi Nilayam –*

“Once, Lord Vishnu asked Narada which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied earth is the greatest.

Vishnu remarked, “Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater?”

Narada agreed that water was great.

Vishnu said, “But the sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater or water?” Narada replied, “You are right my Lord, Agastya is greater than water.”

Vishnu asked again, “But this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (*akasa*). Now is this star greater or the sky?”

Narada replied, “It is the sky that is greater.”

The Lord agreed and said, “Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from king Bali. And in the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Thirvikrama and covered the entire earth in one step, and the space from the earth to the sky in second, and there was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God great or the sky?”

Narada replied, “Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be? God indeed is greater.”

“God, who envelops the entire cosmos, dwells in the heart of His bhakta (devotee). So now, is the heart of the devotee greater or God?” asked Vishnu.

Narada replied, “Indeed, the devotee is greater than God.”

Swami at the end, summed up saying, “God is *Bhakta Paradheena*, He is the servant of devotees. There is none superior to a devotee in this world. God’s heart can be melted only through love. So, develop total love.”

## **COVER STORY**

### **The School of Business Management, Accounting and Finance** **Prashanthi Nilayam**

20th year of **Management By the Avathar**

#### **Uniqueness of the MBA Program**

1. The Director of Human Resources of a reputed IT Multi National Company along with the senior management had gathered to felicitate an employee and the Director said,

*"I don't know why but the students from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute are so unique and totally different. In my entire corporate life I have come across many professionals, but never witnessed the display of a sterling character like these boys have. Parents like me have a vision for our children and it's a comfortable life, success, money. It is a conglomeration of consumer durables, ready-to-eat foods, state-of-the art information technology and citizenship of a developed country. Success, to start with, is academics: ranks, stars, medals, and the work, soon followed by career options. But after seeing the students of this Institute it has made me realize that I would be a proud mother if my son possesses a character just like him."*

What a transformed outlook of success! Of life itself! And the agent of that transformation was one light (of the many) from Baba's Institute. The power of character was in ample display at a time when having a good character is considered old-fashioned by modern youngsters. It was the training of the Supreme Master, the most selfless Mentor and Mother who had instilled timeless values into the heart and mind of that student. Ask any Human Resource Head today and he will tell you, he is looking for people with integrity, honesty and sincerity and not merely technical and analytical skills for, to become a project leader one has to shed his ego and learn to love unconditionally. Swami two decades ago itself knew the kind of personalities the world would need in the twenty-first century; and so, in 1981, set up a deemed University - the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (hereinafter referred to as the Institute), where character building is the central tenet of the educational system.

#### **Genesis Of The Management Program**

In 1985, when Swami first expressed his decision to start a management programme to the then Vice Chancellor, Sri S N Saraf, it was the grand unfolding of yet another significant facet of His divine mission. Immediately the process to get the requisite governmental permission was set in motion and the Faculty of Business Management (as it was known at the time of its inception) made its modest beginning in the Institute.

For the commerce students graduating that year, it was a dream, a timely divine boon. As the Institute administration commenced informal consultations with a few faculty members of the then Department of Commerce concerning the course structure, Swami sent Prof. Nanjundaiah, the Controller of Examinations who is a distinguished professor of commerce, to the Administrative Staff College of India, in Hyderabad . He was to meet Prof. Dharani Sinha, the principal and an academic luminary and a man of values and experience, and take his guidance to frame the curriculum for the MBA programme in consultation with the expert faculty in the Administrative Staff College . Prof. Dharani Sinha proposed a draft curriculum. In the meantime, Swami left to Brindavan. And in the words of Prof. Nanjundaiah,

*“When Swami left to Brindavan, He left word with Mr. Chiranjeevi Rao (the Ashram care-taker at that time) that Nanjundaiah is expected to come from Hyderabad by bus. Stand in the bus stand and put him in the next bus to Brindavan. That was Swami’s eagerness and concern for the programme .”*

And as directed, Prof. Nanjundaiah right away went to Brindavan and Swami spent a lot of time asking him questions about his meeting with Prof. Dharani Sinha and the outcome thereof.

And eventually, a draft programme structure was framed which formed the basis for discussion with an expert committee. The committee consisted of distinguished personalities from industry and commerce including Prof. Dharani Sinha. However it did not take concrete shape even till the time the students went home for the summer vacation. And nobody knew if the course was a go for the next academic year 1986-87.

However the ways of God are mysterious. Swami resolved that the course should start in the next ensuing academic year itself. And in the words of Prof. Kumar Bhaskar, who has been associated with the programme since inception,

*“It was indeed Divine Sankalpa (The Divine Will) that made a thing impossible for any other normal university, possible in the case of our great Institute. The admission notification was issued in Sanathana Sarathi (the ashram’s monthly magazine) and also through the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations of every state. An expert committee quickly prepared an admission test. And there was an overwhelming response! The admission test, which consisted of a written test, group discussion, and a personal interview, was conducted around late June 1986 and the first batch of thirty students were selected. The programme structure was further chiseled under the Divine guidance of the Chancellor: Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.”*

Prof. R. K. Sehgal (who was till then serving in the Steel Authority of India Ltd.’s Staff Training College as the assistant principal) was appointed as the first Dean of the Faculty of Business Management, besides two full time faculty. Three faculty members from the erstwhile Department of Commerce and Mathematics were used as adjunct faculty and the management school finally came into being.

## **Inauguration of the Management School**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the programme on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1986 in the Institute auditorium at 09:00 a.m. and on that eventful morning, Swami said,

*"In the Sai Institute, we are attaching special importance to cultural and ethical values. Among these, the primary place is being given to "Indian Ethos and Values." The course will cover such matters as the Indian economic environment, Personnel management, Organizational Behaviour and Business Communication. Emphasis will be laid on Personnel Management and Human Values, which do not figure very much in the courses of studies in other management Institutes now. The use of computers will be an integral part of the course..."*

*In our Institute we want to turn out Masters in Man Management. The students should develop a broad outlook and prepare themselves to serve society with sincerity and dedication. They must set an example in morality, and bring credit to the country by their work and their contribution to the development of the nation".*

Swami wanted managers, nay leaders, from this school who would not only set an example of strong character but also influence the nation's industry and commerce, and provide a value orientation to all business activity. This sacred purpose is conveyed in no ambiguous terms in the programme's mission -

***"We endeavour to develop dedicated, dynamic, professionally sound and socially responsible managers/leaders of wholesome and balanced personality, academically equipped as well as spiritually aware, who embody noble values, and above all, possess a right and positive attitude with an unblemished character."***

## **The Early Years Of The School**

Under Swami's directions, the MBA course comprised of three main capsules. The first and most important being subjects relating to Values and Ethics, the second being the analytical tools and management techniques and finally, the third containing the theoretical subjects like Marketing and Human Resource Management. Thus while emphasis is on character building, secular education is also at par with other premier management schools.

And Swami's involvement did not stop at just framing the course curriculum. Like a mother who spends twenty four hours caring and nursing a new born child, Swami spent all His energy and time with the students and professors. What a great opportunity it was! In the words of Parthish Dubey , an alumnus now in UK , "In those days, admission into the MBA programme truly was a *Visa to Divine Proximity*."

The current Dean of the Management School , Prof. U S Rao, speaking in the divine presence on the MBA Anniversary Day in 2004 recalled the halcyon days of the management programme saying,

*“I fondly remember the early years of the management programme when Bhagavan used to visit the Institute almost every week and interact with students. He explained the Indian ethos and values and gave insights into all areas of management. Bhagavan has been continuously guiding the formulation of the structure and content of the management programme. Inputs in the areas of self awareness, Indian ethos and values and leadership were specifically introduced into the programme when no Management Institute had these as core courses. Bhagavan even guided the formulation of the content of the leadership programme and the types of leaders whose biographies should be read by the students to draw inspiration from and change their lives in the process. Bhagavan has explained the concepts of 'Reengineering' and TQM to the management students and asked us to incorporate them into the core courses of the MBA programme ten years back when no other management Institute had thought of introducing these into their core syllabus.”*

### **The Management Programme Evolves...**

Swami's continued involvement in the MBA programme over the years has been comprehensive and complete. From time to time He guided the professors and the faculty and there were changes to reflect the changing economic scenario of India and the world. In 1993 , the Master of Commerce Programme was scrapped and the Master of Financial Management (MFM) was introduced in its place. The Department of Commerce was merged with the Faculty of Business Management, which gave birth to the School of Business Management , Accounting and Finance (SBMAF), as it is now known. In keeping with the nomenclature requirements of AICTE and UGC (Government bodies), the MFM programme was rechristened as MBA (Finance) from the academic year 2004-2005. And at Swami's direction, courses like Integrated Rural Development and Rural Finance were introduced to cater to the requirements of the Indian economy.

The Ph.D programme at the department is also a decade old now. And the school has produced research work in topics ranging from International Finance and Corporate Strategy to Leadership and Value-based Management which have been widely acclaimed.

### **Distinguished Visiting Faculty**

The school has been amply blessed with a well qualified and dedicated core faculty drawn from various management schools and industry. The school is also well served by alumni choosing to stay and serve their alma mater after completing their Ph.D.

By divine design, the school has also been graced over the years with very distinguished visiting professors, both from India and abroad. Prof. Anantharaman, who is currently a faculty member, is also an adjunct professor in several business schools

including the Harvard Business School and Prof. Peter Pruzan, from Copenhagen Business School, Denmark are just a couple of recent examples from overseas.

Prof. Chakraborty and Prof. Srinivas Prakhya from Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow and IIM, Bangalore respectively are eminent professors from India. And these management gurus not only share their global perspective with the students but also inspire the young minds with their dedication and love for Bhagavan.

### **'Man Management' - The Central Focus Of The Program**

"Man Management" has been the major thrust and the uniqueness of the management programme over the years. A value based manager with character and confidence trained in people skills is the programme's goal. And it has done very well at that.

Dayasindhu, an alumnus currently in Bangalore, gives an inspiring anecdote which proves this point –

*"In a consulting assignment that I was a part of, there was an important manager in the client organization who was haughty. He would often taunt us with near abusive language. Our team was getting fed up with this attitude and meetings with this manager were a dreaded ordeal. Some of my colleagues were getting impatient and wanted to give it back in the same coin to the client manager. Some complained about the client within our company and wanted to be shifted out of the project. I was also thinking that this was probably the only way out. Then one morning I had a flash that maybe we could try to be extra nice to this manager and see if this helps in sobering his attitude. My colleagues dismissed this as an absurd idea. However, I felt there was nothing to lose if it could be tried for a day. Instead of avoiding this manager, I was smiling and wishing him. He was taken aback at first and then responded with muted acknowledgement. A few days later we were to meet him late evening, and I suggested that we could possibly do that next morning since he may want to spend the evening with his young son. The next morning there was a sea change in this manager's interaction with us. He turned out to be very supportive and cheerful. My colleagues felt that someone had cast a spell on the manager. In a figurative sense it was true that our beloved Swami was the one who could have orchestrated this. We later realized that he was frustrated with us since our project meant additional work for him that translated to spending less time with his young son. Since we were now sensitive to his personal time, he started treating us like trusted colleagues."*

'Man Management' is not just getting work done through others as one would normally understand. When Praveen joined the programme, he also thought so but having completed the course and now working in Hyderabad, has a wholly different view -

*"I realized, Man Management, was about managing oneself, discovering one's own inner self, realizing the fact that there is a greater purpose to life than what meets the eye. The various roles we live - of a son, a father, an employee, a boss - are vocations that we assume to discharge certain responsibilities but at*

*the same time each of us has responsibilities towards oneself - to know one self and to know what ones true goals are. I realized that this has always been the essence of what Swami has been telling us all the while. It is the key, this awareness."*

This is the kind of awareness that Swami brings about in every student. Each student is wholly a different person when he steps out of the Institute after the stipulated two years. With His complete involvement with the programme, Swami slowly but surely opens the hearts of the boys to dimensions of life which seldom others attempt. The Heart and Head, both are important, Swami says and moulds each student into an integrated personality who is an inspiration for others.

Narasimhan Venkataraman, who passed out just two years ago and now in Chennai provides testimony to this.

*"It was almost 9 o'clock in the evening when I was leaving office. A manager in the department in which I work for offered to drop me. While traveling in his car, he suddenly asked me, "Did you also study in Sai Baba's Institute at Puttaparthi?" When I replied in the affirmative he said, "I know a few of your college mates who work in our department". He then added, "You boys work smart. More than that, you all work silently". It was a revelation to me that in the crowded corporate world where a lot of people are busy blowing their own trumpets, people who work silently are really recognized. Working silently is what we all learn from our own Lord."*

### **Project Work - An Integral Part Of The Curriculum**

A project work during the second year of the course provides a great learning experience for every student wherein their theoretical knowledge finds practical fulfillment. And of course, many a time Swami is the one who guides the students in selecting their topics.

Shirish Patil, an alumnus from Mumbai, goes down the memory lane and shares how Bhagavan was his invisible guide –

*"During my second year of MBA (year 1997-98), all my classmates had decided to offer our project work at the Lotus feet of Bhagavan Baba. During the evening darshan, we kept all the projects piled up for Bhagavan Baba's blessings. My project work (Analysis of the Indian Petrochemicals Industry) happened to be the bulkiest and when Bhagavan Baba asked "Whose work is this?" I raised my hand; Bhagavan Baba asked me to hand over the project work to Him. As Bhagavan Baba went through the project, I knelt by His side (Bhagavan Baba stood between the two lions in the marble portico). He then said "You have made a mention of Rakesh Mohan Committee in your analysis," and before I could react, He turned the pages (about 150 pages) and straight went to that particular page and said, "See I told you" Then He asked- "Why should I have interest in what is written in your project work? I wanted to show you that I know everything!" I took Bhagavan Baba's Padanamaskar (salutations at His Feet)*



*and He then created Vibhuti for me. Thus every interaction and talk with Bhagavan Baba has its own significance. Everything He does or says is always for our own good, though we may not realize it immediately.”*

Every student has his own story. Swami’s guiding hand was always there whether the student realized it or not. Santhosh Pai, another alumnus from Mumbai, recollects how Swami came to His rescue:

*“This incident occurred during my management degree days at Prasanthinilayam. This is an event, which under normal parlance, may not be called as a spectacular one by others, but a significant incident which displayed His Grace for me. I belong to the Masters in Financial Management (MFM) batch of 1994-96. MFM students at that time had to submit a detailed Dissertation on a specific topic apart from the annual project. The process was more like a thorough research on the subject matter and submission of the findings and results at the end of the year. My topic was that of application of complex statistical cum financial models on corporates across industries, analyzing its impact and reasoning its findings. The rigors of the assignment were enormous and tough. Data was scarce, facilities limited and time was running out. It was a time when there was no concept of the internet and the data sources were basically printed or published materials available in libraries.*

*As the submission date neared, my pulse began racing. The dissertation was getting held up due to lack of specific required data and the support for analysis and interpretation. Frustration was mounting and I began to feel the heat. At this point for me there was only one solution – Bhagavan. I was in the habit of sending telegrams rather than letters and I did that. To my astonishment, from the very next day, the required data started flowing in from unexpected corners and sources. Some lesser known friends of mine from Mumbai started sending me the right kind of data and information. In no time, all data and information was on the table. One of the lecturers from the faculty, with whom I had very little interaction, came to me on his own one day, asked me on the progress of my dissertation, and offered to tutor me everyday and assisted me throughout, till its completion. All this seemed like a dream to me. All that was delayed and looked impossible for 11 months was completed to perfection, in one month, perfectly in time for submission. It was as if a strong gust of wind had blown off the dark threatening clouds. His Grace had worked wonders.”*

### **Industrial Visits - A Vital Part Of The Program**

At the end of the first year, the boys go for factory visits to a number of reputed organizations in the summer like Bharath Earth Movers Ltd, Biocon Ltd, Infosys, and so on. This provides them a vehicle to familiarize themselves with industrial problems, work processes and issues by seeing them first hand and interacting with top personnel in every organization.

