

Dear Devotees of Sathya Sai,

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education Ireland, met to discuss and draft the Roadmap for the future of Sai Education in this country. The findings are now being put together into a Report that will be sent to Ishver Patel, Co-ordinator for U.K. and Ireland, who in turn will present them both to Prasanthi Nilayam, for the World Education Conference to be held in July this year..

Credit must be given to Ms. Rosemary Marron, for arranging the meeting and for compiling the Report for submission.

Education is the subject that is closest to Swami's heart, and major developments are being put in place for future growth. While the establishment of SSEHV over the last 14 years, has been steady, the next decade will witness a magnificent expansion in this area.

We hope and pray, that Swami will bless our endeavours. *Ed.*

You direct all your activities to the service of mankind. The rich should serve the society through their wealth, the scholars through their knowledge and scholarship, the artists through their art and those who do not have any of these, through their physical strength. But the difficulty is that your service is not selfless. Instead of selfless service, it becomes self-service. How can you earn My Grace, then? Remember, God has incarnated Himself as SAI. I am Truth and My Sankalpa is inevitable. A silent revolution is going to pass through every structure of human society. Those who are present in this hall and all those who have total faith in Sai, though they may not be here, have a golden opportunity of earning My Grace and thus achieve their goal, i.e., Liberation.

If you miss it, you may miss it for ever. -BABA.

Questions & Answers

Q. Swami. Is there death? Are there a heaven and a hell? What is life?

A. *There is no death. It is the body that dies. But Atma, the indewller is immortal.*

Atma is the eternal truth. Your happiness is indeed heaven. Your misery is hell. Both are here in this life. They are not separate entities apart from you.

Q. When we get wisdom based on our practical knowledge, discrimination and determination, will it stay with us permanently or is there any possibility of our losing it by chance leading us back to ignorance?

A. *That is impossible. Actually, you can't call it wisdom at all, if it is lost. You can't consider a person, a man of wisdom, if he returns to the same old state of ajnana, ignorance. In fact, wisdom neither comes nor goes. You are the embodiment of divine wisdom. Your worldly attachments, sensual pleasures, and bodily identification obscure this awareness or wisdom. Once you realise it, you never lose the state of awareness...Ignorance will never come again. Wisdom, once it dawns on you, will never depart from you.*

Q. Swami, you gave a better Akshaya Patra (dish) to the residents of the Gufa Ashram. Are they nobler and more deserving than the Pandavas?

A. *From the worldly point of view the Pandavas are indeed nobler, but if we look at them from the spiritual point of view, the yogis of the Ashram deserve a higher spiritual status. The Pandavas lived in the Dwapara Yuga and the sadhakas belong to Kaliyuga. The Pandavas are gifted with certain divine traits given to them by various gods whereas the sadhakas are the people of the mortal earth. Divine incarnations are always considered superior to, and nobler than, the mortal beings. According to their births, the times and the world in which they are born, the Pandavas seem to be a nobler lot. But if you look from the spiritual point of view, the sadhakas deserve a much higher status. The basis of this status is not the Pandavas, worldly credentials, but the absolute surrender to the Lord, which the sadhakas have made.*

What is the purpose of life? What is the goal of life? After getting such a rare gift as a human life, if you cannot make use of it to attain the divine, indeed if you are not able to remember the purpose of life, what is the use of getting such a sacred gift? -BABA.

The Celebration of Diversity

M.K. KAW

Human beings are different from animals. The greatest difference is that animals react instinctively to threatening situations. They have no choice. Human beings need not necessarily react, they have a choice. They can choose to respond rather than react.

Response is a creative act. When the Hebrew Law called for 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth', it equates men to animals, as if revenge was the only option available. When Jesus advised his followers to 'turn the other cheek', he enunciated the creative choice of forgiveness and compassion.

In today's world, where nations and people are at war with one another, one teaching that we all sorely need is the art of living together. We have to be at peace with billions of others in the world, despite the enormous differences in religion, ritual, custom, tradition, colour, caste, creed, language, dress, cuisine and deportment.

We have to learn to accept these differences. For it is in diversity that the divine drama reveals. When God separated Himself from Himself, so that He could love Himself, He created numerous 'others'. Not in order to dispise them, compete with them, hate them or kill them. It was the differences that lent colour and sound and taste and flavour and diversity to His creation.

The day we understand that all beings are merely God in disguise, they become our brothers and sisters, and all thoughts of hatred, jealousy, greed, lust, and anger, leave for ever. Thus we become incapable of causing any harm or injury to others.

Sourced from the Sai International Magazine.

The situation in the outside world is appalling. Even tenth standard students taking to drink and drugs. The parents are not restraining them. Nor are they setting a good example. When the parents exchange words, the children exchange blows. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them. The parents are to blame for three-fourth of their children's misbehaviour. -BABA.

The Dwellers Of Gufa Pt. 2

The Soma creeper (somalatha) is a very rare medicinal herb, the juice of which was offered to the gods like Indra and Varuna during the yajna and from whom boons of producing in abundance food grains, wealth and other things needed for the maintenance of life. In sacred texts referance was made to this herb and its rejuvenation qualities, which destroys all diseases and "restores youth to the aged and decrepit".

Through the passage of time, this and other herbs, these divine gifts of nature, started to disappear. But when man frees himself of materialistic desires and purifies his heart, these herbs (will) appear again and man can get them through his sincere efforts.

While the spiritual seekers of God, residing in the Nara Narayana Ashram, went seeking herbs to collect, they came upon the rare and divine creeper, Somalatha, that was immediately recognised by two members of the team well-versed in Ayurveda and medical science.

