

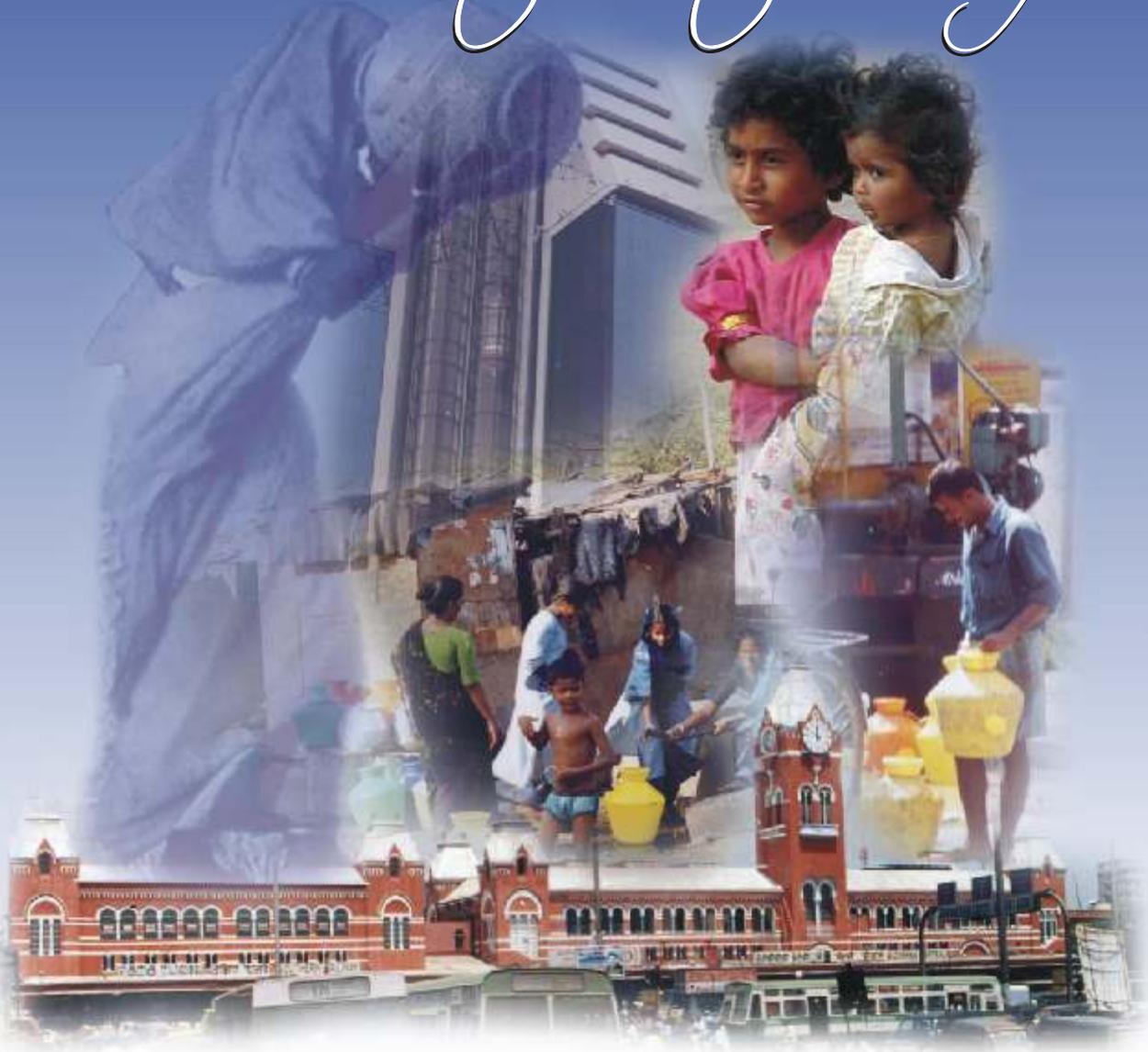


# HEART TO HEART



RADIO SAI LISTENER'S JOURNAL

*From Distress to Relief*



COVER STORY

**Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project  
for Chennai**

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PRANAMS AT THE LOTUS FEET

# Journal

developed by

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# Between You and Us

Dear Reader,

Sai Ram and greetings from Prashanti Nilayam. Devotees constantly talk about the miracles of Swami. For most people, miracle means creation of objects, appearance of vibhuti on photos, and para-normal phenomena of various kinds. True the Lord can do anything at anytime anywhere. But do miracles stop with just what we normally believe them to be? Is not the human body packed with miracles of all kinds, as indeed the whole of the Universe is?

Consider, for example, coincidences. Many people, especially rationalists, would dismiss them as mere fortuitous accidents. But do you know what Swami says: He says that coincidence is a miracle in which He hides Himself! We are bringing this to your attention because many things are happening that we seem to take in our stride but which are nothing short of miracles.

Take our own case. We here connected with Prashanti Digital Studio and Radio Sai just cannot stop wondering about the fantastic things that have happened in just a little over two years. Today, Radio Sai can be heard literally all over the world. Is it not incredible, that wherever one may be, one can either via WorldSpace or via the internet, listen 24 hours a day to Bhajans and Discourses, not to mention other programs? And then, after a long stretch of faltering efforts, Swami's Studio is now able to offer superb quality videos almost immediately after any function is over. Further, three times a week, a TV channel in India is broadcasting our programs under the title SPIRITUAL BLOSSOMS. In addition to all this, there is also the global webcasting which is fast getting into place. Things never seem to stop and right now, everyone here is running around to get ready for LIVE TELECAST ALL OVER INDIA OF THE SIVARATHRI FESTIVAL! Imagine that!! This year, on Sivarathri, people all over India from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat, and from Kashmir to Kanyakumari can actually see and hear, LIVE, what is going on in Prashantinilayam. In fact, we are exploring ways of sending the program all over the WORLD!

No one even dreamt of such a thing at the time of the 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday. But suddenly, without anyone of us here actually trying, they have all happened! If this is not a miracle, what then is it?

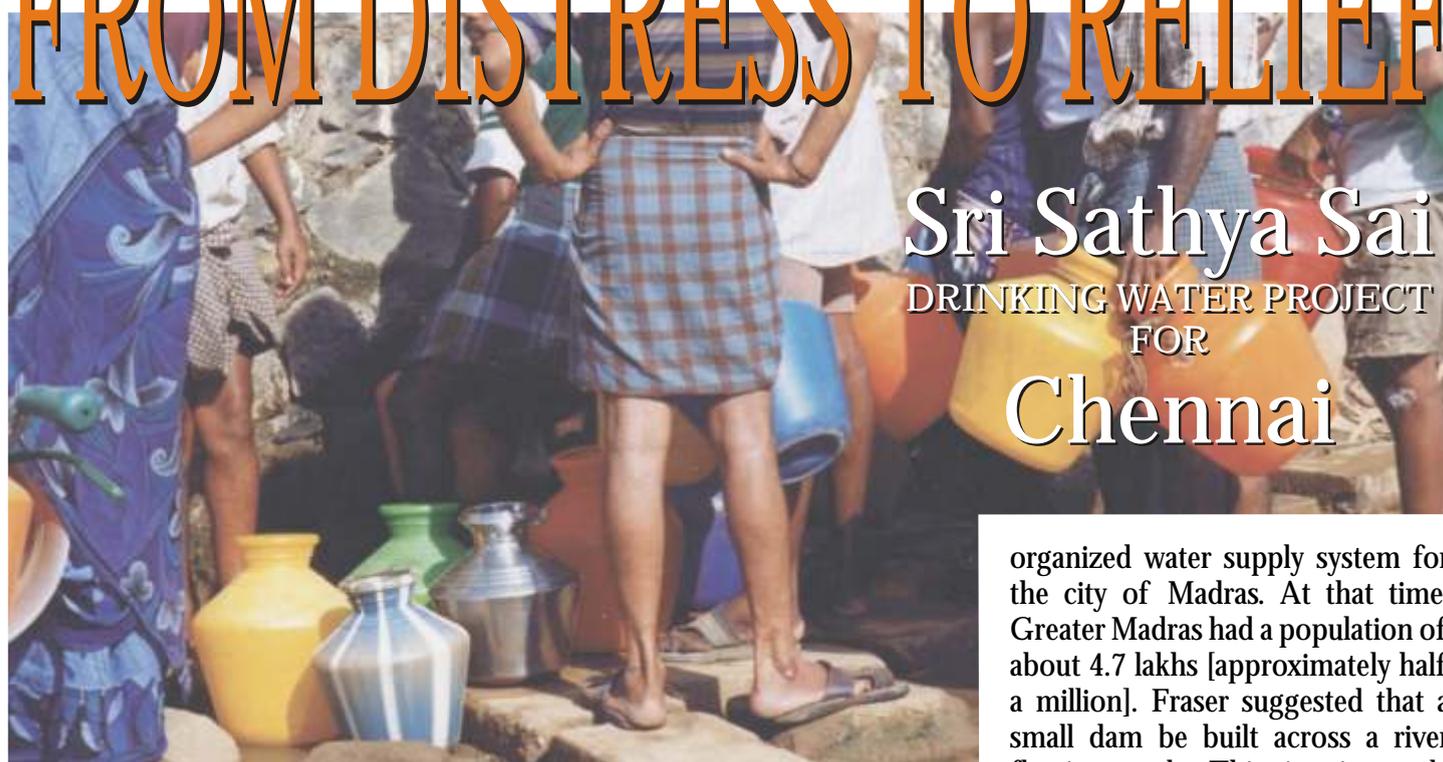
The Lord has many dimensions that we are scarcely aware of. Let us broaden our vision and not straightjacket Him or try to fit Him to stereotype patterns and conceptions.

We look forward to newer and newer ways of serving you and filling you with Ananda. With the Lord's blessing we will too!

Thank you and Jai Sai Ram.

SGH TEAM

# FROM DISTRESS TO RELIEF



## Sri Sathya Sai DRINKING WATER PROJECT FOR Chennai

For more than two thousand years, India has been well known in Europe, especially for its spices, and there was regular trade as well as exchange of goods. Even knowledge [e.g., in mathematics and astronomy] flowed from India to the West. Traders and travellers from Europe came to India via the land route, which was also followed by Alexander when he invaded India. Subsequently when Muslims began to control the Middle East, the land route became blocked, and trade plummeted. Europe was keen to somehow resume contact with India and that was how the search began for a sea route. It may be recalled, that one of those who wanted to discover this route was Columbus.

Columbus sailed forth seeking a sea route to India, and as is well known, Columbus ended up discovering an altogether new continent. The challenge of discovering a sea route to India continued to remain, and it was Vasco de Gama of Portugal who finally made it. Thus it was that the Portuguese became the first to

Establish colonies in India. The other big powers quickly followed suit, and the British landed on the East Coast of India in early eighteenth century in what was then a small fishing village known as Chennaipatnam. Here they built a fort [Fort St. George, that exists to this day], and rapidly spread their influence all over the South, eliminating in quick succession the Dutch and the French. Under the British, Chennaipatnam became Madras, and grew to first become a town, then a city and finally a metropolis. Incidentally, Madras has recently been renamed Chennai. It is from Madras that the British later fanned out to the North East and still later to the North West to finally establish the Indian part of their Empire. Our story is all about the water problem of Madras/Chennai, and how Swami has provided the final solution.

There are no big rivers near Madras and thus, as far back as the late nineteenth century, there was a water problem. In 1884, a British Engineer named Fraser gave thought for the first time for an

organized water supply system for the city of Madras. At that time, Greater Madras had a population of about 4.7 lakhs [approximately half a million]. Fraser suggested that a small dam be built across a river flowing nearby. This river is mostly dry but gets water during the NE Monsoon. A dam was built, and water from it was taken through canals to two reservoirs named Sholavaram and Red Hills. At that time, this water was used not only for providing drinking water to Madras but also for cultivation. The water to the city was taken to a filtration plant in a region of Madras city called Kilpauk, before distribution to the public. This plant exists to this day.

Some years later, the supply of water for irrigation was stopped, and the stored water was used exclusively for drinking purposes. In spite of this, the reservoirs were inadequate since the city demand kept on increasing. One more reservoir was built, this time at Poondi, but once again demand soon outstripped supply.

In the early sixties of the twentieth century, the Government at the Centre recognized the problem of Madras and announced that some steps would be taken to bring water from the Krishna River in the neighbouring state of Andhra

Pradesh to the city. A formal agreement to this effect was signed in 1968, whereby the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra each agreed to release annually, form their share of Krishna water, 5 TMC [TMC means thousand million cubic feet] of water from the River Krishna for the city of Madras. Thus, Madras was to get annually 15 TMC of Krishna water. But how exactly to bring that water over such a long distance? That scheme would require a lot of money which then was not in sight. Krishna water for Madras remained a concept.

Towards the end of the sixties and in early seventies, the Government of Tamil Nadu [the State in which Madras is located] planned a scheme called the Veeranam Project to bring water from the Kaveri river in the south. This project collapsed, having become enmeshed in corruption scandals. All that remained were huge concrete pipes lying by the side of the coastal road near Madras, and big ditches dug to lay the pipes.

The Veeranam Project having failed, the Tamil Nadu Government decided it was time to think seriously about Krishna water. It then made a deal with the Government of Andhra Pradesh for bringing Krishna water to Madras. Basically, the water of Krishna River stored at the Srisailem dam in Andhra Pradesh was to be brought by a canal first to a reservoir called Kandaleru reservoir in AP, and from there by another canal about 150 km long to the Tamil Nadu [TN] border. Continuing into TN, the canal was supposed to take the water to the Poondi reservoir in Madras. This was the scheme.

Actually, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh had a grand idea of a scheme for using Krishna water for irrigation all over AP, and the

request of Tamil Nadu gave him the opening he was looking for. If Tamil Nadu gave money, he could use that money to build a canal from Kandeleru reservoir up to the state border. This way, Tamil Nadu would get water and Andhra Pradesh could use the canal to supply water for irrigation in the southern region. The Chief Minister further named the Kandeleru-Poondi [KP] canal as Telugu Ganga.