In 1990, when the boys went to Chennai to visit industries, Swami also altered His own program to be in Chennai during that time to see that the boys’ visits go on smoothly and the learning process is complete. Many eminent personalities who came for

Swami's *darshan* there also shared their knowledge and experience with the 'prospective managers' in the divine presence.

Even now, every year Swami enquires with the boys at the end of each day of the factory visit, the companies they visited, the things that impressed them and the learning that happened.

### **Workshops – An Enlightening Experience**

Every management student gets to participate in at least two management workshops during the two year course as the school conducts one every year on a topic which is very current and relevant to the times. In 2005, for example, the Workshop was on "Service Sector in India – Building World-Class Organisations" and on "Leadership and Management of Change" in 2004.

And every year, the students have the privilege to listen to luminaries in industry and commerce like Sri Y V Reddy (Governor, Reserve Bank of India) , Sri Vijay Kelkar (Former Executive Director – IMF, and former Finance Secretary, Govt. of India), Sri Venu Srinivasan (Chairman, TVS Motors), Sri Shyamal Gupta (Tata Sons Board Member), Mr. Rajan Govindan (Ex-MD Bankers' Trust , USA ) and the like. It is a very educative and revealing experience for every student when they interact with people about whom they have only read in business journals and magazines.

### **Divine Lessons In Kodaikanal**

For many years, Swami used to take all the MBA students along with Him to Kodaikanal in the summer and spend a whole month with them, inspiring, teaching and touching their lives. Even now, the Kodai troupe predominantly consists of MBA students. Watching Swami at such close quarters is not only a great privilege and an enjoyable experience but also a great learning process for every student. Swami's life is His message and every act of His is an example, a lesson to humanity, if only we observe and absorb. As one alumnus from Mumbai, Gunaranjan, narrates -

*"One afternoon, during a lunch session, Swami, as usual, completed his meal early and started walking along the gangway created with students and devotees sitting on either side in the dinning hall. He talked to a few of these devotees and students, enquiring how a particular dish tasted and whether they would want more of the same and accordingly telling the people serving to serve more of that, or asking them how the food tasted or at times the Lord Himself would serve a few portions to the lucky ones. Sai was playing the perfect host. At the far end of this hall was a washbasin for hand wash after meals. As Swami was doing His rounds, He casually had a glance at the washbasin. His glance turned into a stare as He found that it was not clean and tidy. He slowly walked up to the basin, rolled up His sleeves and opened the tap to clean the washbasin with His hands. It was only when He stood long enough at the basin that everyone sensed He was doing something. Through this small episode, Sai reconfirmed His absolute priority to cleanliness and self-reliance and taught us to live by example."*

## **Interviews - Another Teaching Avenue For The Lord**

Often, Swami calls the management students for interviews and instills into them values that will be their guide throughout their life. As one alumnus from Mumbai reminiscences -

*"I recollect the interview which was granted to my class in the year 1996 (MBA Batch 1996-98). Bhagavan had commanded us to pose any question to Him. I had prayed to Baba saying "Please help us in our lives on a day to day basis." Bhagavan Baba looked at me apparently angry and asked "Do you know when I help you?" After a pause He answered His question Himself "You do not know". Thus at times we feel that it has been solely our effort due to which we have achieved success in our endeavors forgetting that it has actually been Bhagavan who has been helping us at each and every moment.*

*My mother used to tell me frequently that I should pray to Bhagavan every day. I would always reply to her, "I will do that only when Bhagavan Baba Himself tells me to pray" During my MBA, I was called by Bhagavan Baba for an interview along with my parents. Bhagavan Baba, after speaking to my parents turned towards me and said "I want to help you, but you do not pray to Me, so pray to Me!!"*

## **The Distinctive Traits Of A SBMAF Alumnus:**

One may think that for a hard-nosed professional course like the MBA, the students of the Sai Institute are too altruistic. But the fact is that there are successful students now spread all over the globe in almost every sphere of activity and many hold very responsible and prestigious positions in very reputed firms. There are alumni in IBM, Citicorp, Infosys, Wipro, Price Water House, Toyota Corporation, etc. And every student is making a difference in his own way. Each of them vouch for the great work ethic they have learned being with Swami. And there are umpteen examples to provide testimony to this fact.

### **Attitude**

Our attitude decides our altitude, is a famous saying. If in one word we have to describe the secret of Sai management students' success, it is the attitude. And the whole educational system (which includes the College, the Hostel and sessions with Swami in the Mandir) is geared to cultivate this right attitude in every student. As Ravi Chand, a former student says -

*"One subtle trait that all alumni of this Institute imbibe is predominant positive mental attitude. Ability to accept things as they unfold, positive will power and an ability to influence the environment that we operate in and continuously correcting our path to align with that shown by Bhagavan, ensures success for each one of us. Much success lies in detaching ourselves from the results of our*

*actions. Offering our actions completely to our Lord is the means to developing that detachment. I am sure that many of the about 700 MBA alumni from the Institute hold leadership positions in organizations worldwide and I recall Bhagavan's words that spoke of a day when most organizations would have leaders groomed in the wholesome environment of SSSIHL."*

### Sensitivity

Service to fellowmen has to be the cornerstone for every business activity, Swami has explained the boys many times. One day on the mandir portico during darshan, Swami asked one student, "What is your next Exam?" The boy said, "Swami, it is Marketing". Swami then asked, "What is Marketing?" The boy answered as per the textbook, but Swami was not convinced with the answer. Swami finally said, "Marketing is producing goods required by the society".

Every year in the month of October, all the students of the Institute participate in 'Grama Seva' wherein they go to the interior villages around Puttaparthi, knock at each and every door and distribute food, clothes and other items of daily use. Apart from giving them a first-hand experience of the joy of serving, it also sensitizes them to the suffering of their fellow brethren. This attitude of serving, of being patient and empathetic to the other person's views and problems is a priceless boon from Bhagavan and as one student from Mumbai confirms -

*"'Customer's Delight' is the desired level of service in every organization and this is something which comes very naturally to us as we have grown with the concept of service to mankind. Bhagavan has helped us towards a spiritual way of life at an early stage in life. That perhaps is one of greatest benefits as the perspective to life gets defined beyond mere career, fame or money. Life becomes a more meaningful journey".*

### Unselfishness and Teamwork

One of the very first management principles one learns in a management class is the principle of 'Subordination of individual interest for group interest'. If any organization has achieved the status of a role model, it is because few individuals could 'channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company...their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves,' says Jim Collins in 'Build to Last'. And this is something which the students of Sai Institute very easily relate to because the hostel provides a perfect training ground to cultivate this quality of teamwork. Damu Nair currently in U.S., recollects one such incident from his hostel life at Prashanti Nilayam –

*"It was during my stay in Parthi that we took a fascination to build mammoth structures for Annual Sports meets. Initially we made structures out of bamboo, paper mesh etc. and soon we graduated to making full fledged steel structures. On one occasion, due to non availability of professionals, and late delivery of materials we fell behind schedule on the fabrication of a structure. The structure to be made was a huge stage with two ramps on both sides and this was to be*

*the center piece of our inaugural session. Practice was to start the next day and we were left with just one night to finish the structure and no welder to do the job. With prayers in mind and hardly any knowledge of welding two of us with the support of our team started out doing the job. Into the wee hours of next morning and still no one wanted to quit. Many pairs of swollen eyes and many hours later, we had finished the structure. The splendor was that all of our team including the teachers in charge kept awake and gave us support and strength. This was probably known only to the handful of students who were present that night. Sure enough, in Parthi these are not isolated occurrences. Instances like these taught me the importance of team work and more so the drive to do things for the larger good.*

*During the hectic activities for the Convocation Drama or the Sports Meet, every one of us was driven by the single thought to please Bhagavan. To draw a parallel in daily work life, I have seen that it is easier to keep oneself motivated to work hard for the sake of the satisfaction that you derive from a job well done, rather than for any other worldly gains."*

### **The MBA Drama**

The most awaited day of the academic year is August 21st, termed as MBA Day! The memory of that red letter day is ever fresh in every student's heart for on that day the entire school gets together to stage a play for their beloved Swami.

Every year, it would be very special as Swami would visit the Institute Auditorium during the rehearsal of the play and spend a lot of time suggesting changes, inspiring the actors and enlivening the whole team.

The MBA Day was always a very extraordinary day even before the tradition of staging a play started in 1991. There was some event or the other, one year it was an exhibition, another year it was an enthralling music programme and so on.

Last year (2004), in a departure from tradition, the function was held in Sai Kulwant Hall (rather than the Institute Auditorium) to the joy of every devotee. And Swami made the day even more wonderful. He rose to speak at the end of the cultural programme to the pleasant surprise of every body assembled and enthralled every student when He said,

*"If you ask what is Swami's property, I say, "Students are My property." Without the students, I will not be able to do anything. They are looking after Swami with utmost love and care. In fact, they are responsible for all the development that we find in our educational and other institutions."*

### **Reconnect – The Upcoming Grand MBA Alumni Meet**

This year the MBA Anniversary Day is going to be a grand festival as it is the 80 th Birthday year of the Dearest Lord, and the eve of the 20 th Anniversary of the Management School. Labelled as 'Reconnect', it will be a first of its kind in the history of the management school. More than 630 out of 650 students who have passed till now

will gather at the lotus feet of Bhagavan in Prashanti Nilayam for a two-day meet on the 20th and the 21st of August.

It will be an occasion for them to express their collective gratitude to Bhagavan for they owe their success entirely to Him for He has made them what they are today.

It will be an occasion when they will reaffirm their devotion to Swami and reinforce their faith in the role of values in their professional and personal life.

It will be an occasion when they will share their experiences with their junior brothers currently in the Institute and counsel them on how they can make a mark for themselves when they go out into the wide world, away from the comfort of the hostel, the college and above all, the physical proximity of their dearest mother Sai.

It will be an occasion when they will discuss each area of management and give feedback to the faculty and suggest ideas to gear the management programme to face the modern day challenges.

It will be an occasion when they will relive their glorious days at the Institute and be nostalgic.

It will be an occasion to 'Reconnect' with the Lord's Love and His loving care and bask in His immediate physical presence.

A couple of years back, on the Valentine Day, students had prepared a beautiful card for Swami and when Swami came for Darshan that day, Vivekananda Sahoo, an alumnus from Noida, who was there holding the card, describes that memorable evening thus:

*He came walking down the lanes of our heart, gentle breeze playing with beautiful tresses, a bewitching smile hovering on His lips, joy twinkling in His eyes. Even nature wanted to celebrate this occasion of union with a beloved one, the moisture laden clouds burst forth in all glory. His words were as cool and soothing to the soul as the breeze caressing us.*

*Swami- "What is this card for?"*

*Boys- Swami today is Valentine's Day. And all we want in this world is Your love.*

*Swami- You love me or like Me?*

*Boys - We love You with all our breath and heart.*

*Swami looked at the card. It was like He was gazing deep into our souls and there it was written 'Forever yours.....Your Children'*

*There was a swell of tear forming in His eyes and He said, "You are mine and I am yours". And then He added with a smile 'Forever'."*

It is to relive such moments and bask in His love; it is to rediscover this relationship in a new light; it is to pay homage to such a loving, most likable Lord - is the unstated primary purpose of the alumni meet.

Can any university in the world dream of such a management programme where along with Total Quality Management - TQM, you also learn the triple qualities of Patience, Purity and Perseverance; where while you learn reengineering techniques in the classes, your whole personality is reengineered, slowly but surely, to face any challenge in life; where individual and fundamental discrimination is as important as analytical tools of management for managerial decision-making; ..this list can go on, let's come to the most wonderful and most profound aspect, where will you find the Lord Himself, the Divine Manager of the Universe as your personal Guru and Guide!

**- H2H Team**

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6. Sri Y V C S Vijay, SBMAF Alumnus.

## **FEATURE ARTICLES**

### **Develop Morality Quotient in Children – The Only Way to World Peace**

**Dr. Jhum Sai, a NASA Scientist and Director of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand, gave a very illuminating talk in the largest state of Mexico, Chihuahua, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 which was very well received and newspapers carried stories about it. Here we have the English version of a report of this talk which appeared in 'El Heraldo de Chihuahua', a Spanish city newspaper of Chihuahua on the next day.**

The only way to eliminate violence in the world

### **NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT OF MORALITY QUOTIENT IN CHILDREN**

- *Thai doctor Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya, philosopher and NASA scientist, promotes the Sri Sathya Sai philosophy at an international level*

The only way to eliminate the violence that permeates the world, is by modifying the traditional system of educating children in the schools, as well as at home because beyond forming individuals that are outstanding in mathematics, science, technology and the other usual subjects. What we need is to cultivate honest, upright, peace-loving and, above all, loving people.

The Thai doctor Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya, philosopher, Nasa scientist, advocator of the Sri Sathya Sai philosophy at an international level, said that in his Education in Human Values conference and provides concrete techniques for the teachers and parents in providing an integral education to children.

The specialist does not say that teachers should stop teaching math and other sciences, but at the same time, while they are teaching adding, subtraction, division and multiplication tables, to give priority to the values.

For example: to show how to subtract, a textbook from a primary school in Thailand has a picture of a farmer with ten cows and seven were stolen, then the question is, how many cows are left.

In this case, if the teacher does not explain that stealing is a dishonest act, that it is not right to do this, the children will think that it is a perfectly normal action.

On the other hand, if instead of that construction, the teacher tells them that the farmer has a son to whom he gives seven cows because he loves him very much, in addition to helping subtract, it will develop the value of love in the students,



In spite of the fact that the Thai doctor spoke in English, hundreds of people in the Ramiro Valles auditorium in the Accounting and Administration School at the new university campus, remained attentive during the three hours the speech lasted, from eleven in the morning until two in the afternoon.

Beyond developing intelligence, goodness should be cultivated in children, love for themselves and for others, because when they grow up they will do everything with an attitude of serving others.

What is the use of only developing a child's intelligence, if when he grows up he will be selfish and do bad things because he doesn't care about others?

Love is the basis of all human values because someone who loves himself and others, will have inner peace that leads to rectitude and to peace. Dr. Jumsai emphasized: "The person who loves cannot be violent."

In his opinion, education should form and strengthen the following values in the child: illumination, duty, devotion, understanding, character, action, gratitude, integrity, unity and nobility.

He recommends that teachers should be more interested in developing the child's MG (Morality Quotient) and the EQ (Emotional Quotient) than the IQ (Intelligence Quotient).

For the expert, who acts as consultant in education in values for the Thai Government, the school should be in constant interaction with the community.

Parents and society should be attentive to what happens in schools. They should know the teachers and know how they are teaching the classes, what and how they teach.

All the information the children receive is stored in their memory and remains in the subconscious, so if they are treated badly, when they are grown that information will come to the surface and they will want to take revenge or treat others badly, he explains.

To the contrary, if the child receives love, respect, gratitude and other values, as an adult they will treat others in the same way.

According to the doctor, the best technique for strengthening values is to control the five senses. "We do not always see and hear reality, everything is in our mind, if our mind is dirty, everything we see and hear will be dirty, we interpret everything and give it meaning," he said.

The key to good development is in giving love and understanding to the child so that he learns to think positively.

How can children be so violent, he asks, recalling the cases of students that have murdered their classmates in different U.S. schools.

There are studies that prove that those children saw during their lives at least 15,000 murders on their television screens. Surveys show that world-wide, children are in front of their televisions more than four hours daily.

"Children see a lot of violence on TV programs, they store it in their subconscious and then act it out," he indicated, emphasizing that, "This explains then why there are so many wars and so much terrorism in the world."

For this expert, man's enemies are within him and are very well identified: anger, lust, envy, greed, pride, hate, attachment, fear and anxiety.

## **ADVAITHA DARSHANAM GYANAM**

### **The Vision of Non-Duality is True Wisdom**

Our Swami, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, often declares “Advaita Darshanam Gyanam” in His discourses. We shall try to elaborate upon its significance, and gain some precious insight into this profound proclamation, through a series of such deliberations. The ancient seers, sages and rishis of the upanishadic times, like Yajnyavalkya, Astavakra, Vashistha, Gaudapada, etc., were all such men of highest wisdom.

### **The Gyani (or the Man of Wisdom)**

The Gyani, with this non-dualistic vision, reposes in the state of Being. He symbolises Being, Awareness and Bliss of the Atman (B-A-B-A). We use the term “Gyani”, generally referring to a man of wisdom, in several ways, and with different connotations, which do not truly convey the grandeur and the glory of the exalted one, who has realized the state of Non-Dualism or Advaita (also called Monism). For, it is only when one has the realization of the Atman, “the One without a Second” that one can be truly termed a Gyani and a sage. It is quite difficult to express in words, this pure non-dualistic state, which is beyond words, nay, beyond sound itself. It is in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the highest level of Samadhi (state of divine merger), that such a one, reposes, and symbolizes, true “Love” as spoken about by Swami.

Studying the mango is not the same as eating and enjoying it. Or, like “showing a pebble and saying, a mountain is million times its size” does not really convey the true vision of the mountain. One way of arriving at a humble understanding in some measure, is, to study what our Swami, as well as other great Masters of Monism, have to say.

### **Ways to achieve Non-Dualistic state**

#### **1. The Ramana Way**

Sri Ramana Maharishi, the great Gyani and seer of modern times, asked every seeker who came to him, to probe into the “Who Am I?” principle. The process of negation, of “Not This-Not this” (Neti-Neti) principle, is the direct approach in Gyana Yoga, and the individual discards all that is ephemeral, transient and changing (illusory), by realizing that he is not the body, the mind, the organs, etc., to arrive at the eternal Truth.

#### **2. The Simplified Ramana Way**

Our Swami puts this one basic question, in the form of 3 questions, for the benefit of the novice. Swami says “A Gyani is one who has found the answer to the 3 basic questions: “Where do I come from?, Who Am I? and Where do I go?”- The answer also Swami provides for our benefit: “I come from the Atman! I am the Atman! and, I go back to the Atman!”. “The Atman”, Swami says -“is One”, and therefore going and coming of the Atman does not arise! Swami says, this is the Absolute Being or Existence, the Non- dual state, not bound by time, space, cause and effect - The

Satchitananda. This, then is the Blissful state of a true Gyani. Swami says Love is God. This Love is none other than the Satchitananda nature of the Atman.

### 3. See Sai in All – The Easiest Way

Baba says “Brahman is Satchitananda while Maya is Satchitananda plus Name and Form (Nama- Rupa).” The Advaitist rises above this limitation of Name and Form, (caused by sense attachments) to realize the pure Satchitananda aspect i.e. the Brahman. One way to overcome this limitation caused by Name and Form, is for the seeker, (in this case, the devotee) to try and visualize Swami’s name and form in all that he perceives, as all names and forms finally merge in Swami. Swami being the Master of Maya and hence, of all names and forms. This way the senses are purified, controlled and sublimated. (Presence of the Avataar amidst us, elevates us profoundly, towards this realization).

### **Adi Shankara on Non-Dualism**

The great master of Non-dualistic philosophy, seer and yogi, Adi Shankaracharya, states - “*Brahma Sathyam, Jagat Mithya -Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Paraha*” - i.e. “Brahman is Truth, the world is an Illusion.” And that “The Jiva (or the individual) is not different from Brahman”.

This appears, contradictory to the views of the worldly man. For, the worldly man believes this world to be very real and the truth and God, appears to him as an imagination of fertile minds! The worldly man therefore clings to duality and the world of senses, which is of temporary and transient nature. As Shankara states “When Truth is known, where then is this world (of duality)? The question is:- if the Atman (or Brahman), is one without a second and It is all pervading, etc, the individual by itself would have no standing!

But this is not the fact, as Shankara’s explains further that :- the Jiva is not different from Brahman, provided it has shed its self-imposed limitations, attachments, illusory presumptions, prejudices, predilections, the transient individuality, ego, and negative thoughts. And thereby he develops Purity of the Intellect and the Mind, before he realises, through Divine Grace, the non-dual state of Advaita, which is the Jiva’s true and eternal nature. Swami sometimes mentions that He is the ‘Chitha- Chora’, i.e., the stealer of such pure minds and hearts!

### **Man’s Empty Fear**

This individuality is the great Maya or Illusion, to which man clings (consciously or unconsciously), while vending his way towards Truth through the process of self-purification. It is important to emphasize here that, the seeker, if not advanced or mature spiritually, will be afraid to lose his identity, and thus fail to plumb the very depths of his soul. For Example, observing the ‘not-this’, ‘not-this’ principle, of ‘I am not the body’, ‘I am not the mind’, etc. with the fearful thought and imagination of becoming “void” or “nothingness” (which is really a spiritual state of Being, Bliss and all that is

glorious). This basic fear of man towards dissolution of ego, is what makes him cling to duality and hence ignorance.

Man is bound basically by (not one), but eight types of pride and ego, says Swami. The ego, on its part is therefore very tricky. Along with the connivance of the mind, they enact and play a thousand tricks, to keep themselves alive, and the individual succumbs to these tricks, in moments of weakness and inadvertence. For, the ego wants to keep itself alive. Death of the ego, is nothing short of Liberation/Immortality. This is what is meant when Swami's says, "Love is selflessness."

### **Service – A Powerful Tool**

Service as spiritual practice is a very powerful tool, but this should result in purification of the mind and the intellect, and there has to be the erasement of the sense of doership on the part of the Jiva. "The one who serves, the one who is served and the act of serving - should become One," for complete fulfillment, or freedom from illusion. This way, the individual enters the final state of Consciousness (or Samadhi where there is perfect equanimity and perfect peace).

### **The Perpetual Enquiry**

The individual seeker, therefore needs to question at every stage - "Who is it that enjoys?", "Who is it that suffers?", "Who is it that serves?," etc. This is the inner quest and the constant enquiry that has to be done perpetually and persistently by the seeker. As Maharaj puts it "Liberation is not of the individual - but from the individual!" The Buddha has declared "The Buddha is not a person, but a principle!"

### **The Path of Wisdom – Not for the Weak**

The individual is perpetually caught in the vicious cycle of birth and death, ignorance, dualities like joy-sorrow, good-bad, etc, and falls a prey to the vicissitudes of life. Buddha's statement "*Sarvam Dukham, Sarvam Kshanikam, Sarvam Anathmam*" (meaning, all is temporary, full of sorrow and far from reality), applies totally in its state of bondage.

To dive deep within, overcoming these obstacles, (which are basically illusory in nature), and to arrive at the Truth, constitutes spiritual practice of the Gyana yogi (Spiritual aspirant on the path of wisdom), which is otherwise not possible for one who is "afraid." (Due to negative forces like body -consciousness, worldly desires and attachments, Swami says the path of devotion is easier, though slower). This only shows what great treasures are in store for one who is not afraid - for "This Atman cannot be realized by the weak" but by the brave, is the true scriptural statement.

It takes great courage on the part of the sincere seeker, (a courage that comes only with positive qualities of deep devotion, faith, selfless action, surrender, self-introspection, and self-purification), to delve deep within, in order to arrive at the Truth. As Swami says, "the winds of Grace are ever flowing, but the boat sails need to be

unfurled". One great quality of the man of wisdom therefore, is his state of utter fearlessness.

### **My Story is to make you 'Storyless'**

Let me end with Swami's glowing, parting words - "I bring you close to Me, so that your thoughts and mind are centered around Me, and your story becomes My Story!-- but My Story is to make you-- Storyless!"

This is the glorious ideal of the state of oneness, the vision of the non-duality, which every individual has to someday or the other finally realize, through Divine Grace!

- S. Suresh Rao  
Prashanthi Nilayam

## **HE IS EVER JOYFUL**

The good are always the target of malice and envy, slander and abuse from the wicked. Be assured that your goodness can be made tough enough to stand these ordeals. *Avathars* (or divine incarnations) too are not exempt from the attentions of these wicked forces.

### **Truth Always Triumphs**

Krishna had to encounter these obstacles from the very cradle, right up to the finish of His life on earth. Personal spite, false slander, unfounded abuse and defamation followed Him at every step. Demons who could not tolerate the Light and the Love that He cast around Him conspired to tarnish His Name and obstruct His Mission. They tried to bind Him, to foil His plans and pervert His instruments. But Truth triumphed and falsehood stood exposed and disgraced.

Truth may be clouded for some little time by the fog of slander but victory is certain. The forces of hate will be defeated by their own wiles; they dig for their own downfall; their action results in reactions, ruinous for themselves.

In the Court of Dhritarashtra (in the epic Mahabharata), the Kauravas (those who did not follow righteousness) planned to bind Krishna and put Him out of action when He went to His Court on the mission of peace; but what happened? The stratagem recoiled on themselves and they were destroyed. Krishna was unscathed by their wiles and their campaign of defamation.

When the Kauravas were indulging in their campaign of slander, many devotees were greatly distressed. For example, Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandava Brothers (who followed righteousness), welcomed Lord Krishna back to their camp, with the words, "I am not concerned at failure of your mission; I know that it is all part of your plan. But I am overjoyed that you have returned unharmed, from that nest of demons."

Krishna is undefeatable, ever pure, ever bright and ever effulgent in renown. Those who try to foil Him are forever tarred by their own blackness. The malignancy of those who cannot bear His Glory will cause their eternal disgrace; it cannot affect Him in the least. His Glory will increase a hundredfold with every challenge from these peddlers of slander. Wicked men tried to bring the Lord into disrepute by persecuting and torturing Krishna's devotees; but when they stood up to every challenge with joyful fortitude, they failed ignominiously. They gained vaster glory and the Lord's Truth was magnificently vindicated.

### **False Campaign – A Every Age Feature**

Persons who cannot tolerate the Glory of the *Avathaar* have indulged in such campaigns, in every Age! They have contributed to the heightening of the splendour

and the spread of the message, in every age. Their activities are all instruments to the propagation of the glory throughout the world.

Even today, such things happen; but all of you must recognise their inevitability and their fundamental falsehood, and carry on your spiritual practise in full faith and assurance, with undiminished enthusiasm and joy. The Sai Principle, the Sai Divinity can never be affected by any slander; it can never be shaken by any tactics; its progress can never be halted. Do not pay heed to the barkings you hear.

A stray dog stops and looks at its own shadow in the stream; it mistakes the shadow for another dog and starts barking aloud. This sets all the dogs in the neighbourhood, and later in the region, bark in unison. The reason why the first dog barked is its own ignorance of fact. The reason why the other dogs followed suit is that the first dog called the tune. A huge scare is built on a patent falsehood. Thus the story goes on, adding one thing to another.

Just as devotees remained unruffled in the Age of Krishna, you too must stand firm and be unaffected. Faith must endow you with courage and calmness. The life of Krishna teaches you this lesson more than others: do not lend your ears or mortgage your minds to purveyors of scandal.

### **Devotion to the Divine will give you prosperity**

Krishna had to meet these malicious slanderers and destroy them one by one, throughout His life. His parents, His companions, His devotees - no one had peace from that tribe of Kauravas. The message is that you must see the Truth that is covered by all the tales and legends that tarnish the Name.

Devotion to the Divine will give you bliss, and prosperity and peace. It cannot inflict pain, perturbation or personal anxiety. It fosters love and brings all together as one band of brothers. The *Avathaar* will not be affected in the least by these trivial tactics. It is love itself; so, it is always bliss, always happy in song and dance.

Krishna lived all His years singing and dancing in the ecstasy which was His very nature. He was humming a tune within Himself all the while, whether He was on a flower bed or a battlefield.