The KP Canal project was formally launched in 1983 by Indira Gandhi at a formal function in Madras. AP spent about Rs. 2000 crores [1 crore = 10 million] on the entire project [covering large parts of the State], while TN gave about Rs. 500 crores for the KP canal or Telugu Ganga project as it was called. AP of course dug canals all over the place whereas TN was interested only in the canal linking Kandaleru to Poondi. As mentioned earlier, AP wanted to ride piggy-back on this KP canal for supplying water for irrigation to the southern region of AP. Years passed and finally, the Kandaleru-Poondi canal of the Telugu Ganga project was deemed to have been completed in 1996. A function was also held to mark the "completion".

At that time, it was said that of the 15 TMC released every year from Kandaleru, about 12 TMC would reach Poondi, after allowing for evaporation and other losses. However, from 1996 to 2000, the annual flow was quite poor. In some years, it was a miserable half TMC or so! There were many reasons for this poor performance. Firstly, the canal had been reduced to a long ditch, having caved in many places due to erosion; that reduced flow. Next there was seepage, which too reduced flow. Thirdly, farmers all along the route could easily dig diversion channels and take away the water. That in short is how the Telugu Ganga scheme failed to deliver.

Meanwhile, the problem of Madras [now renamed Chennai] started becoming more and more acute. It was at that juncture, that Bhagavan Baba made His dramatic and totally unexpected announcement on 19th January, 2002. It was the occasion of the first anniversary of the Super Specialty Hospital in Bangalore [the hospital was opened by PM Vajpayee one year earlier]. A grand Health Meet had been organised to celebrate the anniversary, and during the inaugural function, Swami gave a Divine Discourse. Naturally, He spoke a lot about health, health care and all that. But suddenly and most unexpectedly, Bhagavan Baba started making a reference to the drinking water problem of Madras. He said that He was greatly moved by the plight of the people there, especially the slum dwellers. He had received much Love from the people of that city and He wanted to do something for them. The rich there could buy water from tanker service but what about the poor? They had no recourse except to polluted water. They were already suffering from malnutrition and various diseases. And now, polluted water made matters even worse. He had to do something for them, and He was determined to do so. That was the essence of the dramatic declaration made on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2002.

Discussions were then started with AP Government. Since Baba's Trust had already executed various water projects in AP bringing drinking water to over two million people, the CM of AP was ready and eager to co-operate with Baba and do all that was necessary so that Baba's promise to Chennai became a reality. After technical examination, it was found that water flow to Chennai was minimal because the original Telugu Ganga Canal linking Kandaleru [in AP] to Poondi [in TN] had become dilapidated. So, it was decided to literally rebuild the

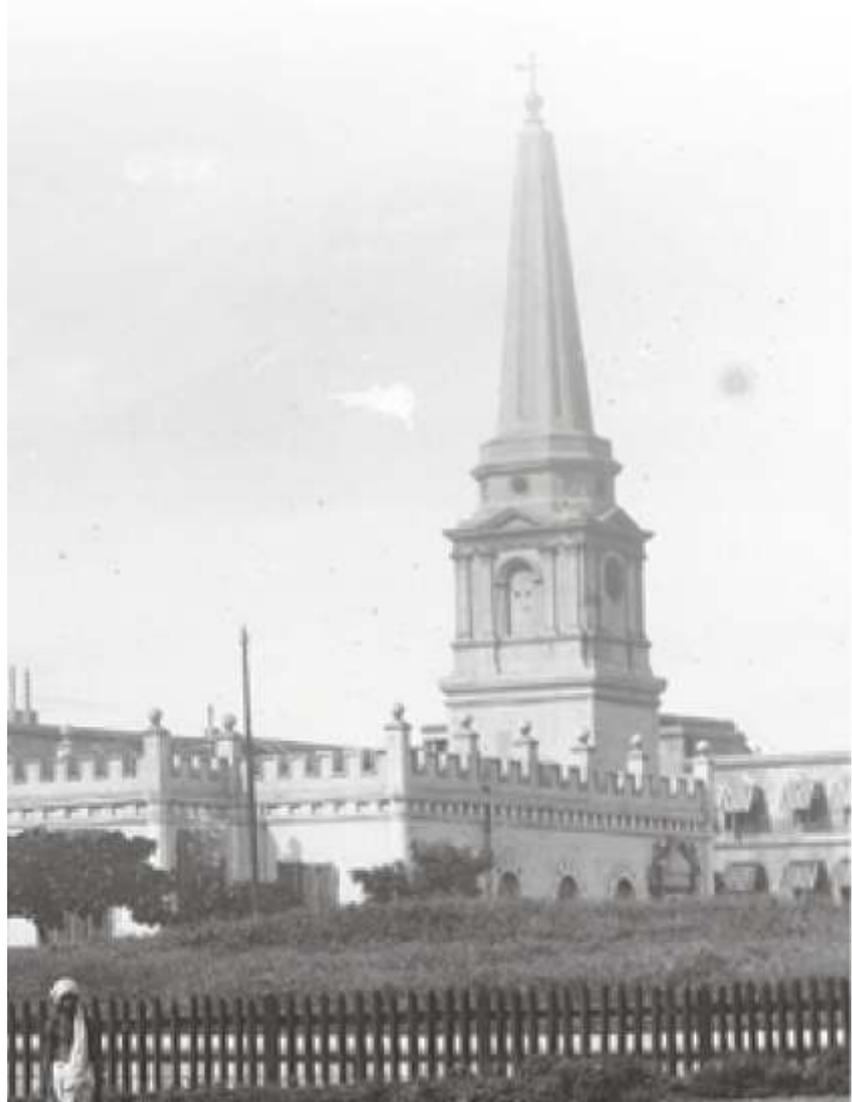
canal all the way [about 150 km] and Baba's Trust took upon itself the responsibility of funding the entire project. In practice this meant a) making improvements to the reservoir in Kandaleru so that it could hold enough water to serve even during dry seasons, b) deepening and widening the canal as required, and c) lining the canal with the LATEST technology to totally eliminate seepage.

This work, has been going on steadily since mid 2002, and has now been completed. Related works in TN are also in progress and on the verge of being completed. As always, Baba took personal interest, constantly monitoring progress. Meanwhile, as an expression of gratitude to Bhagavan Baba for all that He has done, the government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to rename the project as *Sai Ganga*, from the earlier '*Telugu Ganga*'. This is an extra-ordinary development in national affairs. At a time when inter-state water disputes are the order of the day, here is an instance, probably the only one of its kind, where a private charitable trust, commanding the love of the people, is able to execute a project to bring the water of the river in one state to the people of another.

Madras which now has a population of over seven million is at last beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. Finally, it seems that the nightmare would be over soon, thanks to Baba. People wonder what Baba gets by way of return on His "investments"? This question was raised during a UN Habitat Meeting at which a presentation was made by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust about Baba's water projects in AP, where nearly rupees 300 crores had been spent. The Trust representative replied that while others view returns purely in financial terms, for Baba, returns meant the Love that the people gave back.. In fact, when the projects in

AP were first started, Baba's guideline to the Trust was to bring drinking water to as many people of Anantapur district as possible, in as many villages as possible, in as short a time as possible, no matter what the cost and difficulty. People wonder where the Trust gets so much money to be so magnanimous. Baba says that it is Love that makes it all possible.

Love is something people normally wax eloquent about. But Baba with His projects [free education and free medicare] has shown again and again that Love can move mountains! The Chennai project is demonstrating that one more time. ■





Chennai



What started as a small fishing village and weaver's colony known Chennaipatnam, later became Madras when the British landed and established Fort St. George. Since then, Madras now Chennai, has grown steadily .

Some views of Madras as it was around 1900. Seen above is the famous Parry's Corner.



Mylapore



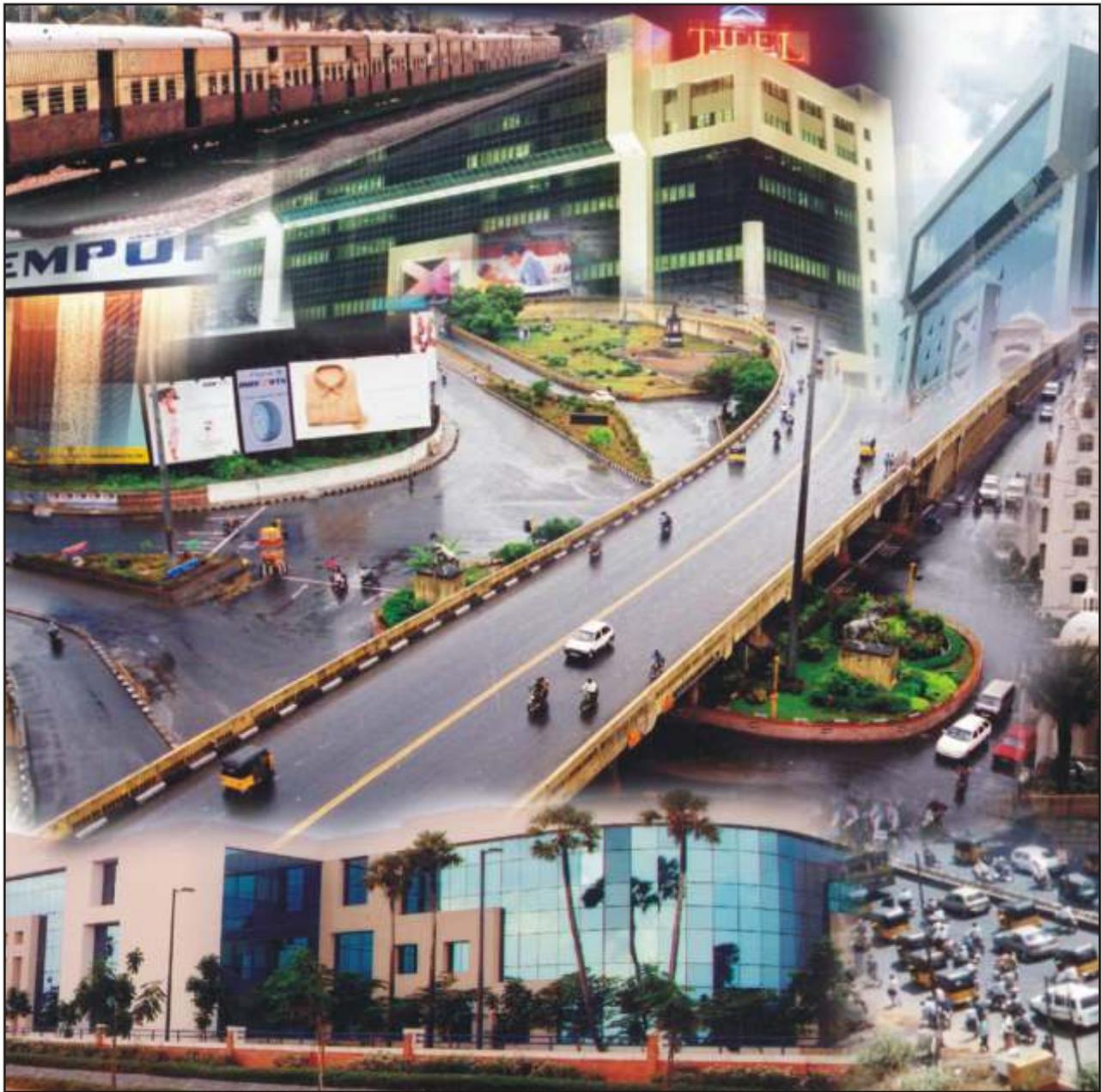
Spencers-Madras



Fort. St. George



Central Station



During the last couple of decades, Chennai city has seen an explosive growth, thanks especially to Information Technology.



While on one side there is glittering prosperity, on the other side there is disturbing poverty. Where water is concerned, the poor of Chennai really have to struggle.



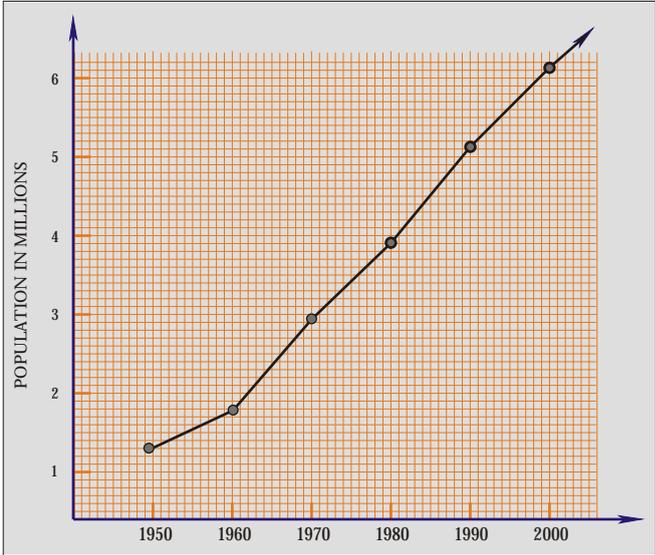


Veeranam, a project to bring water from river Kaveri to Chennai. It never took off.



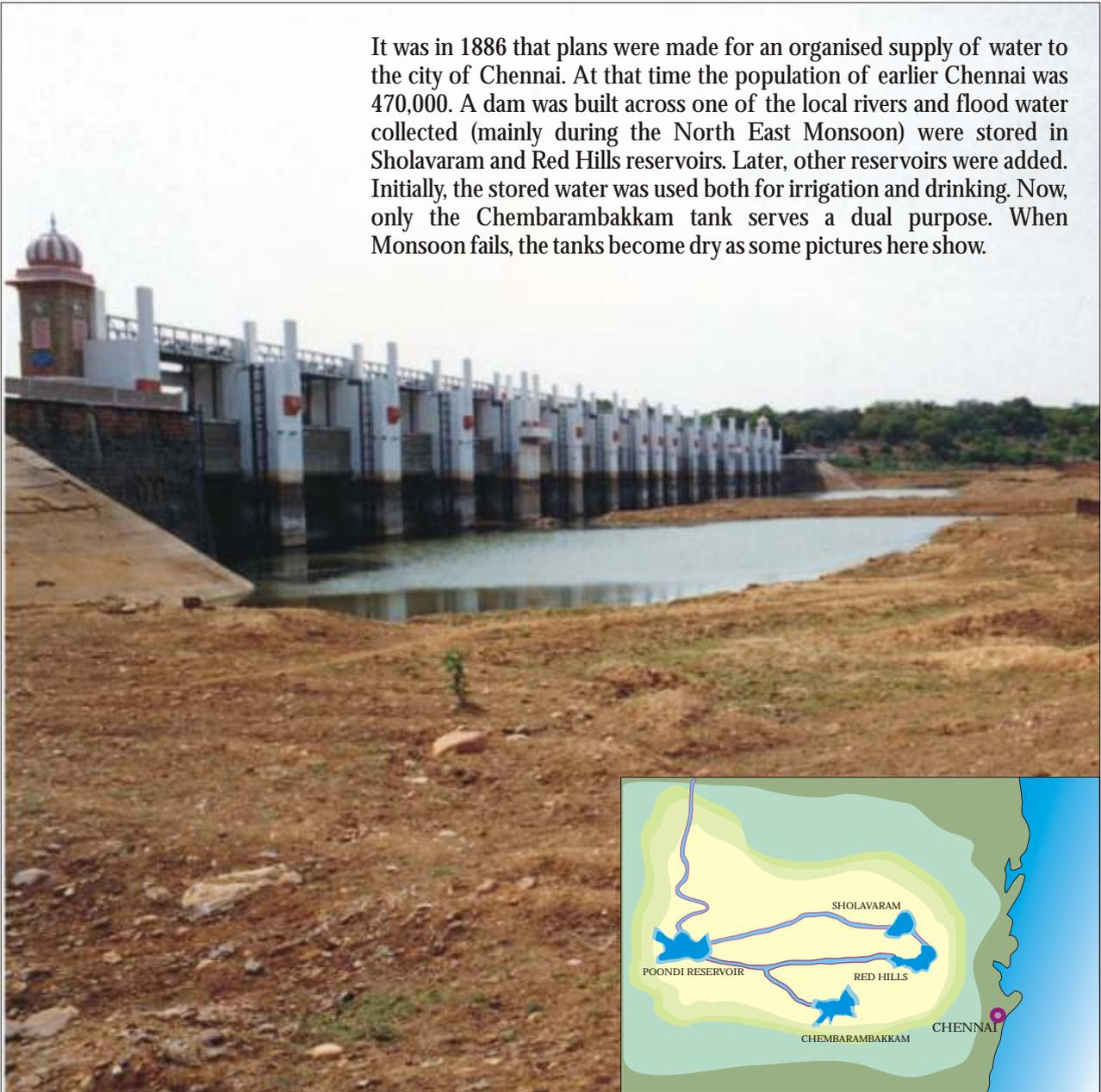


As early as the sixties, drinking water had become a problem in Chennai, and it was clear that local rain water as collected in Red Hills and other such reservoirs was insufficient. The search was on for additional sources.





It was in 1886 that plans were made for an organised supply of water to the city of Chennai. At that time the population of earlier Chennai was 470,000. A dam was built across one of the local rivers and flood water collected (mainly during the North East Monsoon) were stored in Sholavaram and Red Hills reservoirs. Later, other reservoirs were added. Initially, the stored water was used both for irrigation and drinking. Now, only the Chembarambakkam tank serves a dual purpose. When Monsoon fails, the tanks become dry as some pictures here show.



A view of Poondi reservoir



Chembarambakkam



Red Hills



The Krishna Water Project was completed in 1996. The Kandaluru-Poondi Chnnel was supposed to deliver a minimum of 12 TMC of water annually. However, as a result of heavy erosion, seepage, etc., the average delivery was less than 4 TMC. Thus, Chennai's drinking water problems were far from over.





Dam across Krishna river at Srisailem



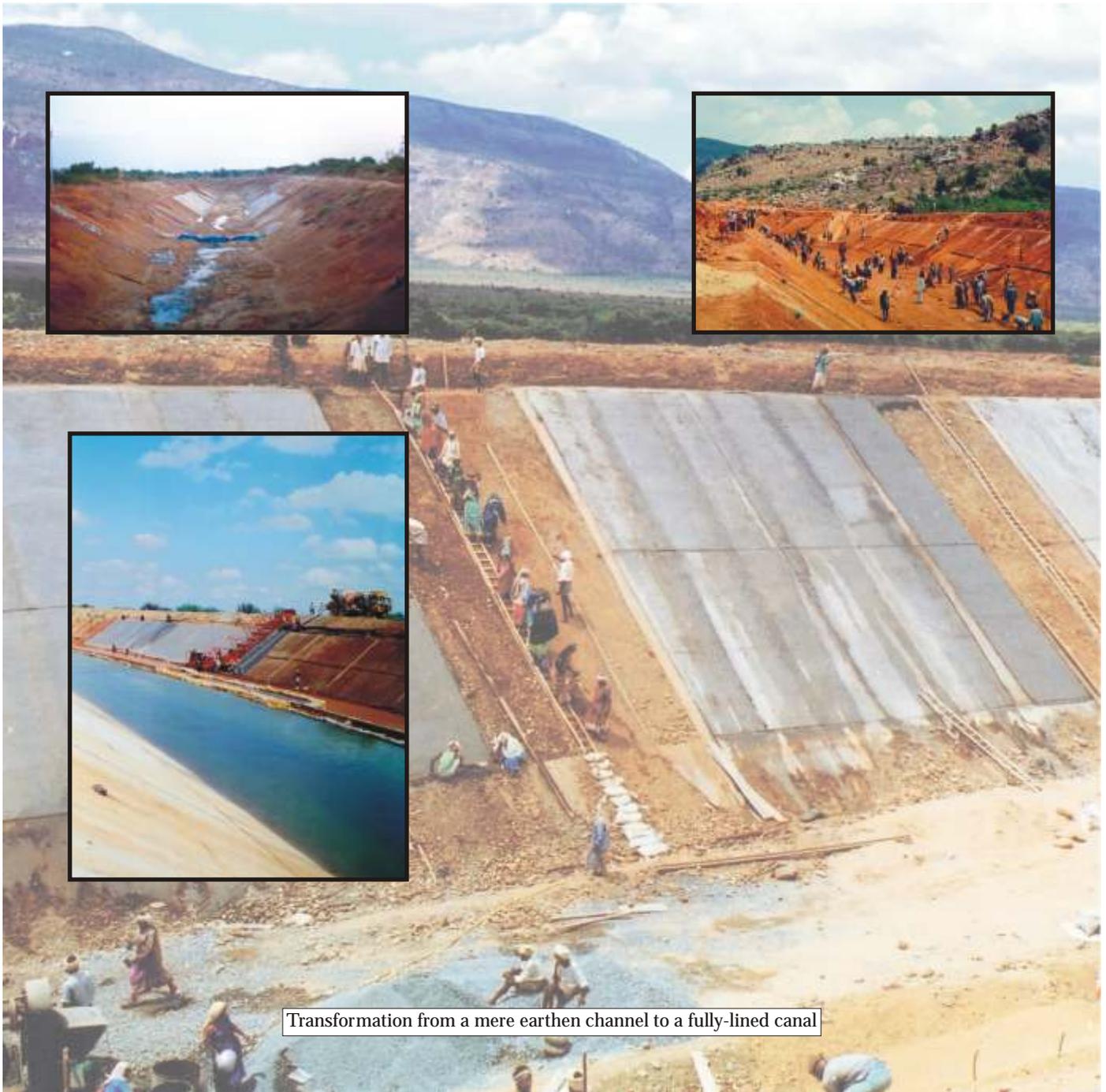
Krishna river up north seemed the best answer to Chennai's water problem. In 1968, the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu signed an agreement whereby Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh agreed to release each 5 TMC annually from their share of Krishna water to Tamil Nadu for meeting the needs of Chennai. Subsequently, Andhra Pradesh formulated a scheme whereby Krishna water would be taken all the way to Chennai via intermediate reservoirs at Somasila and Kandaleru. This scheme was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983 in the presence of the then Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.



Photos taken during the inauguration of the Krishna Water Supply Project for Chennai in 1983



A special feature of the Project has been the use of HIGH DENSITY POLYETHYLENE sheets as water-tight membrane under the cement concrete lining.



Transformation from a mere earthen channel to a fully-lined canal



## Statistics

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Soil excavation.....       | 11,00,000 cubic meters |
| Hard rock excavation.....  | 80, 000 cubic meters   |
| Stone masonry work.....    | 15,000 cubic meters    |
| Rough stone revetment..... | 30,000 cubic meters    |
| Cement Concrete Guniting   | 2,35,000 square meters |
| Cement Concrete Lining..   | 1,85,000 square meters |

## THE TRINITY WITHIN

Man is the crown jewel of Creation. Among the living beings, he is the highest and the noblest. Human birth is the greatest of all and it is therefore imperative that life is lived properly.

From where does human life derive its sanctity and value? Is it the body or the human form that confers value to human life? No, it is not the body because that is made up merely of the perishable flesh and bones. However, this very same body is also the residence of the *Atma* and that is what makes human life so valuable.

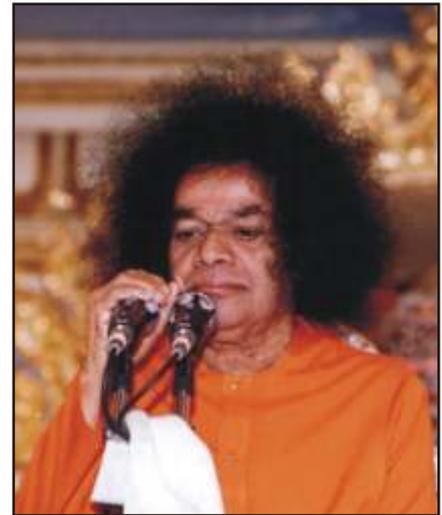
Divinity manifests in the individual as three Sacred Principles: The Principle of the *Atma*, the Principle of the Mind, and the Principle of the Word. Maheswara, Vishnu and Brahma are associated with these three interrelated Principles. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara have no specific form but manifest in the individual as the three Principles mentioned.

In the individual, Absolute Consciousness or the *Atma* functions as the Conscience; its residence is the Heart. From the *Atma*, is born the Mind, which has cognitive power. It is the Mind that enables us to cognize both the outside world as well as the world within. The Mind in turn is the fountainhead of word and speech.

In short, man is three Divine Principles all rolled into one. That is, he is a composite of the Heart, the Mind and the body; and Ishwara, Vishnu and Brahma provide the subtle basis for these three aspects of man.

Man is misusing the Divine Power latent in him. Though gifted with a pristine Heart, like a fool he is behaving as if he is heartless. Man must remember that the Heart is the very seat of God and live constantly immersed in the thought of God.

Vishnu is embodied as the Mind. The Mind is extremely powerful and the most important instrument of man. It must therefore always remain unsullied and nectarine in nature. Vishnu is ever calm and smiling. Reflecting these aspects, the Mind must be ever calm, serene and radiate joy.



Finally, man must remember that he has been blessed with the gift of speech, symbolised by Brahma. In short, man is capable of speaking, thinking and feeling. The Word represents Brahma, the Mind represents Vishnu, and the Heart represents Ishwara. Thus man himself represents the Divine Trinity.

The Heart is intrinsically pure, sacred and auspicious, and must never be allowed to become polluted. Always maintain the purity of your Heart. Don't abuse any person, don't criticize others and don't accuse any one.

True Word is Brahma. Pure Mind is Vishnu, and Pure Heart is Ishwara. Recognize this truth and maintain the purity of your Heart. Be firm in the faith that a Pure Heart is Ishwara, that a Pure Mind is Vishnu, and that Pure Speech is Brahma. Rooted in this faith, make proper use of your God-given facilities. Good results would inevitably follow, and in the end you are certain to merge with the Lord. Pure Speech, Pure Mind, and Pure Heart are the true manifestations of Selfless Love.

EXCERPTS FROM A DISCOURSE BY  
SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

DEAR READER,

Continuing our feature Getting Spiritually Better, we offer below the ninth instalment. We hope you like it, and would share it with others who are interested in enquiry and self-improvement. Do write and tell us what you think, how you find it, whether it is useful, and in what ways this feature can be improved.

Thank you and Jai Sai Ram.

## CONCERNING MIND AND SENSE CONTROL

Swami says that new-born babies are Pure. That is why He often cites Jesus Christ who always wanted us to be Pure like children. Swami adds, "Be like a child for at least five minutes a day!" If babies are Pure at birth, then what happens to them when they grow up? How does impurity get in and spoil the person? Why is it that some are more susceptible and vulnerable to contamination while others are able to resist? All these questions have an answer.

A new-born baby does not know anything about the external world. It barely knows even its mother. It is in its natural state, which is a state of Bliss. We have all seen tiny babies smiling beautifully sometimes. Why does the baby smile? Has it won a huge fortune? It knows nothing about the world, and yet it smiles; how come? Swami gives the answer. He says the baby is in communion with God and that is why it is smiling. Happiness is Union with God, that is all. However, very soon the situation changes drastically. Day by day, the baby becomes increasingly aware of the external world, and pretty soon it develops attachments to people, to objects, and so on. It learns to be possessive that is why children fight intensely over toys, for example. Incidentally, it is increasing contact with the external world that makes past tendencies to surface and further shape the attitude as well as the behaviour of the child. What are these past tendencies? They are the ones that have been acquired in earlier births. As

Swami has told us many times, when a person dies, it is the body that perishes; the mind does not. It is the so-called subtle body and it survives death. This subtle body then enters a womb, and brings with it all past tendencies.