I too am unaffected by praise or blame. My bliss (or *Ananda*) never suffers diminution. Where there is love, there is *Ananda*; where there is *Ananda*, there is music. That is the reason why Krishna sang the *Bhagavad Gita* (the Celestial song) while the clarion calls to start the battle were rising from the serried ranks.

Love knows no fear, no untruth, no anxiety, no grief. I am love; I shower love; I share love; I am pleased with love; I bless that you have more and more of love to more and more Beings. Love is God, Love is Love—that is the message of Sri Krishna.

- *Bhagawan Baba on 10 Jun, 1974.*



## **SERIAL ARTICLES**

### **THE DIVINE STORY OF SHIRDI SAI PARTHI SAI - Part 8** (continued from the previous issue)

#### **ACT IV**

#### **SCENE 2**

The conversation between Venkusa and Mrs. Patel continues, with the *Guru* promising to take full care of his new student.

**GURU:** I shall certainly look after this boy. Adi Shankara's [*Adi Shankara was a great Sage who lived two thousand years ago; Swami often quotes his famous hymn, the Bhaja Govindam*] mother knew that he would leave her and felt depressed. However, realising that her son had been born solely to serve humanity, she reconciled herself to the separation. She was Shankara's physical mother, but this boy was not born to you. Yet, the love that you have shown him is extra-ordinary. You need not have any anxiety. You can go back peacefully, and without any worry whatsoever. From today, this boy will be a resident of the *Ashram*.

**MRS.PATEL:** I am happy Swami, I am happy. ....[*to Young Sai*] Come my boy.....You must pay careful attention to what the *Guru* says, and be good. I shall leave now. ...[*to the Guru*] Swami, I take your leave..... please bless me.

**GURU:** I shall, my dear lady.

*Mrs Patel prostrates before Venkusa and takes her leave, leaving Young Sai under the care of the Guru.*

**GURU:** [*to Young Sai*] Son, come here. .... [*to other disciples who now gather around him*] Students, this boy also has come to this *Ashram* to serve. From now on, he is one of you. His name is Baba. Tell him all about the *Ashram* and its routine. Help him in every way. Take good care of him!

**STUDENTS:** We shall, Master!

**BOY:** [*to Young Sai*] Baba, come here.

**ANOTHER BOY:** Baba, this way.

**BOY:** [*to another boy*] Take this box and come with us.

*The group of disciples lead Young Sai to the residential area of the Ashram.*

### SCENE 3

The disciples of Venkusa are all assembled for their daily instruction and spiritual training. Young Sai is also present.

**GURU:** Yesterday, you repeated the *Surya Namskar Mantra* after me. Today, you shall recite that *Mantra* all by yourselves.

*Students chant but make many mistakes.*

**GURU:** Stop! The very beginning is wrong. This is not what I taught you. You have to begin with the words: *Mitraya Namaha!* You can't chant *Mantras* just the way you want. Chant again, and in the proper sequence.

*Once again the group fumbles, and the Guru is not at all happy.*

**GURU:** It means that none of you have learnt the *Surya Namaskar Mantra* taught to you yesterday. Recitation does not mean merely moving the lips. *Mantras* that are chanted must be imprinted firmly in the mind.

**YOUNG SAI:** Master, if you permit, I shall chant the *Surya Namaskar Mantra* in the proper order.

**GURU:** Baba, you joined this *Ashram* only yesterday, did you not?

**YOUNG SAI:** Yes Master.

**GURU:** Well, let us see how you do. Go ahead and chant!

*Young Sai chants the Mantra beautifully without a single mistake. Venkusa is pleased.*

**GURU:** Baba, you have recited very nicely. When did you learn this and who taught you?

**YOUNG SAI:** Master, yesterday when you taught this to your students, I was listening. You were the one who taught me!

**GURU (to students):** Did you hear? He heard the *Mantras* that I taught you and imprinted them in his mind. Only the one with one-pointed concentration and the determination to acquire knowledge can achieve that goal. There can be no wisdom and knowledge if the body is one place and mind is in another. Such behaviour is most unbecoming of a student. This young one is much better than all of you. Come Baba. It is my good fortune to have you as my disciple! ...All of you! Go and memorise the *Surya Namaskar Mantra*. After that, attend to the *Ashram* duties. Go now. ....  
Baba, come with me.

*Venkusa and Young Sai go to the Guru's hut.*

#### **SCENE 4**

Years roll by. Sai Baba is now a young man. On account of His deep devotion, Baba becomes the favourite of Venkusa. The other disciples are jealous. One day, Baba is serving Venkusa in the *Guru's* hut.

**GURU:** Baba!

**SAI:** Coming, Master!

*Young Sai comes, bringing some fruits and milk for offering to the Guru.*

**SAI:** Master, please have some fruits and milk.

**GURU:** You have completed the daily worship, and have also duly chanted the *Gayathri Mantra*. After all this, you are now serving your Master. Baba, this is more than enough. You may go now; there must be so many *Ashram* duties you have to attend to.

**SAI:** Master, that does not matter. Please take rest. I feel so happy serving you! I regard service to you as a part of *Ashram* duties.

Meanwhile, jealous disciples are watching through a window, what is going on inside the hut.

**A DISCIPLE:** [*to one of his mates*] Do you see his luck?

**ANOTHER DISCIPLE:** If this sort of thing continues, we all have to quit and retire to the forest!

Inside the hut, the conversation between the *Guru* and his favourite disciple continues.

**GURU:** Baba, you are talking of service. Is there any reason for doing service?

**SAI:** The tree gives us wood, the lake gives us water, the flower gives us fragrance, and fruit offers itself as food; in so giving, none of these entities have any expectations whatsoever. Similarly, service does not require a reason. Service rendered without a reason need not be called service. One derives an inexplicable joy from such work, and also deep satisfaction. Master, are you not my mother, father, and God, all rolled into one?

*Outside the hut -*

**A JEALOUS DISCIPLE:** The disciple is teaching the Master, and the latter is listening to the instruction!

**ANOTHER DISCIPLE:** If the lizard is allowed to grow, it will develop into a huge iguana! We have to nip the problem in the bud.

*Inside the hut -*

**GURU:** [to Sai] My dear Disciple! How nicely you express yourself! You have said things pregnant with deep meaning. Your words are most thought-provoking. I like you most, not only among the disciples here, but amongst all those who have studied here. Thanks to the merits earned by you in your previous births, you are able to recite the scriptures fluently. Amongst all the strengths, that derived from the blessings of the Master is the best.

**SAI:** Most Revered Master! If you bless, I can verily see God in you!!

**GURU:** My blessings are always with you. You may now go and attend to your other duties.

**SAI:** I shall do so, Master.

## **GITA FOR CHILDREN**

### **Part 10**

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

#### **CHAPTER 5**

17. A puzzled Arjuna asks, 'I don't quite understand what You are saying. Please can You come again?'

18. With His eternal smile, Krishna replies, 'Of course. You see Arjuna, the *Yogi's* body and Mind function just like yours. But there the similarity stops. His body would always perform sacred actions. His Mind is always full of Pure thoughts.'

19. Arjuna asks, 'How does that happen?'

20. Krishna replies, 'Suppose there is a well. If you throw a pebble into the water, ripples are generated which then travel to the edge of the well. The *Yogi's* Heart is the well, absolutely Pure of course. If the pebble of good thought is thrown into this well, it generates ripples. When the ripples reach the edge that is the body, it results in good action.'

21. 'Arjuna, for the *Yogi* the *Atma* is in the driving seat. He as the *Atma* commands the Mind. The Mind then gives appropriate orders to the body and the senses; the net result is that there is perfect harmony between feelings, thought, word and deed. This really is what the so-called human values are all about.'

22. 'If you ask the *Yogi* as to who is acting, he would simply say, "I don't act; I am the *Atma*, and the *Atma* is just a Witness; it is the Mind and the body that act. As for me, I am not the body or the Mind." Notice he does not even use words like my body, my Mind, etc.'

23. 'The *Yogi* is speaking the Truth, though his way of talking might appear strange to ordinary mortals like yourself. I shall come back to this point later may be but for the moment let Me stay with what I was telling you a short while ago.'

24. 'The *Yogi* is not like a hibernating bear, absolutely still all the time. He may shun the pleasures of the worlds, he may be above desires, he may not want food, he may not experience hunger and thirst the way normal people do. In all such respects, the *Yogi* clearly belongs to a different species, if I might say so.'

25. 'Yet, such people do act in their own special way. They gather disciples around them and groom them carefully and patiently. Why? Because humanity always needs noble souls, and *Yogis* often take upon themselves the task of grooming such people. This is the service that they render to Society.'

26. 'You might ask, "OK, one *Yogi* produces ten others but of what use are they to Society? They keep to themselves and apart from Society. They may be wise but where is the action?" I shall answer that.'

27. 'True the *Yogis* stay with their students but they keep wandering and in their travels, they pass through many villages. Every time the party enters a village, the residents welcome them, extend hospitality to them and listen to discourses delivered by these Wise men. In this way, even *Yogis* serve Society.'

28. 'Arjuna, you must have heard the advice: Avoid Bad Company and Always seek Good Company. The wandering *Yogis* provide the good company that people need. These *Yogis* come as a breath of fresh air, sanctify the places they visit and reinforce the faith that simple people have in God.'

29. 'In short, if the *Karma Yogi* journeys from Action to Wisdom the *Sankhya Yogi* goes from Wisdom to Action.'

30. 'Suppose you want to make syrup. There are two ways of doing it. You could take a tumbler of water, add sugar and then stir. Alternately, you could first put sugar in the tumbler, next add water and stir. Either way the end product is the same. In a like manner, the two paths that I referred to earlier are completely identical as far as the final goal is concerned.'

31. 'Having said that, I should also point out that for you especially and indeed for 99.99999 % of humanity, the Path of Action is much easier to follow. It is a lot easier to go through life working for God rather than telling yourself all the time, "I am God, I am God...."'

32. Arjuna asks, 'Krishna, if it is so difficult, then how come the Wise man is able to say "I am God," and get away with it?'

33. Krishna replies, 'You must get one thing clear. The Wise man does not go about proclaiming to the world that he is God. Instead, he constantly reminds himself: "I am God in the essence. Therefore, I must do nothing that is contrary to my native Divinity. I must see only what is good, hear only what is good, speak only what is good and think only what is good! Further, I must see God in everything all the time".'

34. 'This is how the Wise man spends his life. He is immersed in Constant Integrated Awareness. In simple terms it means seeing God everywhere, in everything, all the time! In the process, he also sees the same God within himself, naturally,'

- To be continued

## **WINDOW TO SAI SEVA**

### **A NEW WAY TO SERVE**

#### **Sending Love Is the Basis of All Service**

Three of Sathya Sai Baba's most well-known teachings are:

- Serve the needy.
- Quiet the mind.
- Expand the heart.

Our group does a service project that integrates all these injunctions; we pray for missing children. This service came to us in a unique way, through a series of seemingly unconnected circumstances.

First, while I was answering calls for assistance referred to me by a local help organization, I met a couple, both physically disabled, who particularly longed to do something to help return lost or abducted children to their rightful homes. Then while I was watching the television show *There Is a Way*, I found myself listening to a guest speaker who was not only an author and lecturer but someone who rejoices in her awareness of Sai Baba's presence on the planet. Because of my experience with the couple, I was quite receptive to her message.

During the show, she described how one day a friend had called her and asked for help in a frightening situation. The friend's ten-year-old daughter had disappeared, and no one had a clue as to what might have happened. Although she was not a psychic, the speaker had decided to spend time in silence, listening for guidance on how she might be of service. After five days and five nights, she had still received nothing and was about to give up when she decided to continue a little longer. Within a few hours, she heard quite clearly the names of three men, the make of a car, and an instruction to call the child's parents.

As instructed, she asked the parents to think the most loving thoughts possible about those three men - to put them in the light of God. Both mother and father began immediately to do as asked [although that must have been the most difficult task these two people had ever undertaken]. The parents thought about the men the three names represented, declared them to be children of God, and recognized that in their true spiritual identity they were lovable and loving. After forgiving them for their mistaken behavior, the parents sent many loving thoughts their way.

*A Course in Miracles* tells us that every attack is a plea for love. Those men were begging for love in the only way they knew how. In sending love, the parents gave them what they had so desperately needed. The results were truly miraculous.

Before the police were able to find the men, the little girl walked into a police station and told the officers there her story.

She said that she had been abducted by force, locked in a dark room, mistreated, and threatened. Suddenly, she said, the men unlocked the room, asked her forgiveness for the way they had treated her, and took her to the car. They drove to a corner just one block from a police station and told her to get out of the car. The police, they said, would return her to her parents. She just had to walk to the station and go inside. This she did, and the outcome not only corrected the immediate situation affecting one family but established a clear procedure useful for every discordant situation.

After hearing this story, our group made a commitment to send loving thoughts regularly toward all the missing, hungry, and abused children in the world. We each participate in this "Bring Home the Children" project according to our own schedule and in our own way. However, many of us find it helpful to start by directing love toward a specific child. Hardly a day passes that we do not see a picture of a missing child, if not in our own mail, then in some public place. After we have surrounded the child with love and God's light, we expand our hearts to include the child's parents, friends, and relatives. We also include the abductors, if any are involved, recognizing that they are expressions of divine love, no matter how mistaken their behavior may be. Then we gradually broaden our love until it includes all children and all humanity in one embrace.

Anyone can do this spiritual exercise. It takes only a few moments and requires no financial resources. Since physical strength is not necessary, this service is not exclusive to the young or the healthy.

All we have to do is LOVE. Sathya Sai Baba tells us, Love is the solvent for the hardest of hearts. He also says, See God in everyone, even in people you regard as enemies. Seen through the eyes of love, all beings are beautiful, all deeds are dedicated, all thoughts are beneficial, and the world is one vast family. Love is the best foundation for service. Think love. Send love. Be love. Love is the highest power. Love is God.

— Joy Thomas

(In Memoriam)

**Author's Note:** In a discourse given at the All India Sai Active Workers' Conference on November 21, 1987, Baba said, *Those who wish to serve society . . . must undertake service activities according to their own capacity.* After contemplating this statement, many devotees have acted in ways that can potentially bless thousands of sick, elderly, infirm, and homebound persons. Some, like me, have begun working in convalescent hospitals and retirement homes. In doing so, I have noted that the greatest pain suffered by the residents is their feeling of helplessness and uselessness. Some perform repetitive hand motions; some carry dolls or stuffed animals that they pretend to care for; others just stare blankly into space. Alfred, Lord Tennyson put the feeling into words succinctly: "How dull it is to pause, to make an end, to rust unburnished, not to shine in use."