These past tendencies are called *Vasanas*. There could be good *Vasanas* as well as undesirable ones. In life, we must get rid of the bad ones. Swami says that getting rid of bad tendencies is what spirituality is really all about!

How do these bad tendencies or spiritual impurities arise? Impurities arise basically from attachments of one type or the other. Attachments are born of desires and desires are promoted by the senses. If the desires are fulfilled, then it leads to one kind of problem. If the feeling of desire is there and it is not fulfilled, then it leads to another kind of problem; there is frustration, leading to jealousy etc.

One might ask: "So, what? What problems do these impurities cause, if any?" Well, to start with, impurities can push one deeply into the world of duality, which means that one would face a never-ending cycle of pleasure and pain, perhaps more of pain and sorrow than pleasure. That is the first problem with impurities. Second is that one can never get back to God and merge with Him. Swami says that from God we all have come and to Him we MUST return. If we focus on the world, we would get stuck in the world, indeed for eternity! If we want to go back to God, then perforce we have to focus on Him. And impurities prevent this focus in many ways.

Let us now get back to desires, worldly

desires that is, because they form the starting point of all trouble. How come people develop desires? How does a baby that is innocent at birth, soon becomes afflicted with desires of one kind or the other? This is a deep and fundamental question, and Bhagavan Baba has given the answer. He says that basically all individuals want to be happy. Actually, they want Bliss because Bliss is their natural state remember God is Bliss, and we all are sparks of the Divine. The tiny baby is blissful because it knows where to find it instinctively, it seeks Bliss inside; it does so because it knows nothing about the external world yet. But soon it becomes increasingly preoccupied with the external world. It sees many attractive things in the world. Until now, the baby knew only Bliss; but now, it falls for the worldly attractions, wrongly imagining that they would lead to Bliss. They of course do not, and this is how the baby gets conned. It gets joy no doubt but there is also the pain that follows pleasure. The baby does not understand that pleasure and pain form an inseparable pair. In fact, even after the baby grows into an adult, the lesson is still not learnt. The adult hangs on to the same belief, i.e., one can find unalloyed and eternal pleasure in the world. Swami asks, "How can you, when the world itself is temporary? CAN THAT WHICH IS TRANSIENT EVER CONFER PERMANENT HAPPINESS?" But this obvious logic is not grasped by 99.999999% of humanity. People imagine that the anti-dote to pain is more pleasure, without realising that this opens the way for more pain!

Some are more gullible to the false attractions of the world while others

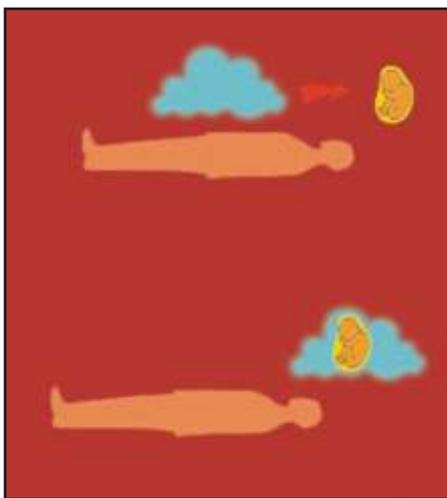
are not. Why? This depends very much on the history of the previous births of the person concerned. Those who have practiced austerities in earlier births and evolved spiritually would be less susceptible to the ephemeral attractions of the world. Those who are still spiritually 'raw' would yield easily to worldly temptations. However, whatever the past, everyone can, if he or she so determines, change the course. A person may be born poor but can become rich through careful strategy and hard work many have actually done so and the rags-to-riches story is not entirely unfamiliar. In the same way, everyone can alter his or her destiny, instead of being a prisoner of the past, provided the yearning is there. Incidentally, the appearance of the *Avatar* promotes this urge in many who would otherwise have remained indifferent to the Divine.

OK, we want to change, we want to improve, and we want to avoid succumbing to the false attractions of the world. What is the secret formula? Mind and sense control is the formula! In this context, Swami makes an important observation. He says that first there is the *Atma* or soul. The Mind is born of the *Atma*, and the body along with the sense organs comes later it is gross, and therefore lowest on the totem pole. This therefore is the hierarchy: *Atma*, mind, senses. Seen in this light, the Mind is the boss of the senses, and the *Atma* is the boss of the Mind.

In practical terms it means that the mind must dictate the senses and control it, instead of the other way around. In turn, the mind must obey the *Atma*.

This is a very important point whose nuances need to be stressed. These days, the media in collusion with the market, is out to influence every person to go for everything that satisfies greed, lust etc. The newspapers and TV are all the time urging everyone to do this or that or buy this and that. They all do this because they want our cash; they couldn't care less if in the process we degenerate. The senses are promptly tempted and the message is passed on to the mind, "Hey, listen, there is this

great thing, don't miss it. It is full of fun and pleasure," or something like that. In a weak person the Mind yields sometimes with a token struggle, sometimes with no struggle at all. The Mind, which ought to have an independent opinion and judgement, is now reduced to being a servant of the senses and goes by what they recommend. This is NOT correct. Swami says that the Mind should be the MASTER OF THE SENSES. It will be so if it follows the *Atma*. If the Mind follows the *Atma* and keeps the senses under tight control, then man can ascend to God. If, however, the Mind yields to the senses and comes under their control then man is sure to descend to the level of animals or even that of the devil.



In a nutshell, we become impure when we fall a prey to the worldly attractions. We fall a prey when we do not exercise control over the senses. To keep the senses under check, the Mind must follow the *Atma* on the one hand, and dominate over the senses on the other.

Ignorant people may ask the question: "Is this not a kill-joy prescription? If God did not want us to enjoy, why then did He create all the attractions in the first place?" Swami has given a clear answer to this question. Let us take the senses first. Yes, God gave senses to the animals for survival. The senses alert about external dangers, and also make the being conscious of the things that the external world can offer, like food, water, etc. Man, who has evolved from the lower form of species, also has been gifted with the senses; however, that does not mean that they ought to be

used the same way that lower species use them; in fact, in some aspects, man behaves much worse than animals. The animals have not made the pursuit of sensual pleasures a full-time vocation; whatever they do is, to use Swami's phrase, in accordance with 'reason and season'. But for man, the pursuit of sensual pleasure has become an addiction, with no reason and season. Indeed, the 'pleasure industry' taking all aspects of it is a multi-trillion dollar industry. Day by day, the power of this industry is increasing, sucking more and more people into the turbulent whirlpool.

God did not intend man to misuse the senses in this manner. Take for example the eyes. Swami asks: "Why has God given you eyes? Is it look at filth and obscenity or to enjoy the *Darshan* of the Lord? Why has God given you the power of hearing? Is it to hear filthy gossip or the stories of the Lord and His Glory?"

To get back to the point about the so-called 'kill-joy prescription', God does not say, you should not derive happiness by eating; eat by all means, but not any and every foul thing; eat what is wholesome, and has been consecrated by first offering to the Lord. God does not say close your eyes and move about the world like a blind person. Rather, He wants us to see what is good and turn away from what is not good. In short, the senses must be used in a regulated manner; otherwise, they would behave like a runaway horse; and that could cause all kinds of problems, besides retarding spiritual progress. Finally, the prescription may sound like kill-joy but it only kills worldly joy; in its place, it leads to Bliss, which is nothing but permanent happiness it is permanent because it is connected with the Divine.

OK, Mind and sense control is necessary; but is this not difficult? Yes, but not all that difficult, if one makes the effort. One must try and try again; if one is dogged and determined, one WILL succeed. Take eating meat, for example. Many have felt that they just could not live without meat but have successfully given it up. How did they manage to do it? They simply said: "I love Swami. Let me do this for Him."

The power of their Love was so strong that it gave them enough strength to overcome the craving for meat. Yes, thousands HAVE given up meat, drinking, smoking, watching TV endlessly, reading useless books, etc., as a 'gift' to Swami. In other words, if one uses Love as the anchor, the impossible does not seem impossible anymore. Yes it would take some effort but it can be done. Perhaps it may not happen instantly but can happen reasonably fast, if there is the will.

Doubts may exist: "OK, I have achieved Mind and Sense Control (MSC); but what good does it do to me?" Well, MSC helps in many ways. First and foremost, it promotes equanimity. Equanimity means that one does not get ruffled, carried away, or excited by what happens. It means that one is able to take everything in one's stride. Krishna declares in the *Gita* that Equanimity is a Prince among the *Yogas*.

Equanimity is very valuable in practice. It is a virtue that enables one to be objective in one's judgement and cool during a crisis. Actually, these qualities are much desired in Corporate Managers and Political Leaders. In that sense, equanimity is a virtue with many practical applications; but to achieve it, one must go inwards and quell the enemies that threaten balance. Let us say there is a certain unpleasant situation. The situation actually happens in the external world. If one allows external forces to dictate the Mind, then the reaction to the situation could be disastrous. One could end up losing one's courage, or losing one's balance by getting angry, or losing one's capacity for correct decision making. If, however, the Mind is controlled from within, then the external situation can be faced calmly. Equanimity is of great importance in spirituality too. It cannot be achieved unless internal enemies are conquered; and conquest of 'internal enemies' is always high on the agenda of all spiritual aspirants.

We normally think that enemies exist outside. This is incorrect. We have greater enemies inside than the worst external enemy one can think of. Krishna teaches that one can never wage a successful war against external enemies unless one has first vanquished

or at least brought under control the internal enemies. It has already been mentioned that by internal enemies, we mean things like lust, anger, jealousy, etc. There is only one weapon for annihilating these monsters: Mind and Sense Control.

In this context, it is pertinent to recall the circumstances under which Krishna preached the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna. The Pandavas wanted to wage war with the Kaurava clan, because the latter were consistently resorting to *Adharma* and causing suffering to them [the Pandavas]. Arjuna, in particular, was very keen to fight. But when he enters the battlefield, he is overwhelmed. He wants to withdraw, and gives various reasons why there should be no war. Superficially, the reasons advanced by Arjuna seem convincing. However, the principle defect in his line of reasoning is that he was not objective in his analysis; rather, he has allowed himself to be swayed by various personal considerations. This is what Krishna objects to, adding that Arjuna's faulty reasoning was entirely the result of his body attachment. Krishna then prepares Arjuna for battle by 'educating' him in such a manner that attachment is removed. Attachment cannot be removed while the deadly internal enemies are still hanging around; they have to be eliminated first, and that is why MSC is important. Life is a battle; and if we are to face it, then we must perforce get rid first of all our internal enemies.

OK. MSC is achieved, and all internal enemies are kept in check. Then what? Well, one is now ready to go though life performing one's duty as the Good Lord intends us to. How? Let us again refer to the *Gita*. Arjuna refused to fight. Krishna says, "Nothing doing; get up and fight." Now Krishna could have contented Himself with just giving a military-style pep talk like generals do on the eve of battle. However, Krishna went far beyond such a routine pep talk. He explained the whole purpose of action, duty, etc., and how exactly they must be performed, in the context of God, Creation and man.

This is a very important point. Action is the essence of the Universe there is always action, action of various kinds

and in various places. Nothing can ever remain still; things are always happening. Now action can be divided into two broad categories: meaningful action and meaningless action. Unfortunately, most of the actions performed these days by man belong to the latter category. What then is a meaningful action? This is what Krishna explains clearly and in great depth.

Meaningful action is that which is in consonance with the spirit of the *Atma*. This might sound like a mysterious statement. However, the mystery would be removed soon with adequate explanation. Action in consonance with the spirit of the *Atma* is often referred to as *Atma Dharma*. The *Bhagavad Gita*, is, if one might say so, a manual for the practice of *Atma Dharma*. Now what is this *Atma Dharma*? It simply means righteous action performed in consonance with the nature of the *Atma*. Does that mean that there are other kinds of *Dharma*? Yes of course there are. One might perform what one honestly believes is righteous action that is in accord with the perceptions of the body and the mind. Here, the Mind and body-consciousness are the motivating factors for the action. Therefore, this does not come under the category of *Atma Dharma*. Action of this type is described as *Para Dharma*. Does that mean that all the people who follow *Para Dharma* are on the wrong track? Not exactly; just that they are on a track that is inadequate. In what way? Well, following *Para Dharma* might be safe most of the time, but, because of its limited perspective, it can land persons in tough moral dilemmas; on such occasions, one is left high and dry, and totally clueless. This precisely is where *Atma Dharma* comes to the rescue; all this would be duly amplified in a later issue.

Meanwhile, the following can be said. Arjuna was making a faulty judgement because he was being guided by considerations of body attachment. In other words, he was facing a dilemma because he was trying to follow *Para Dharma*. Krishna says, "You must follow *Atma Dharma*. In that case, the course of your action becomes crystal clear; there would be no dilemmas." From there on, Krishna explains what

is meant by the *Atma*, what *Atma Dharma* implies, etc. Incidentally, Mind and sense control are absolutely essential for following *Atma Dharma*. This *Atma Dharma* must be followed not merely for avoiding moral dilemmas and so on. The prime purpose is that it would lead one rapidly towards God. *Atma Dharma* is what enables one to spiritualise every activity in life. And it is only when life is spiritualised, that one can eventually merge with God.

In the following chapter, some of the nuances of *Atma Dharma* are spelt out in some detail. Before concluding this chapter, two points may be made. Firstly, Swami attaches a lot of importance to *Atma Dharma*. Secondly, He sometimes links the last word of the last chapter of the *Gita* with the first word of the first chapter. When so combined, the word that results is *Mama Dharma*. It means 'my *Dharma*'. Swami says that 'my *Dharma*' is nothing but *Atma Dharma*. Once again, Mind and sense control is a vital prerequisite for the practice of *Atma Dharma*. And following *Atma Dharma* is a must for getting back to God.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES RELATING TO THE ABOVE

Senses are physical organs that allow the body to contact the outside world, obtain information about it and also communicate with it. In the language of computers, they are like I/O [Input/Output] devices.