*Courtesy: Sathya Sai Newsletter, USA, Vol 28, Number 5*



## **SEVA IN CHHATTISGARH**

Chhattisgarh is a central state in India which was carved out of the state of Madhya Pradesh in Nov 2000. It has sixteen districts and one of its districts is Durg. On 21st June 2005, the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation from Durg District had come to Prashanti Nilayam to receive the blessings of Bhagawan. They had performed village service in over 360 tribal villages and Swami, in the Sai Kulwant Hall, saw their report very mercifully.

They also came with the Chhattisgarh Panthi Folk Dance Troupe who gave a delightful performance for Swami and the devotees. It was a scintillating performance. They have performed this in 64 countries and won many international awards.

Village service is very dear to Swami's Heart. And no wonder Swami was very happy with the programme, their devotion and service. The service activities undertaken by them in the tribal areas of Chattisgarh include providing a bore well to Chetuva village, providing sewing machines to the unemployed in Nankat Village, Medical Camp being conducted in tribal villages, Cool Drinking water being provided in the Bhilai Railway station for the public in the summer, Group Marriages being performed in the Nankat village by Sai devotees, Narayana Seva being done for the village children by sevadals, etc.

### **Swami's Guidance on Village Service**

Now, We would like to present to you Swami's guidance on village Seva which He gave at a rural service workshop for Seva Dals in 1986:

***"Service rendered to villagers, who are denied the ways and means of decent lives, draws Divine Grace, more than service elsewhere. Give a helping hand to the helpless, who are afflicted with many ailments and handicaps.***

*But, before attempting to advise them, you must endeavour to advise yourselves; before venturing to reform them, reform yourselves. Care must be taken to avoid boasting before them about your superiority. It will hurt them and keep them away. Do not indulge in lectures. Action alone can inspire action. Example alone can instruct. Tall talk is a barren exercise.*

*Service activities in all lands can thrive only through selfless dedication. Fanfare is a sign of insincerity. Silent, unsullied work alone can appeal. The villager has enough common sense to see through the show. Remember that, though illiterate, he is aware of the ideals propounded by the scriptures, saints and sages of this land, of the core of Bharatiya Culture. Clever propaganda may achieve some temporary results but, in the long run, it will bring disappointment and disillusion. Like the 'rockets' lit by children on Deepavali night, it will flare up and fizzle down.*

*Today, we are confronted everywhere by statistics parading quantities and reports in glowing terms. Do not bother about adding to the number or achieving a target. I value quality, not quantity. **Genuine, intensive devoted service offered in a few villages is more fruitful than casual contacts and superficial service offered to a large number.***"

- Divine Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium on 21-11-1986 .

## **AID TO THE HANDICAPPED**

### **Sai Seva in Salem**

A solemn function was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Salem District of Tamil Nadu, the southern most state of India on the 4th of June, 2005. Accessories and Aids were distributed to physically challenged persons at Sri Satya Sai Community center, Salem by Sai devotees. Lot of preliminary work was under taken by the members of the organisation to identify physically challenged persons of various categories like Hearing Impaired, Visually Challenged, Physically Challenged people requiring Artificial Limbs, Calipers and Crutches. Patients requiring artificial limbs were taken to Trichy Multipurpose Social Service Society for necessary measurements and production of appropriate equipment to fit their limbs.

Hon. District Collector of Salem, Sri.A.Sukumaran, IAS was the chief guest for the function, which in addition was attended by the State President and other local dignitaries. Rev. Father John Peter, Director of Trichy Multipurpose Social Service Society, was also kind enough to Honor with his presence on this poignant occasion. The entire function was heart warming and emotional when the physically challenged persons received the accessories and aids.

#### **Details of the Accessories and Aids Distributed**

Hearing Aids for hearing impaired	9 Nos.
Walking Sticks for Visually Challenged	30 Nos.
Crutches	7 Nos.
Calipers	25 Nos.
Artificial Limbs (Hand)	9 Nos.
Artificial Limbs (Legs)	20 Nos.
Tri - Cycle	2 Nos.
Wheel Chair	1 No.

The chief guest complimented the Sai Saveks and the Sai Organisation for this humane activity organized by them and assured of his active support in all the service activities of the organization to be held in the district in future. The programme came to an end with offering Maha Mangala Arathi to Our Bhagavan. Narayana Seva was arranged for all the participants.

## **PRASHANTI DIARY**

### **Chronicles of Heaven on Earth**

Swami returned to Parthi from Brindavan on June 18, 2005, in the afternoon. The Lord Who is the Master of Time, did not waste any time in giving an invigorating Divine Discourse on Seva activities to be performed in the drought affected villages of the region the very next day.

#### **JUNE 19, 2005: A DIVINE DISCOURSE**

In Sai Kulwant Hall, in the afternoon of June 19, 2005, Swami said, "In Bharat, of late, we have been coming across a number of problems. This is quite natural. But it is our responsibility to enquire and investigate. In the last couple of months there have been a number of problems and obstacles that have caused a loss of happiness and bliss to people. More than our studies, our actions are important. We must necessarily make an effort to improve the existing situation.

There is no water to drink. Earlier we have taken every care to supply water for drinking. Now the problem is very severe and has spread all over Anantapur District. We are not born merely to earn a living, we do not study merely to fill our stomachs; all that we have learnt must be put into practice to serve our fellowmen and community.

We have to realise the plight of the people in every district. We must first convince ourselves and then share with others the Supreme Will and Mystery of God. Food should be served when one is hungry. One must determine to undertake the task though it may be strenuous. Service cannot be done by wealth alone. We need men of character. Foreigners too will be participating in this mega service programme.

We have to supply drinking water to every village. The problem does not end there. We must supply food too. All aged 10 years and above must participate in this programme. We must be determined to accomplish the project in its entirety. Temperament and attitude is very important".

(Editors note: Currently planning for the project is almost complete and the project will commence as soon as Swami gives His blessings.)

#### **JUNE 20: A DRAMA BY THE ORPHANAGE BOYS - "LOKA SAMASTHA SUKHINO BHAVANTU"**

On June 20, on the third anniversary of the Sri Sathya Sai Deena Janodharana Pathakam (Swami's orphanage), the inmates presented a program to express their thanks to Bhagavan for waking them up from a life of destitution to His benign, soothing lap and giving them a new life altogether.

On this day, they presented some of Swami's wisdom imparted through precepts and parables by means of a dance drama, dedicated with reverence at His Lotus Feet. They used Potana's (a great poet from Andhra Pradesh) prayer poem, *Evvani che Janinchu*, to set the tone of total surrender in the presentation.

Reverberating to the under current of a drum beat (to warn of the futility of running after riches), the drama was an eclectic mixture of songs, dances, *Burra Katha* (a popular Telugu rural folk art of story telling) and short skits. The well rehearsed drama effectively brought out Swami's main teachings on the importance of *Satsang* (good company), *Namasmarana* (Continuous recitation of the Lord's name), Morality (Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows) through effective short skits.

The last skit of a fisherwoman who pulls out a boy from the sea and brings him to the local doctor who even refuses to see him as he is otherwise occupied in the paper currency chase. The boy (who dies because of the lack of timely help) turns out to be the doctor's own son. Sai's *vibhuti* however brings the young boy to life and also kindles the flame of service in the now reformed doctor.

All the 62 inmates participated in the drama. After the drama, Swami called the children to Him (scene by scene) and profusely blessed them all.

## **JUNE 21: A FOLK DANCE BY VILLAGERS FROM CHHATTISGARH**

The Sathya Sai Seva Organization from the district of Durg in the Indian State of Chhattisgarh in India have adopted a few villages in their immediate area for service activities like providing drinking water, conducting medical camps, distributing clothes and blankets to the poor and needy, renovating temples, and conducting group marriages. The people from these villages along with the Seva Dals from the area came on a 'Parthi Yatra' (Pilgrimage to Parthi) to express their grateful homage at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet.

As part of their celebration they performed a folk dance from the heart of Chhattisgarh called "Panthi Nritya", before the Lord. It was performed by a tribal group called Satnamis. The various dance postures depict how the dancers worship their guru Sant Ghasidas. Their dance master Sri Dev Das Banjare has received many national and international awards and has performed in 64 countries. Swami was deeply engrossed at this vibrant fast paced dance with a rural flavour that included loud drum beats and cymbals, which lasted for about 30 minutes.

After the dance, the leader of the troupe Sri Srinivas, briefed Swami about their service activities. Swami looked through all the photographs and asked him details about all the seva activities for a full 20 minutes. "*Chala Santosam*" was the divine response at the end - "Very Happy", and it brought broad smiles on the faces of all the Seva Dals.

The devotees of Chhattisgarh also had the opportunity to perform the *bhajans* for Swami that evening.

## **JUNE 23rd: TALKS BY SRI ANIL GOKAK AND SRI S.V.GIRI AND AN UNEXPECTED DIVINE DISCOURSE**

Bhagavan was out in this evening at 4.00 p.m. He stopped the Vedam chanting at 4.05 p.m. and commanded Prof. Anil Gokak - the current Vice Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute to speak a few words.

Prof. Gokak stated his talk by recalling the early part of his father's life (His father Dr. V.K. Gokak was the first vice-chancellor of the Institute). He also went down memory lane and stated that Bhagavan had extended his mother's life by 18 years and his father's life by 5 years. Continuing he related how he came to Swami's fold. Referring to Swami's social projects, he aptly referred to Bhagavan as a 'Vedantic Socialist'. He concluded his talk by drawing an analogy between an Avatar and a pilot who temporarily brings down his plane to the ground to take a few passengers and then return back to the skies!

Swami next commanded Sri S.V. Giri, the former Vice-Chancellor to share his thoughts with the audience. Sri S.V. Giri also struck a personal note talking about the heart surgery that he had for the first time in 1989. Over time, though another 4 of the 5 heart passages had been blocked, Bhagavan had said there was no need for any further surgery. And he has been continuing to discharge all his responsibilities - purely on account of Bhagavan's Grace!

He then shared how Swami had made sure that his resignation from the post of the CVC (Central Vigilance Commissioner) - Government of India was accepted without any complications. Sri Giri stressed on the three most important facets of this Institute - Service, Society and Faith. He concluded his talk by stressing on the Truth elucidated by our scriptures that all is one.

Next to the delight of all Swami gave His Divine Message. Mikes were soon kept in place. Swami asked all the students to come closer and naturally they were most happy, climbing all the way right up the steps. Swami, in His discourse, initially described in elaborate terms the spiritual journey of Prof. Vinayak Gokak - the father of the current Vice-Chancellor and the first Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher - to Swami. Swami elaborated on how He helped Sri Gokak understand the difference between Atma and Anatma, Sathyam and Nityam and helped him realize the Eternal Truth.

Swami also said that when *Vyashti* (individual) identifies himself with *Samashti* (community), only then can he realise *Parameshti* (God). It is very difficult to understand *Parameshti* which is beyond both *Vyashti* and *Samashti*. There will be harmony between *Vyashti* and *Samashti* when one develops equanimity. *Vyashti* i.e. the individual constitutes *Samashti*, the community and *Samashti* is the collective form of *Vyashti*. One who understands this relationship between *Vyashti*, *Samashti* and *Parameshti* (God) can know the truth. We can understand the reality only when we transcend worldliness. Total change cannot come instantly. Gokak understood and held on to this truth fully well and forgot everything else, Swami said.

## **JULY 4: THE ONLY ELEMENT- A DRAMA BY DEVOTEES FROM REGION X, USA**

The Sai Spiritual Education Children from the Texas region of USA put up a drama to celebrate the Independence Day of the United States. The North American continent before it was "discovered" was home to the Native Americans who respected Nature and worshipped the 5 elements as life sustaining forces and as the Great Spirits.

The play was inspired in part by the history of this culture by drawing on the story of the celebration of Thanksgiving. The early pilgrims who arrived tired, cold and hungry, from across the seas were well received by the natives. They gave them seeds to plant and helped them settle down in their adopted land. Next autumn, when the pilgrims had a bountiful harvest, they decided to offer thanks to the Lord for the bounty and invited the natives to join them in the celebration. This was the first American Thanksgiving, and it is still being celebrated, though the people in the cities and towns have lost touch with Nature and the Elements. In the present day, Thanksgiving in America is an occasion for families and perhaps close friends to get together to celebrate with food and plenty.

The story revolves around 2 boys - Shawn (from a good, affluent family that however has lost touch with the hardships faced by the poor) and Sid (whose affluent family serve the poor and needy as service to the Lord Himself).

After one Thanksgiving Day feast, Shawn goes with Sid's family as they serve food to the homeless at the downtown shelter and has an intriguing experience. Realizing the bounty of the gift of food provided by Mother *Earth*, he goes on to serve a thirsty person *Water*, gives a blanket to a shivering person (*Fire*), and a fan provides *Air* to a person wilting in the heat; all this happens in the space (*Ether*) created by God.

This brings home to Shawn the connection between service and the five elements that make up the entire Universe. Above all, the *seva* experience makes Shawn evolve and realize that the Only Element is LOVE.....

## **JULY 18: ASHADA EKADASHI CELEBRATIONS**

**THE MORNING PROGRAM: Drama "God Is The Only Friend" By The Bala Vikas Children Of Mumbai.**

Drawing inspiration from their proximity to the film industry in Mumbai, popularly known as "Bollywood", the kids bring out that man today lives in the delusion that he is the doer. The true reality however is that the doer is someone infinitely more powerful... more effulgent...more grand...God Himself.

The story revolves around Amit Kumar, a "hero" (a leading man) in the film industry who is currently riding tall on the crest of the success of his latest movie at the box office. This brings him numerous accolades and of course the fair weather friends and sycophants, who praise him and his abilities to the sky.

Though Amit always starts his new ventures with a prayer to the Lord, he however believes he is infallible and that he can do everything. Predictably, the next venture

"Dost" (into which he has sunk all his life savings) fails miserably at the box-office in India and he is staring at total ruin. All his friends desert him and he is thus totally alone.

This is when God (Who has been in the back-ground all the time) enters his life and shows our hero, that in life God is the only friend. Amit realizes the error of his ways swiftly - that the real doer is God and that man is only a witness. The story ends on a happy note in that Amit's picture does well at the box-office abroad thus saving Amit from ruin.

With gorgeous film style sets, fast foot-tapping songs and colourful vibrant dances, it was certainly a different fare than what is normally seen in Sai Kulwant Hall, but one that resonated well with the crowd and drove the point home. The organizers additionally provided a wrist band inscribed with the words "God is the only friend" so one could also literally take the message home.