- There are two aspects to the senses: The information gathering part and the cognitive part. To give an example, the eye is like a TV camera; it receives a picture and transmits it to the brain, where the information is processed and then recognised. Swami sometimes uses the Sanskrit words related to these two aspects. They are: *Karmendriyas* or organs of sensing and *Jnanendriyas* or organs of perception.
- In spirituality, the term Mind and sense control is often used. Lest the word 'control' is misunderstood, it is to be stressed that control really means regulation. Control implies

an external force whereas regulation implies an internal stipulation.

- Everyone would agree that soldiers must observe discipline, especially in regard to physical fitness. In the same way, the seeker or the spiritual soldier must observe sense and mental regulation; and this discipline must really come from within - there can be no two opinions about that.
- Thus, sense and Mind control really refers to regulation rather than control. The use of the word control is unfortunate, especially as it arouses all kinds of suspicions. Regulation is always desirable. A simple example. A boy may like chocolates very much. If he eats too much, then he will have plenty of problems with his teeth, not to mention other kinds of problems also. Regulation means a strict watch on the amount of chocolates consumed. Though regulation may start off as the result of external advice or even compulsion, it can be sustained only through one's own sense of determination.
- Regulation is a kind of self-discipline. Such discipline is observed [though in a limited sense] even by people with worldly objectives. For example, a tennis star aspiring to win the Wimbledon title subjects himself to a strict timetable and life style. Such discipline is even more essential for the spiritual seeker.
- Swami compares all this with the use of brakes in a car. He says that it is stupid to drive a car with one foot on the brakes. At the same time, one must not only make sure that brakes are in perfect condition but must also know how to use them properly when the need arises. In life, one must make sure there is a brake for every activity connected with the senses.
- The senses which are outward looking would see something "attractive" and tell the Mind, "Hey, this is great, allow me to try it!" The Mind must be strict and sternly reply, "Nothing doing!"

- Of course this is not what usually happens. So the question arises: "Why do the senses and the Mind often go astray?" Basically this is due to the traits inherited from earlier births. As has been pointed out, human birth comes after many earlier births in lower forms. In all these forms, the outlook is purely external. Some of the traits acquired in earlier births may still survive, and it is these past tendencies or *Vasanas* as they are called, that often lead the senses and the Mind astray.
- Agreed that *Vasanas* can lay traps; so what is one to do? That precisely is where Mind and sense regulation comes into the picture. Like the aspiring tennis star, one must, for the sake of spiritual progress, make a conscious effort at regulation.
- OK, but how does one do this? Here, the following analogy would help. Suppose we want to keep the body fit. Then one important requirement is that we stay away from "junk" food. In the same way, the senses and the Mind must be fed only healthy "food", and kept away from junk.
- Baba strongly emphasises this point about giving proper "food" to the senses and the Mind. He says that these organs consume subtle food, as opposed to the physical food that we feed to the body. Just as the physical food must be pure and healthy, so also the subtle food.
- But what exactly does that mean? Swami has explained. Basically it means: See no evil, see what is good. Hear no evil, hear what is good. Do no evil, do what is good. Think no evil, think what is good.
- Any simple way to achieve all this? Yes, and Baba has explained all that. He says, "Avoid bad company and seek good company. Then you are off to a great start!"
- Add to these the simple teachings that Baba gives like, TALK LESS, HAVE LESS LUGGAGE, etc. All these relate to self-regulation.

- In this context, mention must also be made of the six great enemies of man who are constantly on the lookout to penetrate within. They are: *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada*, and *Matsarya*, meaning, lust and desire, anger, greed and miserliness, attachment, pride, and jealousy. Verily they are like cancer and must be kept out. Only strict regulation as discussed above can do that. As Baba says, these enemies will try to get a toe-hold, pretending to be friends. But once they get lodged inside, they will not stop short of total destruction.
- Now why is regulation important in life? What if one indulges in self-gratification, but takes care of the body suitably? This is an important question. To appreciate the answer, one must first of all understand why God endowed beings with senses remember, animals like the tiger, for example, also have eyes, ears, nose etc. God endowed beings with senses in order to survive in the external world and in order to protect themselves from danger. For example, thanks to the senses, the tiger is able to go in search of water, and the deer is able to run for its life when it sees a tiger.
- Senses can and must perform similar functions in the case of man also. But man must be very careful about the use of the senses. In the case of animals, there is no question of misuse of the senses. They live according to a built-in program, and they have no mind that can distract, offer choice, etc. To use Baba's words, they function in accordance with "season and reason". It is only man who acts as if there is "no reason or any season".
- Man is liable to temptation, and the senses, in collusion with the Mind, play a great part in leading man down the path of sin to disaster. That is why regulation is required.
- These days, people ask: "So what if man commits what you call sin? You may not like it but I do. What's there to prevent me from acting the way I want?" The answer is simple: "There is nothing to prevent, but there is always a price to pay. In some cases Society will extract the payment and in the other cases, Destiny will, through the Law of *Karma*. There is no free lunch."
- There is a more important point that goes beyond mere punishment or retribution. The purpose of life is to go back to God. In other words, life must be a journey to God. And this journey is not possible without appropriate sense and Mind regulation. Without sense and Mind control, one would go in the opposite direction, only to be trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Incidentally, Baba often says in His Discourses: *JANTUNAAM NARAJANMA DURLABHAM*. It means that birth in human form is a rare and precious gift from God; we had therefore better make good use of the opportunity given to us.
- In brief, regulation of the senses and the Mind is a must for a seeker; there is no escape from it. If a person claims to be a seeker, then that person must be prepared to voluntarily impose on himself/herself such regulation, and practice self-control.
- One must appreciate that in a human being, the Mind plays a double role, a lower role, if one may say so, and also a higher role. The lower role is common to animals while the higher role is unique to humans. Naturally, one expects the higher role to be more dominant in humans.
- Swami sometimes says, man is an M, B, A, meaning that he is a composite of the MIND, THE BODY, and the ATMA. Man's life must exhibit a harmonious blend of these three aspects.
- *Buddhi* is the vital link between the higher Mind and Conscience. If *Buddhi* is weak, then man will be dominated by the senses acting in collusion with the lower Mind. If *Buddhi* is strong, there will be balance.
- The external forces are very strong [especially these days], and will always try to drag the Mind outside. The senses will say, "Hey! You got to try this thing; it is really great!" When the Mind yields, it makes a lower choice. If the Mind says, "Get lost!" then it is making the higher and of course the correct choice!
- Man's personality reflects internal hierarchy. In an evolved person, the *Atma* dictates the Mind, the Mind dictates the senses, and the body acts in accordance with a sacred discipline. In an inferior person, the senses and the Mind dwell in the external world, shutting out the influence of the *Atma*. The life of such a person is thus nothing to write home about.
- Today, sensuality is being extensively encouraged by demonic forces organised as the pleasure industry, and acting in unholy collusion with money-greedy media. There is a reckless promotion of individuality, all in the name of "freedom". As Baba says, the one who talks of such freedom is actually a slave, slave to the senses.
- Promotion of and aggressive marketing of sensuality is severely disrupting modern Society. Civilisation grew by people coming together for common good. That is why Baba emphasises that man must seek spiritual elevation by seeking good company and doing good in Society [see, for example, the Divine Discourse delivered on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2002, on the occasion of the Deepavali festival].
- Sensuality has trapped man into the dungeon of "I", "Me" and "Mine". Indeed, even the concept of the family, held sacred for thousands of years by people of all faiths and all civilisations, is now being sacrificed in order to promote evil trades, desires, etc. Can one have a solid without atoms? Similarly, can one think of human Society without having the family as the basic building block? Yet, that is the impossible experiment that

modern civilisation is currently trying.

- Notwithstanding all this, people grumble: “Listen, there is no point in talking about all this. Let us face facts. When people are being constantly bombarded by the media to succumb to desires of all kinds, when one is literally forced to buy beyond one's means in order to keep up with the Joneses, how can one practice Mind and Sense Control? Even *Rishis* would find it almost impossible! Such is today's situation!”
- One must concede that this is a powerful argument. Ordinary mortals cannot easily resist such sustained and massive pressure. But there is one agent that can make the impossible possible. That is Love. Suppose one simply says: “I don't care whether this is possible or not. I will not get involved in all those arguments. Swami does so much for me. He gives me so much Love. I must do something for Him in return. So I will do this for Him, as an expression of Love”. Such a resolve is not all that naïve. People have given their lives for their country. Here, one is not asking life to be sacrificed, but only unwanted desires, and that too for God! Incidentally, Baba is most considerate and does not say, “No you should not have a car”, and things like that. If a car is required for various genuine reasons, then one can have a car. Only, one must get attached to it, or regard it as a status symbol, keep changing cars just to be one up, etc.
- It is pertinent to mention here briefly, the kind of discipline that was prescribed in ancient India, since Baba makes references to it often. Swami points out the goals of life prescribed by the ancients that are enshrined in the *Purusharthaas*. Essentially they prescribe priorities in life, three important features of which are: 1) All actions must be based on *Dharma*, 2) Worldly desires must be kept in check, and 3) Liberation and merger with God must be the goal. It is worth

looking and studying in detail what Baba has to say on this matter.

- In ancient India, there was also a code that spelt out how a man must put into practice the *dictats* mentioned above. From the age of five to the age of say eighteen, the boy is supposed to live as a *Brahmachari*. A *Brahmachari*, as the term itself indicates, is supposed to focus on Brahman, i.e., God, which automatically implies not only being immersed in the study of the scriptures, but also turning away from worldly desires of ALL kinds. In fact, he must live like a renunciate or *Sannyasi*, and beg for food. A *Sannyasi* and a *Brahmachari* were expected to regard the entire world as their family; thus, seeking alms was not considered as begging or demeaning but as an expression of the feeling of Universality. After eighteen, the young man got married, entering what was called the *Grahastha* stage. In this phase, the man and his wife became partners in sustaining *Dharma* in Society. That is why the wife was called *Saha-dharmini*, meaning one who had equal share in sustaining *Dharma* in Society. How was this done? The man and wife took care of elders at home, gave charity as possible, welcomed guests as God extending due hospitality to them, worshipped God duly besides encouraging their children to do so, and in general helped the community in all possible ways. When the children grew up, the parents withdrew into themselves to focus more on God and observe all possible austerities as prescribed. This stage called *Vanaprashtha* literally meant withdrawing into the forest; but operationally what it implied was simple and totally detached living. At a still later age, the man became a *Sannyasi*, snapping all bonds, including with his family.
- What is to be noted here is that people belonging to every strata of Society had to follow *Dharma*, and at every stage in life. *Dharma* cannot be observed unless there is self-discipline, and that is why there was peace and prosperity in those

days.

- One cannot glibly say that *Dharma* will not work in today's tech Society or irrelevant. Such myths are regularly being manufactured by vested interests. Morality cannot simply be dismissed for the entire Universe rests on a Moral Law. As Gandhi put it, there is a Moral Law governing the Universe.
- There is also another important point regarding morals and morality. It just cannot be fragmented, as people, often driven by self-interest try to do. In eastern societies, people often think, mistakenly of course, that they can have a personal relationship with God involving rituals, prayers, etc., but can flout *Dharma* in Society in all ways that suits them. Thus it is one finds many unscrupulous businessmen, who think they can wipe out any possible sins they have committed by paying “conscience money”. In Western Society, on the other hand, people are often very fussy about community ethics but care two hoots about personal morality. Both are unacceptable, and both harm society in their own ways. Once again, Morality is one whole and cannot be trimmed as one likes.
- To summarise:
  - One must go through life focussed on the real goal, i.e., God.
  - For this journey, internal purity is a must.
  - This internal purity cannot come without Mind and sense regulation.
  - Such regulation does not mean that one has to live like a hermit. Baba is most emphatic about that. He merely says that one must not crave for things of the world and thus become a slave to desires.
  - Self-regulation means using the “brakes” when required, and not driving with the foot on the brake.
  - Mind and sense regulation is needed for several reasons. 1) Self-advancement, 2) playing a proper role in Society, and 3) for making the world a better place to live in.
  - Mind and self-regulation would make an individual into a proper

and concerned citizen. And when such concerned citizens work, say, in a company, that organisation would function as a corporate citizen.

Regulation cannot be fragmented. Regulation must be with respect to one's individual relationship with God and also with respect to one's relationship with the community and Society.

In other words, one cannot say only private morality but no social morals or vice versa. Morality is one whole and cannot be split to suit individual convenience.

Particular attention must be given to channelising the enormous and highly creative energies of youth along proper directions. Just to give an example, a very high percentage of the computer hackers, and virus producers are young people. They do such things for "kicks" and so-called excitement. Should one derive pleasure by causing problems for others?

#### POINTS TO PONDER OVER

- These days when there is a tremendous bombardment by the media to enslave our Minds, we must give serious attention to Swami's advice that "we learn to see not through the eyes of others but with our own eyes; not hear through the ears of others but with our own ears," and so on.
- Baba also often draws attention to the presence of the five elements within us. He says that the five elements outside, meaning the environment, cannot remain unpolluted if the five elements within are polluted. In other words, external pollution begins first with internal pollution. This is a very important point that does not receive as much serious attention, as it ought to, despite many Bal Vikas programs that are routinely staged. How many of these children are helped, for example to minimise TV viewing?
- Look up the proceedings of the Summer Course held in Ooty in 1976. It is entitled, *Summer Roses in the Blue Mountains*. There, Swami

begins many a Discourse with words like: "Why have you been given eyes? Is it for seeing anything and everything?" and so on.

- Another thing that Swami sometimes says in His Discourse is: "You have come here. Before you return, offer at least one bad habit to Me! I do not want your gifts; it is enough if you give up and surrender at least one bad habit. I would be most satisfied with that!" Which *Guru* on earth would talk like that!
- In some Sai centres, they sometimes have a sacred fire, and devotees are asked to write on a piece of paper one undesirable habit [e.g., smoking] that they would like to get rid of. They are then invited to drop that piece of paper into the fire. No one knows what has been sacrificed, but the devotee has made a solemn promise to the fire God and thereafter, it is up to the devotee to remain true to his/her promise. Community functions like this can lead to a lot of "cleaning up".