THE EVENING PROGRAM: Drama "Krishna-Uddhava" By The Bala Vikas Children and Youth Wing Of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations, Nagpur

In the evening there was another rich feast in store, continuing with the same theme of friendship with the Lord, offered by the children of Nagpur - a musical ballet entitled "Krishna-Uddhava".

'Krishna-Uddhava' depicted the saga of the unique love and friendship that existed between Uddhava and Krishna. Even from childhood, Krishna was Uddhava's dearest friend and his very life-breath. Krishna too reciprocated by the words,

*"Na thatha me priyatham aathmyonirna shankara*

*Na cha sankarshano na shri naivaatma cha yatha bhavaan'.*

'O Uddhava, Siva, Brahma, Balaram, Lakshmi and even my very own  
Atma are not as dear to me as you are'.

The musical ballet brought out tenderly how right from a very early age, Uddhava yearned from the innermost recesses of his heart to make Krishna his best friend. Sitting, lying, walking, sleeping, talking, eating and playing with Krishna, Uddhava lived as Krishna's shadow - two bodies with one heart as it were.

One day Krishna sends him to visit His parents in Brindavan and also to bring solace to His dear devotees - the Gopikas. Uddhava, who was a *Jnani* - a man of wisdom, was rather proud of his learning and knowledge so Krishna wanted him to experience the all encompassing bliss that could be derived from the total surrender and love of the Lord. From the simple cowherd maids, the Gopikas, the learned Uddhava witnessed, experienced and learnt *Bhakthi* or total devotion to the Lord.



In the final scene, known in the Bhagavatham as the Uddhava Gita, Krishna helps Uddhava realize his oneness with the Lord. He gifted him His Padukas, or divine sandals, the symbol of the Divine Lotus Feet and the ultimate goal of all devotees.

The musical ballet ends poignantly by inspiring all of us to grasp this opportunity and make Sai our dearest friend.

## **JULY 19, 2005: EASWARAMMA WOMEN'S WELFARE PROJECT (EWWP) INAUGURATION**

### **THE MORNING PROGRAM: Swami Inaugurates The EWWP**

On Ladies' Day, 19th November 2004, Swami inaugurated the Easwaramma Women's Welfare Project. As a follow-up to it, with Swami's infinite Grace and Blessings, the Easwaramma Womens' Welfare Trust was established to benefit women at large. It was founded on the teachings of Bhagavan to reach out to the problems of women in a meaningful way, and bring peace and comfort, without any distinction of religion, caste, colour or creed.

Under the auspices of the Easwaramma Womens' Welfare Project, a Mother and Child health care programme will be offered in villages on a regular basis providing the foundation for a healthy society. The programme is initially operational in the villages in and around Puttaparthi with the scope slowly expanding to include a growing number of villages. The Mother and Child programme will schedule monthly visits to villages and include trained doctors, nurses and volunteers. The groups will be equipped with all the necessary equipment to conduct pre-natal checkups for monitoring the health of the mother and foetus, provide nutritional supplements and education on health care during pregnancy.

Additionally, the Easwaramma Self-Help Programme for women seeks to empower women to achieve self-reliance and to provide a means of steady livelihood and thereby improve the health and quality of life of women and their families. The programme will train women in making a variety of useful and saleable products using locally available and environmentally friendly raw materials for sustained development.

On the morning of the 19th, Swami came to inaugurate the premises of the Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust. Spending over half an hour, He visited all the rooms in the building and listened with interest to the presentations and blessed all the aspects of the programme including the Mother and Child medical van parked right outside. After taking *arathi*, Bhagavan left to give *darshan* to the devotees assembled in Sai Kulwant Hall.

### **THE EVENING PROGRAM: Concerts By Renowned Women Artists**

The afternoon served up a delectable feast of music to please everyone's heart by two of the most renowned artists of India. Featured were Vidushi Sumitra Guha singing Hindustani - the classical music of North India and Ms Bombay Jayashri Ramnath singing Carnatic Vocal Music widely prevalent in Southern India.

Vidushi Sumitra Guha hails from Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh and is a disciple of the great Pandit A. Kanan and Vidushi Malobika Kanan. Smt. Sumitra Guha was accompanied on the *tabla* by Annirudh Mukherjee, on the flute by Rajesh Prasanna, on the *manjira* by Shoubik Mukherjee. Ms Padmaja Chakravarthy accompanied her on the harmonium and Shrabani Mukherjee on the *tanpura* rounded off the group. The spontaneity of her rendition, the depth of her style, the sweetness of her melody and above all the passion in execution left everyone in raptures and lifted them well above the mundane and petty problems of daily life.

Ms Bombay Jayashri Ramnath was groomed in her initial years in Carnatic Music by her parents. Later, under the tutelage of Smt. T R Balamani, Jayashri took to the path of pursuing her music seriously and added substantively to her repertoire. In 1989, she had the rare privilege of enrolling herself as a disciple of the legend Shri Lalgudi G Jayaraman. Harnessing a facile and mellifluous voice with great restraint and dignity she presented her music with a rare charisma which had the audience spellbound. Her voice flowed like dew drops on a new leaf and easily made the audience forget themselves and the hot muggy afternoon. Ms Ramnath was accompanied by V V S Murari on the violin, Poongolum Subramaniam on the *mridangam* and Jayalakshmi Sekar on the *tamboora*.

But more was yet to come. Seeing Smt. Parveen Sultana in the audience, the divine finger went up and beckoned. Smt Sultana, another great exponent of Hindustani music, came forward and gave obeisance at the feet of the Lord. He very sweetly blessed her by asking her to sing for the audience. He also called her husband and blessed him profusely. Being very happy at this unexpected bonus, Smt Parveen Sultana seated herself next to Vidushi Sumitra Guha, borrowed a *tanpura*, and quickly tuned it to her satisfaction. A few hurried words and instructions to the accompaniment and she gave a soul-stirring rendering of 2 or 3 songs that was like the icing on the cake.

But all good things have to end, and so did that mesmerising afternoon. The audience was so entranced that most of them were reluctant to leave the blissful atmosphere in Sai Kulwant Hall created by the musicians.

## **JULY 20: GURUPOORNIMA CONCERT BY THE SAI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

The Sai Symphony Orchestra, comprising of 59 musicians from 17 countries, performed a concert of Western Classical Music in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the eve of Guru Poornima - July 20, 2005, in Sai Kulwant Hall. The orchestra, led by Swiss conductor Klaus Maurer, prepared this challenging program in only five days. The members of the orchestra met the challenge and performed as a unified group, epitomizing Bhagavan's message of unity in diversity.

The one-hour program opened with the *Marriage of Figaro Overture* by Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This lively work conveys excitement and anticipation, appropriate for the thousands of devotees gathered to celebrate Guru Poornima. The next selection was the last movement of *Symphony No. 7* by the German composer Ludwig Van Beethoven. This work conveys determination, a strength that comes from unwavering faith in God. Next came the tuneful and humorous

*Italian in Algiers Overture* by Italian Giacomo Rossini, a work that features the tiny flute, the piccolo. The piccolo represented the young Krishna, as He stole butter and played with His friends. Then the orchestra played two *Slavonic Dances* by Czech composer Antonin Dvorak. Dvorak's music was inspired by the songs and dances of the peasants of the Czech countryside. Another piece by Beethoven followed, this time the 4th movement of his famous *Symphony No.5*. The *5th Symphony* expresses Beethoven's personal struggle with adversity, culminating with his ultimate victory as expressed in the 4th movement. The final work on the program was the *Boda de Alonso* by Spanish composer Geronimo Jimenez. This music, with its strong Spanish dance rhythms and the wonderful percussion instrument colours, expressed the musicians' happiness and gratitude for being given this precious opportunity to perform for Swami.

At the conclusion of the concert, Swami was very happy with the orchestra, and asked that the orchestra play more. The orchestra responded with a joyful and spirited repeat performance of the Jimenez *Boda de Alonso*. Swami blessed the conductor by speaking to him for many minutes, materializing a gold chain for him, and posed for photographs with him. It was indeed a joyous occasion for every musician. The orchestra looks forward to performing a new program of music for Swami in November as part of the 80th Birthday celebrations.

## **JULY 21: THE GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATIONS**

### **THE MORNING PROGRAM - 4 Speakers And The Divine Discourse**

Bhagavan arrived in the fully packed Sai Kulwant Hall at 7:30 a.m. to the accompaniment of *Nadaswaram*, *Panchavadyam* and *Veda* chanting. After blessing the devotees Bhagavan took His seat on the dais specially decorated for the occasion.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse was preceded by inspiring speeches by Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations; Dr. G. Venkataraman, Former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning; Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and a student of II year M.B.A., Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Sri Srinivasan touched upon the significance of the Guru Pournima celebrations and said that Guru Pournima is the day when we receive transcendental vibrations from the Sadguru, our beloved Swami. Stating that His universal love encompasses the whole of humanity, he stressed that all that we need to do is develop faith in Him.

The next speaker, Prof. G. Venkataraman highlighted the roles of the Guru and the Sadguru and its importance in the present times when the world is marred with strife and conflicts. Prof. Venkataraman, quoting Bhagavan, mentioned that the role of a Guru is to scrub and clean our hearts to see that it shines forth with the wisdom that is latent in it. Let this day remind all of us these ancient truths encapsulated in our holy scriptures, Prof. Venkataraman reiterated.

The student speaker narrated incidents from the stories told by Sri Ramakrishna and anecdotes from Sage Narada's life to stress the importance of the power of God's name. The student, echoing the great significance of the physical proximity of

Bhagavan, urged the gathering that it is the duty of each and every devotee that he or she imbibes the teachings of Bhagavan and put the same into practice in everyday life.

The last speaker - Mr. Anil Vinayak Gokak, in his enlightening speech gave a glimpse of the role of Bhagavan as the Supreme Guru. 'Gu' is *Gunatheetha* and 'Ru' is *Rupa Varjitha*; Formless and Attributeless. The difference between the Guru and the Teacher is that the teacher imparts knowledge whereas the Guru imparts impulses which are transformational in nature. He urged the devotees to review, to introspect as to where one stands and the extent of progress one has made in their spiritual journey.

Bhagavan started His divine discourse talking about the consequences of one's actions. He said, "People may act as they please, but they cannot escape from the consequences of their actions. Whether he is a *pamara* (simpleton) or a *mahaneeya* (noble soul), he has to face the results of his actions. Wherever you go, the results of your actions will follow you like your shadow. However, it is possible to escape from the consequences of action by the grace of God. God is always by your side saying "Tathastu!", "Tathastu!" (so shall it be!). Man is not taking cognisance of this truth and is indulging in wicked deeds."

Towards the end of the discourse, Bhagavan electrified the audience by revealing that He had supplied water to East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh. In His words, "The Water Supply Project works in East and West Godavari districts are nearing completion. We have already drawn plans for a water supply project in the Krishna District also. Water is very essential for the survival of everyone. It is the sustainer of life. What else can be of greater service than providing drinking water to the needy? It is the source and sustenance of life. I do not expect any rituals or worship from you. I am doing it out of My love for you. East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts are now being covered under the Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project. The people of those districts are extremely happy. There can be no greater service than providing drinking water."

After His Divine discourse, Bhagavan released the 5th Volume of His Biography 'Sathyam Sivam Sundaram' and also a set of books called 'Pancharatnas' or 'The Five Gems' about the life and mission of Bhagavan, brought out as a souvenir on the occasion of the 80th year of the advent of the Avatar.

### **THE AFTERNOON PROGRAM - A Musical Program On Rama By The Institute Students**

In the afternoon, the students from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prashanti Nilayam Campus enthralled one and all by bringing the life-story of Lord Rama alive through mellifluous rendering of Ramakatha in the immediate Divine Presence of Sai Rama.

The programme was planned and executed by Swami Himself. On July 10th, the boys had put up a music programme in Sai Kulwant Hall. But Swami occasionally interrupted in the middle of a song and asked the boys to sing a different song. When the boys had sung about half that song, He would ask them to sing yet another one. And so on, it went. The boys were perplexed. Are we singing out of tune? Is Swami displeased with

us? At the end of the programme, the boys went up meekly to talk to Swami, and Swami was very reassuring. He said that He was very happy. Looking back now, after the sequence of events that transpired later, He was probably seeing what songs the boys could sing well, selecting the songs and putting the pieces together for a musical performance, though it was not at all obvious at that time.

On July 12, in the morning, the divine Lord unexpectedly dropped in onto the College campus just as the boys had finished their morning prayers. The music boys were summoned and quickly sent to the hostel to get their musical instruments. And what followed at the closed door session can at best only be described as a "love feast". A private musical session with Swami. What a rare privilege and blessing!

Swami declared that He wanted them to play in public, but it was still not clear, when and where? And this routine would repeat in the next few days. More often than not, Swami would come almost on a daily basis just after the boys had finished their classes for these "practise" sessions.

And the music program evolved step by step. After the songs had been selected, there was a selection of the right kind of instruments to be in the orchestra, the seating arrangements, the order of songs and so on it went. Swami even advised the singers to take care of their health, not eat too much spicy food, and also avoid ice-creams and cold drinks.

At this time, we in Heart to Heart were working on the cover story for this month's issue (on the School of Business Management) and we were actually seeing the Avatar's management technique at work. A slight nudge here, just a teeny suggestion there, but mostly by His presence and encouragement, Swami the quintessential manager, was silently bringing the programme to life. His enthusiasm was contagious and soon the whole Institute and even the devotees were engrossed in Swami's "latest" project.

D-Day - Guru Poornima afternoon dawned, and Swami came to the Mandir early at 2:30 PM itself. He personally supervised the makeup of the 2 singers paying attention to the minutest detail. He talked with everyone, relieved their tension and put them in a contemplative frame of mind so they could sing about Lord Rama from the bottom of their hearts.

And what a glorious concert, it was. Emotions were elevated till lumps formed in the throat and the body tingled with the thrill of listening to their mellifluous, dulcet voices, dripping with *bhakthi*, singing in unison praises of Lord Rama. After the invocation, the boys sang *Namo Sathya Sai Baba*, *Kandalo Nelakonna*, *Dheera Sameere*, and *Yamuna Teere*.

This was followed by *Madhura Mohana Ghanashyama*, *Challa Gaalilo Yamuna Tatipai*, *Rama Katha* and the last *Manishini Madhvuni Jeya*. In the penultimate song, a group of dancers with their vibrant steps and meaningful hand gestures, brought to life the emotions expressed in the song.

What a sweet and enchanting program - singing the praise of the Lord, presented by the Lord Himself!

## **JULY 22: An All Day Inter-Faith Conference On The Theme - The Religion Of Love**

On July 22, we had a very interesting day here in Sai Kulwant Hall. An interfaith conference had been arranged with representatives from Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism to talk about love and peace as expressed in their religion.