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#### ASSIGNMENTS

- Suppose a Teacher or a Parent were to come to me and ask: "How to motivate young children to be good? How to guide them?" What answer should I give? What guidance can I offer? How to deflect the minds of the young from the meaningless external attractions? [Trekking? Observing Nature? Creative Craft? Music?]

#### SELF AUDIT

- Swami is often so very child-like. How can I also be like that? [Swami often says, "Be like a child for at least five minutes a day!" This does not mean that one should be CHILDISH! Rather, it means that one must be INNOCENT AND PURE LIKE A CHILD!]

What bad *Vasanas* do I still have? How specifically should I get rid of them? ■

## Is There No God?

**THERE IS NO GOD.** All of the wonders around us are accidental. No almighty hand made a thousand billion stars. They made themselves. No power keeps them on their steady course. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts. Without the magnetic poles man would be unable to navigate the reckless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there.

How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy. Without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die. Why does snow sit on mountain tops waiting for the warm spring sun to melt it at just at the right time for the young crops in farms below to drink? A very lovely accident.

The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? A kidney will filter poison from the blood, and leave good things alone. How does it know one from the other? Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to all other animals?

Who showed a womb how to take the love of two persons and keep splitting a tiny ovum until, in time, a baby would have the proper number of fingers, eyes and ears and hair when it is strong enough to sustain life? Is there no God?

-By Jim Bishop



## Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow

There are two days in every week that we should not worry about. Two days that should be kept from fear and apprehension.

One is yesterday, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed, forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed, nor can we erase a single word we've said. Yesterday is gone!

The other day we shouldn't worry about is tomorrow, with its impossible adversaries, its burden, its hopeful promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is beyond our control. Tomorrow's sun will rise either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds, and until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow, for it is yet unborn.

This leaves only one day - Today! Any person can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when we add the burdens of yesterday and tomorrow that we break down. It is not the experience of today that drives people mad. It is the remorse of bitterness for something which happened yesterday and the dread of what tomorrow may bring.

Let us therefore, live one day at a time!

## RENDEZVOUS WITH ANIL KUMAR

**Introduction:**

It is said that Prasanthi Nilayam is Swami's office, Brindavan is His home and Kodaikanal is His playground. In a manner of speaking, this is so particularly where Kodaikanal is concerned, for it is here, that one gets a glimpse of the Sai of the Forties, especially where Divine *Leelas* are concerned. It all lasts only a few weeks, but what extraordinary weeks they are, for those blessed to enjoy Divine intimacy then!

Kodaikanal is a hill station in South India about four hundred and odd kilometres south east of Bangalore and near the Temple Cities of Madurai and Palani. In former years, every summer Swami used to take a few selected students with Him to Kodai. To help you to know more about Swami's Kodai sojourn, we reproduce below the transcript of a dialogue between Prof. Anil Kumar and Prof. Venkataraman, broadcast earlier over Radio Sai. Both are from the SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING.

GV: Anil Kumar Garu, welcome to the Studios of Radio Sai. Normally I begin by asking our visitors or guests to introduce themselves. In your case, however, this is obviously not necessary. I would not say you are next only to GOD, but you certainly stand next to GOD so often [!] that most people know you for sure. Nevertheless I think most of us don't know how you first came to Swami. So may be, you could tell us very briefly how you came to Swami. We want to know how He pulled the string in your case and brought you close to Him.

AK: I am Anil Kumar from the State of Andhra Pradesh and I belong to *BRAHMA SAMAJ*, founded by Rajaram Mohan Roy. Our families have been following this faith, Brahma Samaj, for the last three generations.

GV: What is special about this Brahma Samaj?

AK: *BRAHMOS* don't practice idolatry. A follower of this Samaj believes in fellowship of faiths and congregational worship. The Brahma Samaj does not accept class or the caste system. It believes that all religions are equal. It works for women's emancipation.

GV: So, everything that is said in *Vedanta* is there in this philosophy?

AK: Yes, and that is why the founder Rajaram Mohan Roy is sometimes called the Prophet of Modern India. Both my grandfathers happened to Brahma missionaries who dedicated their entire lives for this cause. I came to Swami for the first time in 1970 because of some problem at home. My wife was sick and I took her round to thirteen doctors, and spent thousands of rupees. But after coming to Swami, she

had a total cure. Being interested in philosophy since my childhood, thanks to my grand father, I then started reading SAI literature and soon I found that Baba explains Brahma Samaj ideals better than the founder Rajaram Mohan Roy himself! As a result, I am a better Brahma now than ever before.

GV: Yes, that is what Swami always says: Be a good Christian, be a good Muslim, be a good Jew etc. Now, you are a very good teacher and you also know a lot about how Swami as the Supreme Teacher moulds students. So I am going to ask some questions relating to that. In particular I want you to share with all our listeners, the thrilling experience about Kodaikanal. It is said that Kodaikanal is Swami's playground whereas Prasanthi Nilayam is His office and Brindavan is His home. How many times have you been to this playground?

AK: At least six times.

GV: That is very good and I suppose many more trips are in store for you.

AK: Thank you sir.

GV: The Kodai trip seems to be an extraordinary event and with a special purpose too. Why don't you tell us all about the Kodaikanal trip, starting from the beginning?

AK: Well Sir, Swami selects students for the trip, and the selection is based on all aspects of their performance in the college - academic, conduct, devotion, excellence in sports and games, talent for singing and dramatics as well. All talented students who are also highly devoted are selected by

Bhagavan to follow Him. A few teachers are also included in the party. Kodaikanal is such a beautiful place. If I am to say how paradise would be, well, that could not be anything other than Kodaikanal.

GV: When does Swami go to Kodaikanal, typically?

AK: Usually He leaves in early April; and He returns by 5<sup>th</sup> of May. So roughly speaking, He spends about a month in Kodaikanal. But there have been occasions when He stayed on 6<sup>th</sup> of May also and celebrated *ESWARAAMMA DAY* there, in Kodaikanal. It happened twice I believe. Kodaikanal is most interesting because Swami is very, very close to the boys and they can learn many, many things from Swami.

GV: I suppose boys are also very close to Swami.

AK: Very, very intimate.

GV: Typically, how many hours a day is Swami with them?

AK: Sir, immediately after breakfast He spends an hour with them. After that, Bhagavan goes out to give Darshan to the devotees and grants them interviews. During this time, the boys go around the lake a bit and they return by 9:30. From 9:30 to 11 O'clock Swami again talks to the boys, after which lunch follows. Next we have tea around 2 O'clock. Swami talks to boys again from 2:30 to 4 O'clock. From about 4 to 5 P.M there is a public meeting which the boys also attend. After the public meeting, Swami talks to students and some select devotees, which is something like an echo session the evening meeting is reviewed.

GV: Public meeting means Discourse also?

AK: Yes of course; the Discourse is given in the Bhajan Hall of Sai Sruthi, Swami's Mandir in Kodai.

GV: So, from morning till evening, Swami is talking all the time?

AK: At least five Discourses a day!

GV: My God!

AK: Four of these Discourses are exclusively for students. Besides, it is wonderful to see how Swami treats the boys. He enquires about their family, their brothers and so on.

GV: OK, let us go over the details and start from Bangalore - He always starts from Bangalore, right? It must be pretty exciting to go all the way from Bangalore to Kodaikanal. Tell us everything about the trip from Bangalore to Kodaikanal.

AK: The student party travels in a big air-conditioned van,

with cushioned seats that can recline. Swami tells all the boys to get into the van, which is loaded with sweets and eatables of all kinds, apart from fruits in plenty. One can go on eating until one reaches Kodaikanal, neck deep. During the journey to Kodaikanal, Bhagavan halts at not less than fifteen to twenty places. This is because the State of Tamil Nadu in which Kodai is located, is full of Sai devotees all over. Every village in Tamil Nadu has a SAI centre. Along the highway, devotees raise huge pandals and sit there singing Bhajans while waiting for Baba. Swami stops, gets down from His car, blesses all devotees, makes a quick round, receives Aarathi and the gets back into His car.

GV: Letters also?

AK: Yes, He takes letters also, smiles and enquires, "How are you?" And after He gets back into the car, the convoy proceeds.

GV: How long does it take you to go from Bangalore to Kodaikanal with stops for lunch, etc.,?

AK: We start from Bangalore at about 5 O'clock in the morning and reach Kodaikanal by 5:30 or 6 in the evening.

GV: Twelve hours?

AK: Twelve hours at a stretch and there are certain important places like Dindigul, Salem and Coimbatore, where big groups, roughly twenty five thousand people, gather.

GV: Twenty five thousand?

AK: Yes, and waiting for Bhagavan. The other centres will have not less than a thousand or two thousand. But these big towns are where Bhagavan used to address devotees many years back in the early days. They still remember Him and that is why they assemble in very large numbers when Swami is on His way to Kodaikanal. On reaching Kodai, He gives to every boy a sleeping bag. When they get in and pull the zip, we don't know if it is a gunny bag of rice or a boy sleeping inside!

That is not all. Next morning, Swami distributes a kit containing tooth Brush, tooth paste, shaving cream, after-shave lotion, blades, the razor, and so on. After this come towels, new dresses, cameras and what not. One suit case load of gifts of daily needs and certain monumental presents that we feel like preserving for the posterity.

GV: So you can go without any luggage and accumulate lots of luggage?

AK: Take one suit case and bring back three!

GV: So what happens to the teaching about less luggage?(laughter).



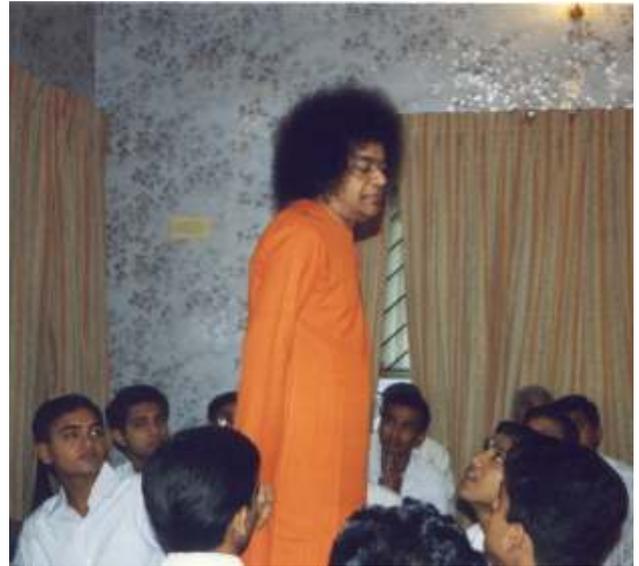
AK: And then the sumptuous meals there. For breakfast we have three items, Ten items for lunch, four items for afternoon tea, and ten items once more for dinner.

GV: Tell me Anil Kumar, after eating all this, how do you manage to stay awake through the five sessions when Swami speaks? (laughter)

AK: Swami's speech is like an appetiser. Listening more makes us also eat more!

GV: So food for the stomach, food for the head and food for the Heart!

( to be continued.....)



### TEST TOUR SPIRITUAL QUOTIENT II

- 1 Who became the King of Lanka after Sri Rama killed the wicked Ravana in the holy epic Ramayana?
  - A Hanuman
  - B Sri Rama
  - C Vibhishana
  - D Lakshmana
- 2 In His only tour outside India, Sai Baba in 1967, visited the African countries of
  - A Kenya, South Africa and Uganda
  - B Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda
  - C Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda
  - D Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe.
- 3 In Swami's saying on travel - "Less luggage, More comfort," what does the 'luggage' symbolically refer to when seen in the context of the journey that is life?
- 4 In the Bhagavad Geeta, Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna that there are three paths that an individual could take to attain Godhead or Self-Realisation. What are these three paths?
- 5 Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was born as a
  - A Hindu
  - B Muslim
  - C Christian
  - D Buddhist
- 6 Many devotees address Sai Baba as 'Swami'. What does the Sanskrit term 'Swami' mean?
- 7 Complete the saying of Baba "You may not always oblige but \_\_\_\_\_".
- 8 Baba often says that one's money should be like one's shoe. What is He trying to explain through that analogy?
- 9 The famous book 'Sai Baba Man of Miracles' which has been instrumental in bringing thousands of spiritual seekers to Baba's lotus feet, is written by
  - A John Hislop
  - B Howard Murphet
  - C N. Kasturi
  - D Joy Thomas
- 10 What are the words of "Good News" called in Christianity?
  - A Sermon
  - B Gospel
  - C Homily
  - D Confession
- 11 What is the telephone number to contact Sai Baba in Puttaparthi?
- 12 Which famous saying of Baba would you get if you rearranged the phrase 'Ella Volla Revels'.

Look for Answers in page 29

Dear Young readers,

This edition of tender hearts carries the story of the journey of some young, ignited minds from New Jersey to the Abode of Love, Prashanti Nilayam. Read how their pure and unalloyed devotion won the heart of Bhagavan. Let us all learn a lesson or two from our dear brothers in New Jersey.

# FROM NEW JERSEY WITH LOVE

*We humbly submit ourselves at the Divine Lotus Feet of Our Beloved Bhagavan and offer our love to Him.*

*Growing up in the Sai organization, a group of us Sai brothers have always shared a heartfelt connection with each other which stemmed from our mutual love for Swami and a passion for music. Swami has always said that Keertanam [singing] is one of nine forms of Bhakti [devotion]. We felt driven to follow the path of music to reach Him.*

Our priceless experience commenced early, around January of 2002. At this time, one of the members of our music group from New Jersey got the sudden idea to put together and attempt to perform a musical program for our Dearest Swami. Although all of us have always wished to perform for Him, the actual thought of doing it had somehow never occurred to any of us. When it was discussed, we naturally agreed and soon informed all known singers and musicians who could make this a dynamic performance. And of course, as always with Swami, we were not sure what to expect. Our group consisted of two main singers, one harmonium player, two tabla players and a dholak player. We frequently sent registered letters to Swami, praying to Him for an opportunity, each of us signing our letters as "Music Boys". We wished to establish a *heart-to-heart* connection with Swami, using letters as a vehicle to His Lotus Feet. As musicians, singing His praise to Him is the greatest form of worship and love that we could offer to Him. With His Grace, five of us arrived in Parthi by the first week of July; the plans of the sixth were a bit disturbed. There was a great deal of uncertainty whether the sixth member of the group, who was a lead singer, would come or not. Moreover, when we arrived in Parthi, he reconfirmed his inability to come to Parthi. Although initially dejected, we kept strong, sturdy faith that he would indeed come, somehow...