First to speak was Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, an Islamic and spiritual scholar, who has adopted peace as his life's mission. In 1970 he established the Islamic Centre in New Delhi, India and is its president. He has published over 200 books. His commentaries of the Holy Quran (in English and Arabic) and an encyclopaedia of the Quran, done under his direction, are ready for publication. Among his awards is the Demiurgus Peace International Award 2002, for his outstanding achievements in strengthening peace among nations and developing a complete ideology of peace. He said that in the sacred Koran there are 6500 verses and most of them pertain to love and peace. In fact he said, the very first verse is about love and the verse is repeated 114 times in the Quran. He narrated incidents from the life of the prophet Mohammed to show that he saw no differences in religion, culture and race. Love and peace are synonymous, he said.

Representing Buddhism next was Sri Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne He is the founder of the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* of Sri Lanka. He has doctorates from Emilio Aguinaldo College, Philippines, and Sri Jayawardenapura University, Sri Lanka. Dr. Ariyaratne has received many awards, including the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize, India, and the Niwano Peace Prize, Japan. He has been President of the World Parliament of Religions. Lord Buddha, said Sri Ariyaratne, asked everyone to love all life as a mother loves her only child. In every sphere of life transform love into action as love by itself is not enough. On a personal note he talked about the time he first came to Swami in 1982 and since then he dedicates all his actions as an offering to Swami.

Speaking first in the afternoon was Father Henry Fehren who was ordained as a priest of the Holy Catholic Church in 1948 in St. Cloud, Minnesota, USA. He now conducts his pastoral and counselling duties in New York. He has taught at several colleges and universities in America and England and has written many books and articles. On TV and radio, he expounds the universal tenants of Love and mutual acceptance of all others. He has received 13 awards from the Catholic Press Association and one from the National Religious Press. Jesus said that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Sai Baba says primarily the same thing, said Fr Fehren, when He says that God is in each one of us. To love your neighbour is to love God and to do evil in the name of God is the worst evil. Real love is not easy for love is not a romantic, unrealistic emotion. It is not enough to just love those who love you. Quoting the example of Jesus, Fr Fehren said, Jesus loved Judas who betrayed Him; and also loved Peter who denied Him.

On behalf of Judaism, we had Rabbi David Zeller, an internationally known singer, teacher, story teller, and writer, and a pioneer in Jewish spirituality and meditation. After organizational development for the kibbutz movement in 1970 and living as a *sadhu* in India in 1971, he was professor at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology from 1975. He founded the Network of Conscious Judaism in 1980 and directed the Shevet Centre

for Jewish Spirituality and Meditation, in Jerusalem. Saying that the Kabala means to receive, he said that the world has to receive one another with love. He said that a body is healthy when all the organs work in harmony. So too it is with the body of humankind. It is only healthy when all cultures and religions play their part. Love your neighbour as yourself. See God in yourself and in others.

Speaking last on behalf of Hinduism. was Sri P.S. Jayarama Sastrigal, a Sanskrit *pandit* and scholar. He received his education at *Vyakarana Sironmani, Annamalai* University. He has been conducting Hindu ritual worship for over 50 years as: *Asthana Vidhyavaan* of the Padhuga Trust, Madurai, and *Aasthana Vidhvaan* at Raja Rajeswari Aalayam, Ramnad Samasthanam. Titles conferred on him include: *Aanmiga Chemmal*, *Upanyasa Thilakam* and *Muhavai Periyavar*. He has written several books, including *Deepa Sthothram*, *108 Sivarpana Vilva Sthothram*, and *Ganapathi Suprabatham*, and he has several audio releases. Sri Sastrigal told an interesting story about how the 5 fingers had an argument as to who was the greatest. The thumb said it was the greatest as without it the other fingers could not work. The index finger laid claim to the title as it was used to point to people. The middle finger said it was the biggest in size, while the ring finger said that people were honoured by putting a ring only on that finger. The little finger could lay no such claims. Meekly it said that it was the most blessed as God saw only the little finger first when we bring our hands together to prostrate before Him. Using this story as the theme, He brought out examples to show that love and humility are necessary to win the love of God. He also spoke on a personal note about his relationship with Swami and how He had saved him on numerous occasions.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable and illuminating day. While it has not been possible to do justice due to space limitations, we will carry all the speeches on Radio Sai for your listening pleasure in the future.

## **JULY 23rd AND 24th - CONCLUDING PROGRAMMES OF THE GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATIONS**

### **July 23rd - Mahapurush Sankardeva - A Drama By The Bala Vikas Children Of Assam**

On the evening of the 23rd, Bala Vikas children from Assam put up a play entitled Mahapurush Sankardeva, a saint during whose time Assam experienced a period of great spiritual; awakening.

Starting with 2 dance prayers - *Mangalacharan* and *Devi Vandana*, the play presented a few episodes on the life and sports of Lord Krishna's childhood days. Popular events like the stealing of butter from the houses of the Gopis by the cowherd child God (*Labanu Chori*), liberation of Nal-Kuber by Krishna (*Arjun Bhanjan*), killing of the demon-snake Kaliya and banishing him to the Ramana island (*Kaliya Daman*) - were re-enacted and set to lilting music. The presentation was enriched by depicting a few other items drawn from the great spiritual heritage of Assam and the spiritual revival it experienced during the time of Srimanta Sankardeva.

## **July 24th - Distribution Of Sewing Machines And Grinding Machines By The Teachers From The Anantapur College**

In the morning the teachers of the Anantapur College distributed sewing machines and wet grinding machines to poor and needy women selected from the Anantapur District. The women one by one obtained blessings from Bhagavan and laid a flower at His Lotus Feet. This small gift (of a sewing machine or a wet grinder) would empower these women to obtain some income and help support their family.

Following the distribution, the students of the Anantapur campus regaled the Lord with group songs and *bhajans* before *arathi* was taken.

This brings to a conclusion the chronicles of another month at the divine Lotus Feet. It has been an exquisite month, full of surprises and spiritual gifts. And I am sure more is in store as we count down to the 80th Birthday. We of course, will continue to report on all the activities for you, our dear reader.

So till next time, Sai Ram.



## **PRASHANTI DIARY CONTD...**

### **The Story of the Narayana Necklace**

Ever since Swami started the Veda chanting in Sai Kulwant Hall way back on September 18th, 2003 , there has been very good progress and interest in the Vedas. Not only do a majority of students in Swami's Institutions (including the primary school) chant the Vedas with the aplomb of learned Brahmin priests, but there is also a world-wide resurgence, with devotees in many countries learning to roll the ancient Sanskrit words on their Western tongues.

According to ancient lore, the body of knowledge was embodied as the four *Vedas* (Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda) by Lord Narayana Himself for the welfare of humanity. This very sacred body of knowledge was thus gifted to man by the Supreme Lord to help him evolve and elevate himself from the level of humanity to the level of divinity.

One of Swami's oft stated mission is *veda poshana* or nourishment of the Vedas and to restore its pre-eminence and pristine glory in human society. So while we devotees have made progress in learning the Vedas by rote and perhaps even chant it for the most part with an acceptable intonation, we still need to ask the question - is it enough? Is this all that Swami wants?

There is a story of a religious saint reciting a holy text loudly with intense feeling. Another learned saint, perhaps a little wiser, gently asks the first one whether he understood what he was reciting. The first one replied that he had no need to understand it, for he was reciting it for his God and his God understood it perfectly.

This quaint story perhaps best summarises our situation also. Are we smug in the belief that Swami is coming to sit in Sai Kulwant Hall and derives pleasure from listening to our chanting of the Vedas? Or perhaps, does He now want us to make the next step and actually understand the meaning. After all, this Veda chanting business is really for our own benefit not for the benefit or pleasure of the Lord. So while we now chant it blissfully thinking "He understands even if we do not", it is perhaps time to make the next step and understand the meaning so we can chant it with full feeling, intensity and involvement and derive the maximum benefit. The benefit of realizing our full divine potential! That we are God!

With this preamble, we would like to recount what happened in Sai Kulwant Hall in the afternoon of July 3rd. Swami came in as usual to the sound of Veda chanting by the students, staff and devotees. After He took His seat in the veranda, He started reading the letters that devotees usually hand Him. On opening one oversized envelope, He took out what seemed to be a booklet. Swami perused it carefully and then called one of our brothers, an alumnus of Swami's Institute now working for the Ashram, who is part of the group that leads the congregation in the Veda chants. Handing him the booklet at a page open to a "comic-book" strip on Vivekananda entitled I AM GOD,

Swami told him that he should read it to understand the importance of the Vedas that they are chanting. Our brother took the booklet respectfully and resumed his seat.

After a few minutes, he was called again to the Divine Presence and given instructions by Swami for the Narayana Upanishad to be recited and the meaning to be explained to the assembly. The "Vedam Group" first chanted a couple of stanzas from this epic hymn, which were then translated by our brother for the benefit of the audience. And so on it went, a couple of stanzas at a time, till the entire Narayana Upanishad *mantram* was thus translated for the benefit of the congregation.

The Narayana Upanishad deals with the glory of Lord Narayana as extolled in the four *Vedas*. The opening stanzas deal with creation and describes what we learn from the Rig Veda - that from Narayana emerged the life principle, mind, all the senses, sky, fire, water and earth; which all combined together to form the Universe. Brahma, Maha Rudra, Indra, all the *prajapathis* and the other demi-Gods all emerged from Narayana. The twelve Adityas, the eleven *rudras*, the eight lords of directions, all the Vedas and all types of wealth were born from Narayana. Everything is sustained by Him and ultimately everything merges in Him.

From the Yajur Veda we learn that Narayana is the eternal principle. Brahma, Siva and Indra are all Narayana. Earth and Heaven, Time and Directions are all Narayana. Narayana forms the inner and outer worlds. Everything is the manifestation of Narayana. Past, and the future are all manifestations of Narayana. Narayana is blemishless, ever blissful, and non-dual. There is nothing which is not Narayana. Narayana is the very Supreme self, the one without a second. Narayana and Vishnu pervade the entire universe. It is Narayana alone who exists.

The Sama Veda declares that the primordial sound "OM" has to be uttered first followed by "Namo". Then comes the meditation on "Narayana". " Om " is single lettered; "Namo" is two lettered and "Narayana" is five lettered. All these together form the eight lettered mantra OM NAMO NARAYANA, which is the king of all the mantras. Those who chant this mantra with sincere faith and devotion, will attain good health, long life and prosperity. They will also attain the status of "Prajapathi". They will attain the immortal state of Narayana Himself.

The Pranava (" OM ") is made up of three syllables **A**, **U**, and **M**. Pranava is verily the life principle. Pranava is supreme bliss. It is the supreme state of Brahma or Atma. The masters of Yoga, who know this adore the Pranava chanting " Om " and attain the abode of liberation. Such yogis break the bonds of birth, life and death. Those who adore the mantra, "Om Namo Narayana" will attain the supreme abode 'Vaikunta'. Narayana is 'Parabrahma'. His seat is the lotus of the heart. Knowledge of this Lord is the highest wisdom. This wisdom shines like lightning. Sri Krishna, the son of Devaki, is the very embodiment of Brahma. He is also adored as Madhusudhana. He resides in all beings. He is the fundamental basis of everything. He Himself is causeless. He is the causeless cause of everything. This is what is pronounced in the Atharva Veda.

The last stanza of the *mantram* calls this Narayana Upanishad as the crest jewel of the essence of the four Vedas. If this Upanishad is chanted in the morning, it destroys the sin committed the previous night. If it is chanted in the evening, it removes the sin

committed in the day. If it is chanted at noon , it pulverises the five great sins. One who chants this Upanishad will attain the merit of the study of the Vedas and ultimately attains oneness with Narayana.

When the translation was thus going on, explaining the importance of the OM NAMO NARAYANA *mantra* and how it would help us attain the supreme abode Vaikunta, Swami asked a question in English to our brother (doing the translation) in a voice just loud enough to carry to him, "What is the meaning of Vaikuntham?" Hah, a divine trick question! For most of us the answer would have been pat and along expected lines - Vaikuntha is the abode of Lord Vishnu. But this brother, better informed than most and with great presence of mind, remembered a definition that Swami had given in a discourse and answered, "Vaikuntham is anything that is not narrow, but broad and ever expansive". Swami beamed at this answer that He was looking for, and wore the proud smile of a teacher who realizes that Her students are finally "getting it".

At the end of the *mantra*, a pregnant silence prevailed in the entire hall. Swami raised His palm in the classical upward gesture that He so often makes to elevate everyone's mood. And then suddenly, without any warning Bhagavan waved His right hand vigorously and materialized a beautiful golden necklace. After undoing the clasp, He called the brother who had done the translation and handed the necklace to him. Bhagavan also told him something to which he listened very carefully.

By now the entire audience was electrified. The magnificence of the necklace was patently visible to all, even to those seated in the last rows. We also wondered if there was going to be a revelation and we were not disappointed.

The brother turned to the audience with the necklace held up. Hurriedly a mike was set up for him. He then explained to all the significance of the necklace, as explained to him by Bhagavan. Bhagavan had said that the necklace contained the power of the sacred mantra - "Om Namō Narayanaya." He went on to state that Swami explained to him that all the Vedas, Upanishads and the other scriptures illumine the path that man has to take to attain his final destination - Divinity. The mantra "Om Namō Narayanaya" contains the essence and power of all the scriptures. The fatherly and motherly aspect of divinity is contained in this mantra. Without either of them, there can be no creation. But, if one were to contemplate deeply, said Swami, one would realize that there is no difference between the two aspects- Purusha (God) and Prakruthi (nature), they are indeed one and the same.

After explaining the significance, our brother turned towards Swami and held the necklace to hand it back to Him. Swami asked him to keep it in his pocket and return it to Him later. What a signal honour! And what a delightful afternoon basking in the divine presence. How slowly and patiently Swami leads us back to Him. For all of us present there the Narayana Upanishad will come alive everyone time it is chanted, for then the divine images from this afternoon's happening will come before the mind's eye and thrill us to the very depths of our being. Clearly the time has come. And the time is right now. Let us arise, awake, aspire, adore and achieve God!

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **SERMONS MAKE SENSE**

A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

"I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall what the menu was for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be dead today."

No comments were made on the sermon contents anymore.

*Courtesy: East and West Series, Feb 2004*

## **SAI BABA - THE ENGINEER**

This is a very interesting story of how Sai took on the role of an engineer to avert a great disaster in San Salvador , the capital city of El Salvador , a small Central American country bordering the North Pacific Ocean . This appeared in the Latin American Sai Magazine in Spanish - “*Sabidurai Sai*”, Volume IX, Issue 1.

The night of April 18, 1998, everything was quiet and peaceful in San Salvador, the capital city of El Salvador. A new watchman, Felipe Flores, had just started his first shift in the electric plant, CEL, which produces electricity for San Salvador using petroleum.

Since this was the first night at work for Felipe, his supervisor had explained the strict security rules which do not allow anyone to enter the plant without written permission from the manager and they had provided him with a notebook to make notations every hour about what was happening.

At 11 PM, a fire broke out in the installations of a plastics plant which is next door to the CEL plant. The firemen that arrived at the plastics plant shouted to the workers of CEL to evacuate, since the fire could quickly spread and an explosion could occur. Only Felipe Flores remained at his station, all the other workers left.

Minutes later, there appeared inside the CEL installations a person who at first sight Felipe mistook for a fireman because of his orange robe. Immediately the fireman started to switch off all the high tension lines, throwing the switches without help from anyone. Felipe decided that this could not be a fireman, because he acted with such authority and knowledge of the installations, that this must be one of the engineers.

The engineer started to go to an interconnection of valves that control the flow of petroleum, and Felipe was running after him with his notebook in hand. He had forgotten to write down his name.

While the engineer closed the huge valves, which normally takes two persons to move, Felipe asked the engineer for his name. Over his shoulder, the engineer answered, Sathya. Felipe dutifully recorded it as ‘Satia’.

When all the valves were closed, and the engineer was leaving, Felipe remembered that he had not asked for the engineer’s last name. He ran after the engineer again and said, please give me your last name. Once again, over his shoulder, engineer Sathya said, ‘Baba’.

The huge fire had consumed the plastics factory, but thanks to the rapid action of engineer ‘Sathya Baba’, the electrical plant and the surrounding city had been spared from a huge explosion.

The next day in the offices of CEL, when Felipe went in to report what had happened to the manager, the manager was busy and he waited by the desk of the manager’s secretary. This secretary was a devotee of Sai Baba and she had a small photo of Swami on her desk.

Felipe saw the photo of Sai Baba on the desk of the secretary and asked,

"How is it that you have a photo of the engineer on your desk?"

The secretary explained to Felipe that this was no engineer, but it was Sathya Sai Baba who lives in India.

Felipe was not in agreement except with the name, and he showed the secretary his notebook. Below is the reproduction of the original page in Felipe's notebook.

Translation of Felipe's Notebook

16:00 hours	Shift started. Nothing unusual to report. The operator, Oscar Amaya, reported for work.
17:00 hours	Nothing unusual to report
18:00 hours	The switches were opened for electric transmission and the voltage generated was normal.
19:00 hours	The alarm of the relay was set off due to low voltage and variations in the system of transmission.
20:00 hours	The transmission system controls are normal
21:00 hours	<p>The system of switches for electrical transmission 30- 2-83 and all the control Panels and remote controls, for the high voltage transmission lines <b>were closed by order of engineer Satia Baba, who was in charge of that shift</b>, and this action was motivated by the fire in the factory of Dinattec which is located next door to the installations of CEL, Soyapango. Further motivation was to avoid and prevent a tragedy. Security personnel, and the firemen evacuated all the CEL workers that were at their stations.</p> <p>Note: Everything was resolved without any tragedy taking place.</p> <p>Signed, operator for the shift, Sr. Felipe Flores.</p>

- John Benher  
El Salvador

## **THE NAILED FENCE**

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all.

He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails had been pulled out.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same again. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one.

You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It will not matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there." A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

Therefore Swami Says,

*" It is said that if you cut down a tree, it could still sprout; or if a piece of iron were broken in two, a blacksmith could repair it. But, if you were to break a heart with venomous words, it would not be possible to ever make it whole again. Words can cause endless troubles, and they can give boundless joy. You should therefore be most careful that your words you use should not give pain to others. Never hurt another's feelings. One day, the words you have used will come back to you. So always use words that are sweet and good."*

*Courtesy: Sunrays For Sunday*

## **'FIND WHAT YOU LOVE'**

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and of Pixar Animation Studios, delivered an inspiring talk on June 12, 2005 to the Stanford graduates. His talk was in three parts. Here we have the second and third part of that talk where he talks about love and Loss and also about death which he calls as 'the best invention of life'.

"...My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky – I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We had just released our finest creation - the Macintosh - a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down - that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me – I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the worlds first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the



only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

### My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope its the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary...."

*For the full text of the speech go [here](#).*

## **SAI SAVED ME**

*This is the story of one of our Readers, Mr. Rajeev Mittal, a qualified Chartered Accountant working as Financial Director in a MNC in Malaysia , in his own words:*

“I was born on 3rd January 1965 at Agra in a middle class family. My father, a Civil Engineer, was at that time an Overseer in UP Government and my mother, a housewife. Since I was born after two elder sisters, there was great joy and happiness in my family upon my birth. Since a boy carries the name of the family forward, my grand parents were also very happy.

However, after about six months, I started getting sick quite often, mainly with high fever. Around 1.5 years, I was diagnosed for “poliomeleities” (sort of polio) in my right leg. Despite their meager resources and borrowing from friends and relatives, my parents took me around from one Doctor to another visiting hospitals in Delhi and Northern India . A very reputed Doctor in Punjab finally carried out a series of operations on my right leg at the age of around 2.5 years. He experimented some new surgical theories on me without taking prior consent from my parents and unfortunately, the operations were unsuccessful and my situation was becoming worse day by day. The operations were irreversible and the Doctors more or less gave up any hope for improvement. There was continuous “puss” in my right leg. I could have spent my whole life on a wheel chair, a burden to my parents.

Now when I look back, I feel very sad because my birth had robbed my parents who were still young then of their joy and happiness. They also accumulated debt for my medical treatment.

### **First visit to Prashanti Nilayam**

My parents brought me home from the hospital and left my recovery on God and indeed God came to my rescue. One day, sometime in 1967-68, my father read an article about Swami in the “*Illustrated Weekly of India*”. At that very moment his intuition guided him that if anybody could save and cure me, it was Baba. He discussed his feelings with my mother and both decided to bring me to Swami for his blessings. My father had never heard or knew about Swami before. Leaving my two elder sisters with neighbors in Agra , my parents took me for their journey (pilgrimage) to Puttaparthi in 1967-68. It took them more than 3 days to reach Puttaparthi with the then prevailing rail and road infrastructure.

During our stay, Swami graced us with His interview. Before my parents could even start narrating my health problems, Swami said in Hindi – “*Baba Sab Janta Hai*” (Baba knows everything). Swami materialized vibhuti and asked my parents to apply on my leg and assured them I would be all right. My parents took a notebook with them where Swami wrote “**With Blessings – Baba**”. That notebook is still with me as the priceless treasure and has unique fragrance even after almost 4 decades. Thereafter, Swami asked my parents to return back home.

We all returned to Agra and the situation on my leg started improving day by day. Since our visit to Swami when I was three years old and until today when I am 40 years, with the grace of Swami, I have had no problems with my leg. I am absolutely independent, walk without support, drive car, motor cycle etc. In my youth, I have also been to holy places at high altitudes such as Mata Vaishno Devi, Badrinath temple, Shankaracharya temple at Srinagar etc.”

## **MOVING THE IMAGE OF GOD**

Anybody who has been to the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum in the Vidya Giri Stadium would agree that it is truly an architectural beauty, a jewel among concrete structures which carries the Divine Consciousness within its walls. When visitors enter the Contemplation Hall they become moved by the tangible divine touch of the Lord that comes from the silence and the ambience of the room. No one can help but notice the striking statue of Swami that adorns the room.

We thought it will be nice to tell you the story of the beautiful statue. Imbued with the commanding presence of the Lord, it is a life size replica made from bronze; and yet has all the sweetness that we associate with His Love. The form of the Lord is always sacred. It carries power to connect the devotee to God. It is a channel for the Divine blessings and protection.

So it was the devotees' fortune to be present in the Kulwant Hall on *Gurupoornima* 2002, when the bronze statue of Bhagavan was placed on the front veranda. A gentleman called Mr. Luigi Faranti had it fashioned in Italy and transported here with much devotion.

Then, exactly a year later on 28th August 2003 , Swami instructed that the statue should be placed in the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum on public display. With the help of a tractor-trailer it was immediately taken to the Museum and was provisionally placed in the VIP room - the room's most important guest had arrived!

Col. Bose, who is in charge of the Museum, considered four possibilities for the best display venue and discussed the matter with Sri Indulal Shah, the Chairman of International Sai Organisations then and the soul-force behind the Museum. They received a divine 'hurry up', as the very next day Swami asked if a place had been found! The Contemplation Hall became the preferred choice and the installation date fixed for 4th September.

However a problem arose in constructing a pedestal. Concrete would need more than 5 days to set and wood would not carry the statue's weight of more than 700kg. So the ingenious Museum staff had to find a solution quickly and this came in the form of some granite stonework left over from the Museum's construction. These became the plinth for the statue to rest on, surrounded by teak wood.

The statue still had to be moved 25 metres. This was achieved by rolling it over metal pipes, which took 20 minutes and the same number of *Seva Dals*, whereupon it was lifted into place. *Bhajans* were then performed for the installation ceremony.

You must agree, as would any visitor to the Contemplation Hall, that this life size image of the Lord captivates one's attention at all times. The devotees' journey in the museum culminates at the Chaitanya Jyoti Meditation Hall. This affirms to the visitor that having viewed the enchanting Museum's edifying contents, we must learn from one of its messages. For it is when we See Always Inside - SAI - that the real gift of Chaitanya

Jyoti is experienced. One feels Swami's Presence emanates from the statue and it is thus an easy conduit for communication with God for as swami says,

**"If you look to Me, I look to you."**

– H2H Team

## THE BLESSINGS OF DIVINITY...IN AUGUST

### **Quiz on Swami's Life and Mission.**

Last month you may have attempted our Quiz which tested your knowledge of the milestones in Swami's life in the month of July. Every month is special, for most of its days have been hallowed by Bhagavan's divine *Sankalpa* as anniversaries when He started projects and undertook actions that stand as testament to a life Divine. As before, we have selected the current month, now **August**, and found how with each action Swami has given us glimpses into His Divine plan and examples for us to follow.

The Quiz format is designed to test and also tell you about the milestones in the life of our Lord. Don't worry so much if you cannot get them all right as you can teach yourself the answers and learn more about Swami simply by doing this quiz.

**H2H** has picked out some significant happenings in **August**, during which Swami has made His mark in His(own)story. Can you remember the years to match these august events?

1. In which year was a bronze statue of Bhagavan placed in the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum? Please see the story in the current issue's *Miscellaneous* section.

- A) 2000
- B) 2004
- C) 2003
- D) 1998

2. On *Krishnajanmashtami* of which year did our Lord inaugurate the ashram *Gokulam* (dairy farm), lovingly playing His role as *Gopala*, and showering His love and protection for the fortunate cows under His care?

- A) 1989
- B) 1962
- C) 1956
- D) 1975

3. The General Hospital, Whitefield has seen many years of dedicated service. In Swami's inaugural Discourse, He stated "*This hospital is being started amidst the villages so that expert advice and treatment can be rendered to them in a loving atmosphere of reverence and devotion. No charge will be levied here for any service.*" When was this?

A) 1976

B) 1969

C) 1962

D) 1988

4. H2H's present Cover Story is on the School of Business Management. During His inaugural Discourse Bhagavan said, *"In the Sai Institute, we are attaching special importance to cultural and ethical values. Among these, primary place is being given to 'Indian Ethos and Values.'*" Can you remember the year that the school founded?

B) 1986

B) 1978

C) 1981

D) 1990

5. The book *"Swami in Kashmir"* gives an enthralling pictorial account of Swami's divine journey there in 1980. In which year in August, did Swami first visit Srinagar?

A) 1957

B) 1960

C) 1962

D) 1952

6. Can you remember the year our very own Prashanti Digital Studio was inaugurated, from where *Heart to Heart* is produced? H2H carried a Cover Story on this in *Vol 1 Issue 2*.

A) 1999

B) 1997

C) 2002

D) 2000

7. When Swami spoke some calming words to the Chitravarthi River, its flood waters receded thereby saving Prashanti Nilayam and Puttaparthi. This account can be found in *Sathyam Sivam Sundaram IV* 'Love on the March'. Which year was this?

A) 1952

B) 1975



C) 1967

D) 1982

8. It seems only right that the Lord's abode should not come under temporal authority. Thus it was in which year that Prashanti Nilayam was declared a township, separate from Puttaparthi?

A) 1987

B) 1958

C) 1967

D) 1982

9. In which year did Swami establish the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust, thereby saving the prestigious Sai Schools at Mudenahalli and Alike, (Karnataka) and ensuring the welfare of their many students?

A) 1978

B) 1959

C) 1965

D) 1987

10. The new Books and Publications Trust Building was inaugurated by Swami giving a full Divine tour to all floors. When was this?

A) 2003

B) 2001

C) 1999

D) 1997

### **QUIZ ANSWERS**

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

## **THE HEALING TOUCH**

### **KARTHICK'S JOY**

Karthik's father had two children, one aged 3 years and other 11 months old. In spite of repeated visits to general physician, he could not recover from common cold and cough. Doctors diagnosed him as a case of congenital heart defect and as a result was frequently suffering from cold and cough. Doctors at Guntoor demanded huge amount to correct his heart, which was beyond the reach of his father, a poor coolie who struggled to feed his children and wife. A kind doctor at Guntoor suggested that they catch hold of the feet of their creator and go to SSSIHMS, Bangalore. Karthik's family after mobilizing money for their travel landed in the hospital for check up and was operated on 27-11-04 for PDA ligation and is fully recovered and jumping around the ward. Parents joy knows no bound. Parents want to go to Puttaparthi but can't afford it. When they come for check up again they pray that Swami is in Bangalore so that they can have Darshan.

## **SSSIHMS STATISTICS**

### **PUTTAPARTHI SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL**

Cumulative Statistics from 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Cardiac Surgeries:14,813

Cardiac Catheterisation: 15,430 [10,712 – Diagnostic; 4,311 – Interventional]

Urology Surgeries:26,726

Ophthalmology:26,239

CT Scans:4,141

### **BANGALORE SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL**

Cumulative Statistics from 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1991 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Cardiac Surgeries: 5,501

Cath Procedures: 10,568 [4,782 – Diagnostic; 5,786 – Interventional]

Neuro Surgeries: 4,865

CT Scans:15,835

MRI Exams:18,134