The first morning that we sat together, wearing gold-colored scarves, we proceeded to Darshan and sat in the second and third row. Bhagavan came over, glanced at us, casting a look of recognition and *sendiga* signal that things were in motion. He took our letters and sweetly said "*Choostanu*" [meaning "I will see" in Telugu] and coolly walked off...

Practices began, although incompletely manned and spirited



without the other singer. Overall, all were worried and unsure, as he was not only the lead singer, but also the leader of our group. We became more and more concerned as the days rolled by. On a brighter note, Darshans were absolutely spectacular. Bhagavan looked more and more like the God Supreme than ever before, glowing in ecstasy and shining brilliantly in beauty.

While in Parthi, we called the missing member of our group and we learned that he had a beautiful experience. While meditating, he saw us sitting in Darshan lines, wearing gold-colored scarves, the very color that we selected!! We knew that Bhagavan had a plan for us; only time could unveil it to us...

Everyday, we flooded Bhagavan's mailbox with our prayers. Perhaps He heard our prayers... perhaps He is simply too kind to us. We were thrilled when we received word that our group leader was on his way to join us in Parthi.

There was a story behind his miraculous change in plans. Our leader's boss was extremely insistent that he should not leave because of major layoffs and two major projects that needed to be completed. If he left, his job would be in danger. However, if he was able to finish his role in the two projects, he would be able to leave for Parthi. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, he went to his

boss, asking what additional responsibilities he had to take on while his boss was on vacation. The boss immediately told our leader that there was no need for him to take on any responsibilities; he did not understand why he was talking as though he wasn't going on vacation. Our leader then reminded his boss that it was the boss who told him not to go, but his boss was insistent that he did not recollect any such statement. Furthermore, he told our leader to "modify his plans" and leave immediately, reminding him that he must be back by July 25<sup>th</sup> for an extremely important meeting. In a fluster of confusion, he immediately left and instantly saw Bhagavan's intervention in the whole process.

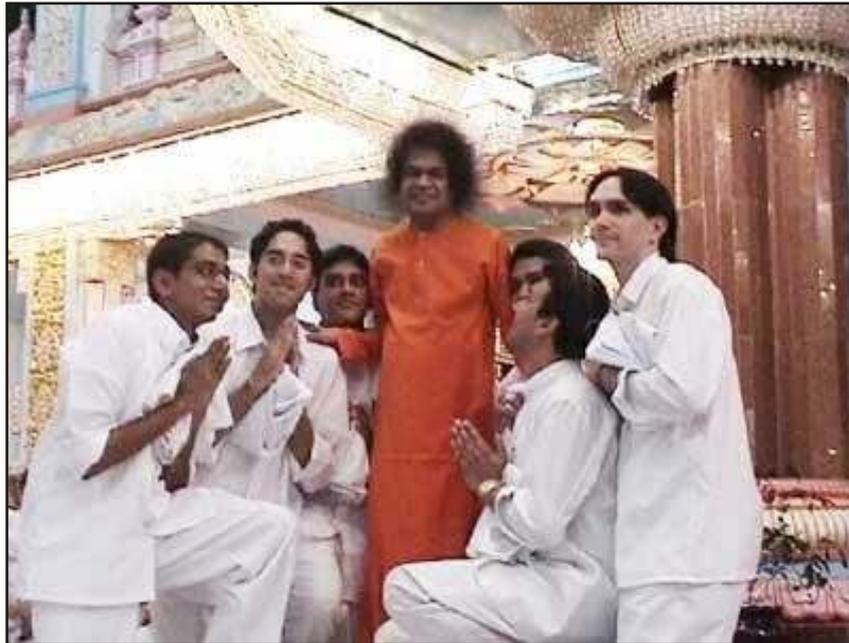
Practices continued and on the 16<sup>th</sup>, at about 3AM, our group was finally united, donned in our gold-colored scarves, ready to draw our Lord through our love as best and as fast as we could, for we only had four days together as a group.

It didn't take too much of an effort on our part- He did it all. We sat in two rows of three's, three in the front and three in the back, in both the second and third lines. With bated breath we waited for Bhagavan to come, praying, crying and begging for His mercy to be showered on us. Finally, He did come, slowly and magnificently. He saw us from a distance and came closer and closer, and as He did, the prayer in my mind and heart grew louder and stronger and more vigorous! He accepted our group letter and then looked at us and asked one of the other main singers where we were from. He replied "USA, Swami." Swami took a few steps to our right and then turned back and asked "Music Boys?" Our hearts jumped and our joy was transparent. He asked: "When is the program?" "As You wish, Swami." "What is the time?" "At Your Will, Swami." He turned for a moment and then turned back and asked our leader: "When are you leaving?" "On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Swami." "All?" "No, Swami. Boys are leaving later. Swami, should I change my plans?" "Very happy. Good boy," as He patted his cheek, "No, no. President se pucho. Srinivasan. (All India President of the Sai organizations) I will also speak to president." "We love You, Swami." "Yes, yes. Very happy."

He continued to walk towards the verandah. Half of us broke down into tears, half of us were starry-eyed, all of us were dumb-founded. In a few seconds, Swami summoned Mr. Srinivasan from the verandah and told him to speak with us,

that we were the *Music Boys* and that we were from USA. Those words were simply ringing in our ears, minds and hearts. Mr. Srinivasan came over and called us aside. Mr. Srinivasan asked us when we wanted to perform, suggesting the 17<sup>th</sup> evening in Poornachandra Auditorium, upon Swami's approval. He also insisted that we get the approval of Dr. Bill Harvey, an official representative of USA. Further, he also suggested that we perform for Mr. Leonardo, who was in charge of all of the cultural programs during the Seva Conference, which was around the corner. Somewhere in the confusion, Mr. Leonardo

mistakenly assumed that we wanted to be a part of the cultural programs and wished to be slotted into the timings. In any case, we performed for Mr. Leonardo and Dr. Harvey, who both gave their approval, most graciously. Mr. Leonardo immediately informed Mr. Srinivasan of his approval, also taking with him to Mr. Srinivasan, the book that we prepared for Swami with our request. Mr. Srinivasan took with him the consent of Leonardo and the book to Swami that afternoon for lunch.



That evening, we met Mr. Leonardo & Mr. Srinivasan, who informed us that Bhagavan took the book, looked through it and told Mr. Srinivasan that He would personally inform the boys of His decision and give us His instructions, directly. Thinking beyond the words that were used, we felt completely confused and anticipated the worst. We stepped up the power of our prayer and each of us gave it every ounce of intensity that we had in our capacity.

The next morning, we sat again in the same place, but a little more towards the front. Swami came by and asked:

"Did you speak to Srinivasan?"

"Yes Swami."

"When is the program?"

"As You wish, Swami."

"No, no, that is not my business, sir!"

"No, Swami, only heart-to-heart connection, Swami. No one else. Please tell us, Swami."

"Yes, yes, very happy. Okay. Tomorrow evening. Here, [pointing to the dais] in the front."

"Thank you, Swami. We love You."

"Yes, very happy."

Our hearts were filled with elation. Once again, there were tears and smiles. The joy was uncontainable. But at the same time, we knew to maintain discipline and therefore closed our eyes and sat quietly after Swami went inside. As the

pandemonium and confusion of post-Darshan mania began, Mr.Srinivasan descended from the verandah and approached us. He asked how many we were. We replied six. He told the six of us to come up and follow him and he made us sit at the front of the verandah, right in front of the Interview Room. He stepped inside for two to three seconds and summoned us inside...

As we filed into the small room, we were simply taken aback by the sudden proximity to our Dear Lord, whose bright orange robe caught our immediate attention. He was standing there, in His full glory: the essence of purity, beauty and wonder, with His thumb, index & middle fingers atop the bridge of His nose- totally lost, absolutely not there; revealing His innate Divinity, exploding and transcending all worlds before our very eyes; an image, forever the screensaver of our minds...

Among other things, Swami asked us to sing the songs for Him, so that He could get a preview, as it were! We did and He seemed pleased. He went through each song and selected the ones He wanted us to perform. He reminded us that it was a public performance and that we must have a group name. We of course requested that He Himself give us a name. And so He named us, "*Music Boys of New Jersey...New York.*" He advised us to practice well in preparation for the next day's performance. He most sweetly put us all at ease by calling us in, talking to us, asking each of our roles, discussing the songs, etc. He was concerned about our health and made us some Vibhuthi, which seemed to have a medicinal effect. We repeated over and over how much we loved Him and He reciprocated that love a thousand fold!

After the interview, some of us were crying, others could not wipe the smiles off of our faces! But we still had work to do. We practiced to the best of our ability all day and the following morning. Finally, afternoon Darshan on July 18<sup>th</sup> approached and we were all jittering with joy. We arrived well before

Darshan and put our instruments in the Mandir, all instruments, voices, minds and hearts tuned to Swami's rhythm and rhyme. After Swami came out for Darshan and called some people for an interview, He came out and told us to come to the dais and commence the program.

We prepared a bouquet of flowers to offer to Swami and He graciously accepted them. Before we began, Swami asked us where we were from and then announced to the students and to the rest of the gathering that we were the Music Boys from NJNY; what a grand way to begin by having the Lord of the Universe as our Master of Ceremonies! We were and still are eternally honored and grateful, for we may never know for what reason we were given such an opportunity! His love and kindness transcends anything that we have ever experienced.

The program went over well and when we finished, Swami most graciously gifted us with white clothes and even allowed us to be photographed with Him. He then asked one of our boys to speak to the gathering. He spoke about Swami's infinite love and compassion, how Swami brought us here and allowed us to perform, simply by being pure love. He mentioned that we knew no one coming to Parthi and came with no connections, only our *heart-to-heart connection* with Him. Indeed, it was that heart-to-heart connection that brought us to Swami and that allowed us to perform. It was Swami who prompted us to desire to perform; it was Swami who encouraged us to write letters to Him; it was Swami who inspired us to love Him. Undeniably, it was Swami who arranged for the entire program, from the first practice, down to the details of the songs. We can do no more than humbly submit ourselves at His Lotus Feet and thank Him for all of His Love. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank Swami for the pure love He showered on us. This experience will always remain as a precious and indelible mark in our memory. ■  
*Jai Sai Ram*

Continued from page 26

### Answers

1. c

2. b

3. 'Luggage' in the context of life refers to 'desires'.

4. The three paths advocated by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Geeta are

- Karma Yoga The path of Action
- Bhakti Yoga The path of Devotion
- Gyana Yoga The path of Wisdom

5. a

6. The Sanskrit expression 'Swami' means 'Lord'.

7. you can speak obligingly.

8. Baba uses the shoe as an illustrator to drive home the point that just like the shoe which is comfortable if it's of the right size and not a size higher or lower, a person also should desire and possess only that much money as is required to lead a decent life. Too much or too less of money will only give discomfort and avoidable tension.

9. b

10. b

11. Did you think it was a number, sorry. It is a sound, a thought, a feeling, a prayer, a yearning... it is as varied as the hearts and minds of people on earth. Each having his own style, his own frequency, his own way of getting linked.

12. Love All Serve All

## The Bliss Of (A Drive by) Darshan

Swami had just finished giving the Bliss of His *Darshan* to the thousands who had assembled in Sai Kulwant Hall that afternoon. He then sat down in His chair on the verandah and listened blissfully to the *Veda* Chanting by the Institute boys. But something was amiss. There was a certain Divine restlessness and suddenly He got up and signaled to the boys, “I will go out and return”.

Swami goes out often in His car into Puttaparthi village, ostensibly for a drive. But the *Avatar* is really beyond the vagaries of the mind, in that He does not become bored and “needs” to go out for a drive to relax. In reality, it is His deep and unlimited Compassion and Love, that motivates Him to “go out for a drive”, so that He can give the Bliss of His *Darshan* to the hundreds of poor people of Puttaparthi, who are unable to come to Sai Kulwant Hall, engrossed as they are in their own day to day chores and engaged in the task of earning a livelihood. It is also the plight of the sick, the old, the infirm, and not so able, who are unable to brave the crowds and come to Sai Kulwant Hall for His darshan, that perhaps prompts Him to go out Himself and bring *ananda* to all.

In a sense it is reminiscent of His Krishna *Avatar* days during the *Dwaraka Yuga*. Only then, it was the melodious sound of His flute, wafting gently through the village that would draw all the *gopikas* to Him.

The setting is the same, but the props in *Kali Yuga* are more contemporary. Now it is the strident high pitch tone of the police escort vehicle that acts as the clarion call and gives an advance warning of the imminent arrival of the *Avatar*. Housewives quickly shut off their stoves, have a quick peek in the mirror to make sure they are presentable and rush out. Teachers and village kids abandon their class-rooms; roadside barbers and their clients rush to the street; patrons of tea-

stalls, curious passersby, passengers in public transport vehicles, farmers in the fields, almost everyone who has heard the siren, stop whatever they are doing and line up on both sides of the road, hands folded in supplication, anticipating eagerly the brief but glorious glimpse of the *Avatar*.

Soon the small red Maruti car comes into view. Cries of “*Ja!*” (Victory) rent the air. Roadside flower girls do a roaring business, as many villagers buy flower garlands to toss onto His passing car. A few devout ones even break coconuts in front of His slow moving vehicle, as a mark of auspiciousness.

And Swami. He is calmness itself. The embodiment of Bliss providing bliss to one and all. His eyes dart quickly to all sides viewing everything and blessing everyone by His benevolent gaze. Occasionally, He raises His Hand, in the time-honored way, to bless a bystander. And slowly the caravan wends its way, right up to Brahmanapalli village, just past the Music College and Gokulam. At the end of the road, at a convenient point, He directs the car to make a U-turn to return.

Stragglers and latecomers who did not come out in a timely manner the first time around, have now joined the crowd to at least get His *darshan* on the return trip. Usually the return trip is much slower due to the augmented crowd size. As the car approaches the Ganesh gate, there is now a crush of people waiting to catch His glimpse. Security is tight and the police have a tough time keeping the crowd away from the road. And soon He enters Sai Kulwant Hall. The car is covered with flowers and His face is wreathed in a big smile. He is now happy, as He has brought happiness to all.

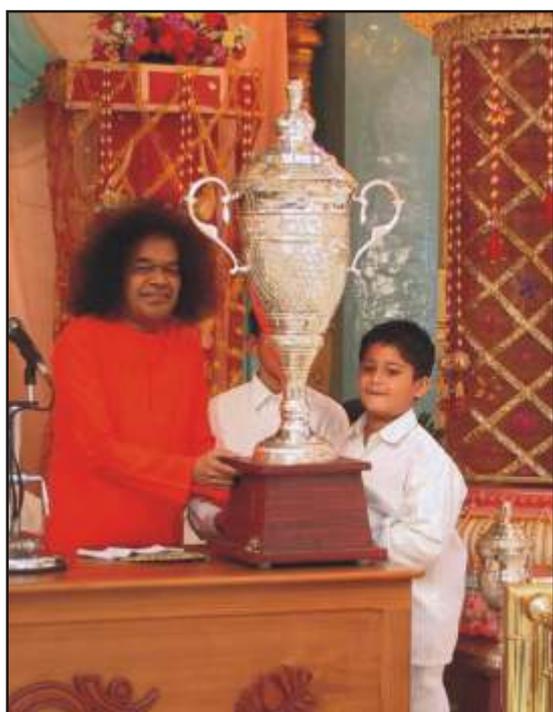
Heart to Heart has captured for you in pictures this captivating story. Enjoy! ■





**Celebrated:** The Annual Sports and Cultural meet on January 11<sup>th</sup>. As is the norm, this time too there was a spectacular display of daredevil sports and colorful cultural items. Every student, from K.G to P.G, excelled in their presentations. ■

**Inaugurated:** By Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004: Sri R.V.Janakiramiah Kalyana Mantapam, a beautiful marriage hall in the village of Puttaparthi, for the people of Parthi. It was a grand affair for which the whole village turned up and danced in ecstasy. ■

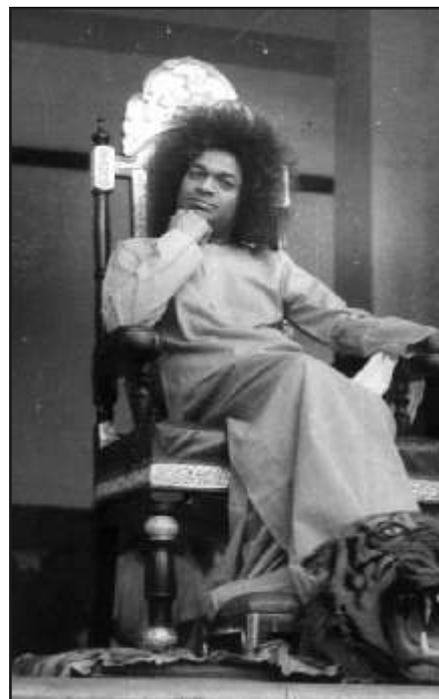


**Celebrated:** The holy festival of Sankranthi and the prize distribution ceremony of sports meet 2004, on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Swami gave, in addition to the prizes, His Divine Sankranthi message. ■

Wonder how many people know where Andaman islands are? During the British rule of India, they established a fearsome prison for detaining the most difficult freedom fighters. Many were even executed. During world war II, the Japanese bombed the islands many times. Now, all that is dim memory. There is a fresh fragrance of *shanthi*. Reason for the change? See the pictures below.....

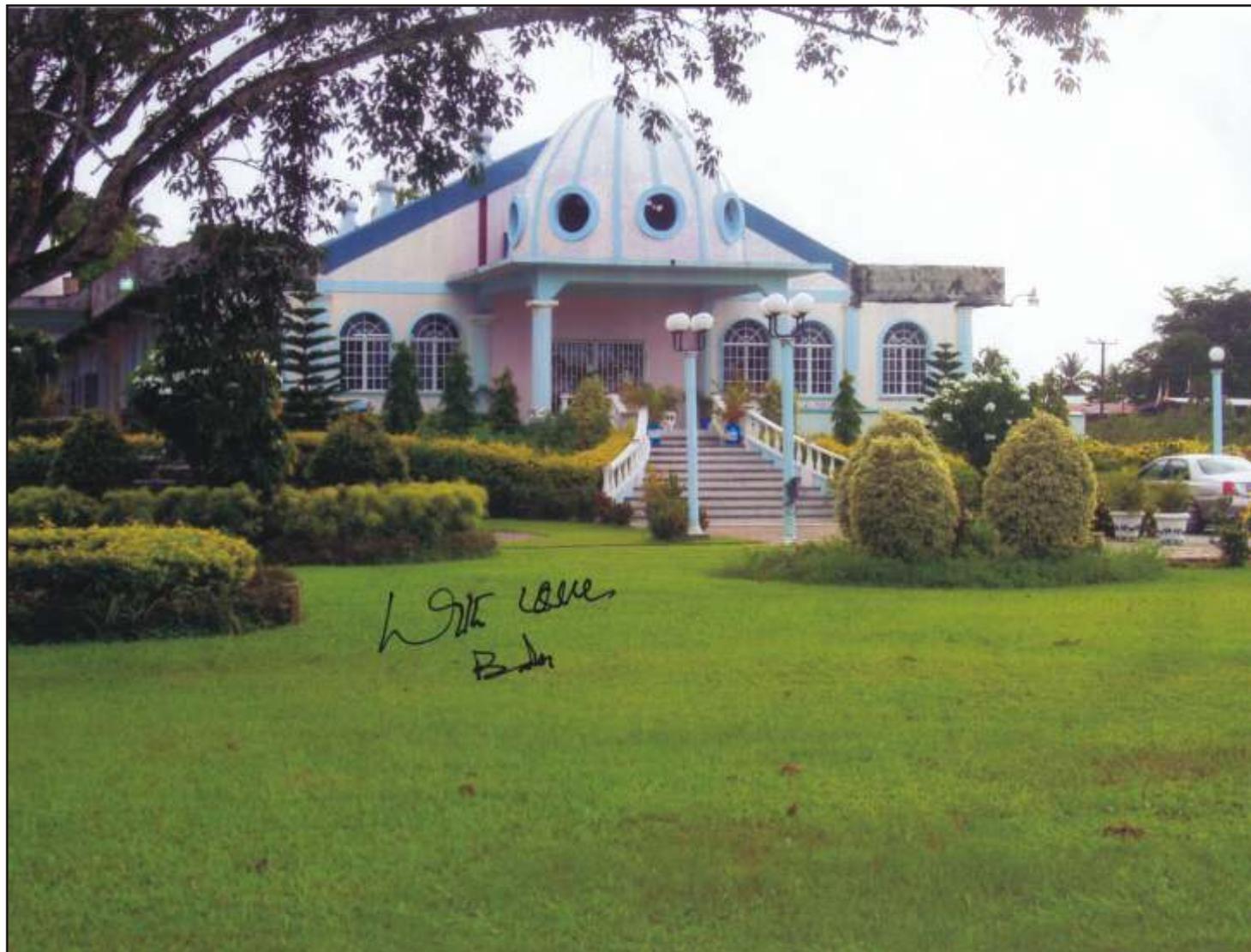


# The Lord on His throne.....





# The Eshwaramma Sai Centre , Trinidad

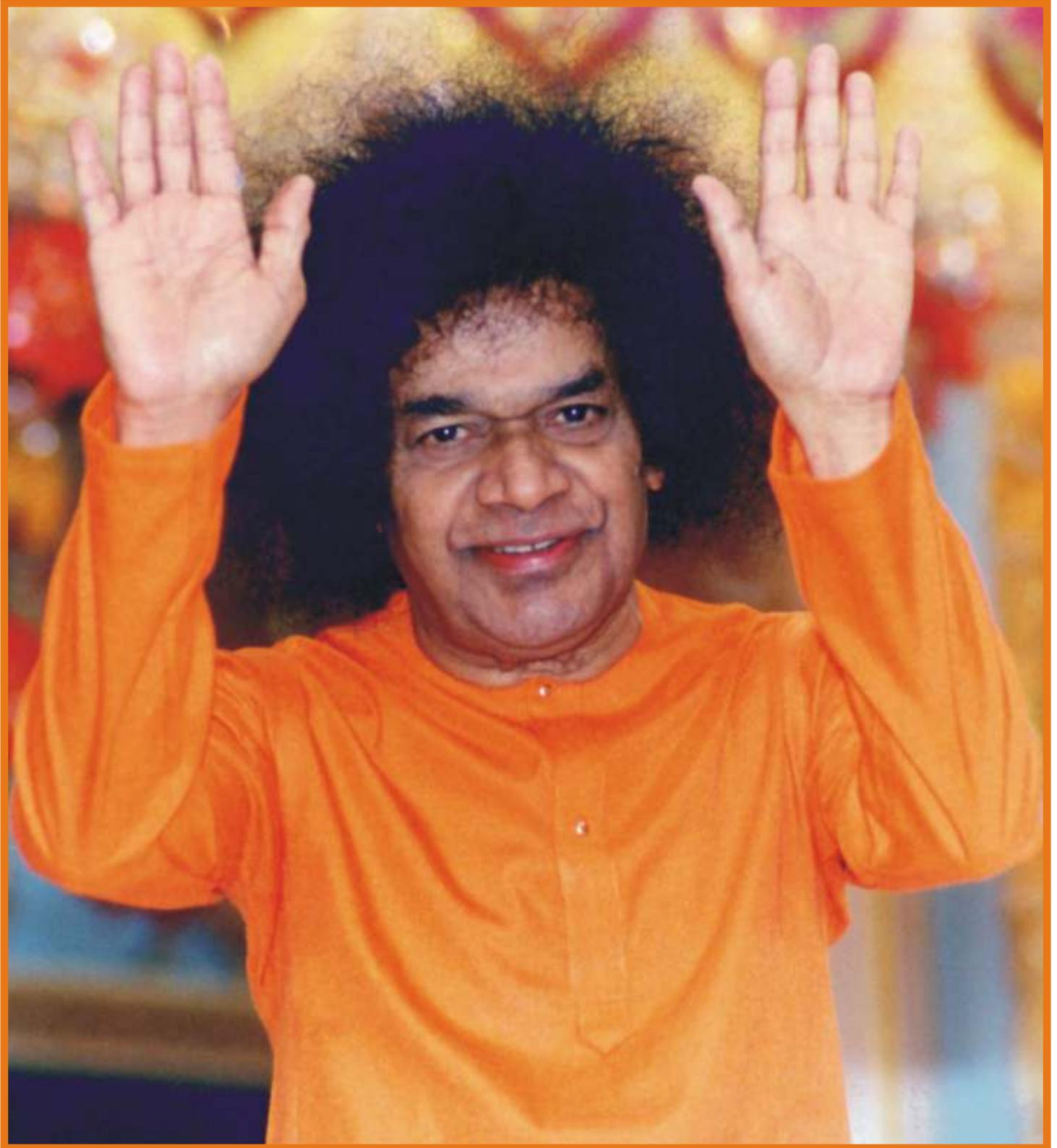


In the next issue.....

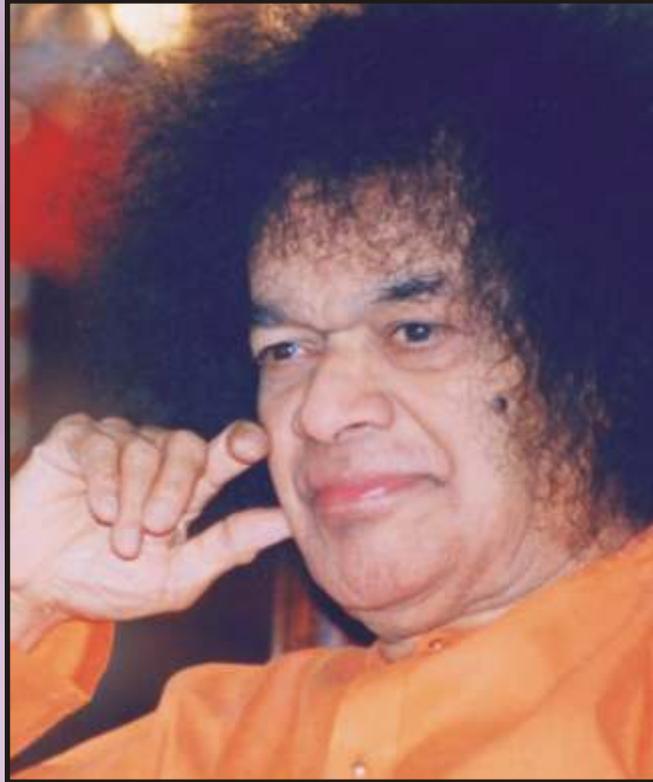
A report on the glorious festival of Shivaratri at Prasanti Nilayam.



# Aum Sri Sai Ram



“ Why Fear When I am Here “



*The moment you see your own inner beauty and are so filled with it that you forget all else, you become free from all bonds. You realise that you are all beauty, all the glory, all the power, all the magnificence of the universe, for the Jiva (the individual) is the reflection of God in the mirror of Nature. Once you attain self-realisation, you recognise everyone else as but the reflection of yourself. This is the true basis of the unity of mankind.*

*- Baba*



**Love All Serve All**