One day the Lord Sai appeared before them and they placed the Soma creeper before Him for His confirmation, and did so. He took the cutting and planted it near the Ashram, where in years to come it will flourish and spread around the Ashram.

"Similarly, the Sadhakas came across another wonderful and divine herb, the juice of it leaves, when put to the eyes,

provided the user with an unusual vision which enabled him to see things, and objects, even in the densest darkness of the night, as clearly as in day-light”.

The life at the Gufa Ashram is led by strict discipline, but is enriched from time-to-time by the visits of great sages living in the Himalayas for over five hundred, or even a thousand years. All spoke most highly of our Lord Sathya Sai.

About thirty years ago when Swami was having breakfast with close devotees, they said, “Swami! Your leelas and miracles are the talk of every home in almost all the major countries of the world. As such we want to organise a conference of all spiritual seekers at the international level and declare from that forum that God, the Creator of this Universe, has already come down on Earth. By so doing the entire humanity will get the benefit of Lord’s presence”.

Sai Baba smiled and spoke with compassion, *“Your feelings for your fellow beings are commendable and I respect them. But that time is still far off. Prior to that I have to bring such persons near me, who, in their previous lives, have been incessantly and untiringly trying to get across to Me through their severe sadhana. A time will come when the world will know about the Avatar through public declaration. All the same impelled by a sense of duty if you wish to bring this Truth to the knowledge of your fellow devotees and friends, you may do so on personal level.”*

This is one important reason why Swami is not permitting the sages and siddhas to come and meet Him. He similarly does not allow public announcements, or published accounts like those that Mohammad had prophesied in one of his famous books, ‘The Ocean Of Light’.

The day is not too far off when knowledge of Swami’s presence amongst us, will be known by all.

In the meantime, it is said that we should not expect the sadhakas at the

Gufa Ashram to return from there; they have to stay there for their entire life to attain different stages of samadhi before they reach the culminating point, Chinmaya Samadhi.

Swami said, as a *“Person enjoys happiness and prosperity in proportion to his performing good actions and vice-versa”*, this is why the eleven members of the Gufa Ashram had ample noble actions to their credit. They had earned the Grace of the Lord, so there was no partiality in the Lord’s action. *“The divine vessel was given to them in the light of their good deeds in their previous lives and they richly deserved it”*.

One evening Lord Sai appeared in the Gufa Ashram, at dinner time. After enquiring as to their welfare, He said to one of the pilgrims saying that He wanted to give him a new lease of life and a new body. *“Your actual life was 33 years only. I have now extended it to 120 years. But you will have to be very careful about your new body that you have received from Me. The surroundings over here are cold and you have imbibed more cold in your body than heat. In order to maintain a balance between the two you better come to Puttaparthi and stay there for three months.”*

The Sadhak was worried as to how he was to get there, travelling all alone over unfamiliar terrain and without food, and spending the nights in the open snow-clad mountains. While he and the others pondered this outside the Gufa, they suddenly witnessed a thick fog descending on all sides. They noticed where the sky faced the Gufa there was an unusually bright sun lighting up the ground. To their amazement to see a helicopter landing on that exact sunlit spot! An officer approached them from the helicopter with wide-eye amazement, and asked about the group. They replied, “We have been sent here by Lord Sainath and are practising penance under His guidance.” The officer had heard of Sai Baba and in answer to his question as to how long they had been there, they

replied, "Three years!" to his surprise, as it was a restricted area and was unaware of anybody being there.

The sun burst forth and the officer returned to the helicopter and flew off, but return eight days later with the offer to render service to the Sadhak by taking him to Rishikesh, and from there he could travel to Puttapparhi. The officer promised to return him to the Gufa Ashram after his stay with Swami, Who arranges everything.

(Conclusion in the next issue)

He who shouts and swears and advertises his worries to everyone he meets and craves for sympathy, such a one can never be a devotee. Such men are miscalled devotees. They make earnest men lose faith in Godly ways - BABA.

Advanced Yogic Levels

The three main forms of acquired yoga, are -Jada samadhi, Chetan samadhi and Chinmaya samadhi.

Jada Samadhi -When a yogi succeeds in controlling his mind and senses through rigorous meditation, though this type of samadhi brings the sadhaka very close to Bhagavan, it does not help him to stabilise himself at that level, and he stands in need of a higher kind of sad-hana.

Chetana Samadhi -This next stage is when conflicting forces distract the mind in penance, cease to function and are reduced to nothing, we have Chetana Samadhi. Once you have attained this level your body becomes light and energetic, so-much-so, that it acquires the speed of mind and may travel a thousand miles in the blink of an eye! The yogi conquers external nature completely and the cosmos has no meaning as he becomes omnipresent.

At one time a few Americans enquired of one disciple of his teacher, and was told, "My Guru has acquired Chetana Samadhi and is Omnipresent. I cannot give you any particular address."

Thereupon the Americans wrote to the preceptor and addressed it to the name given and the address as, "The Omnipresent", and posted it. The next day they received a postcard with the following message, "Dear Sir, I got your letter in time. The fact is that I was with you even when you were writing the letter. I was there in your heart as the ever alert Conscioiusness. Yours (etc.)"

Chinmaya Samadhi -This is the Supreme stage in yogic sadhana; the stage when worldly attractions do not affect one, nor pulls one down. Such a one has attained mastery over time and space. He can create anything out of nothing. He can create an entirely new universe which is not time-bound, but Grace-bound. He has merged with the Supreme Self, -Parabrahma Himself -Who is higher than the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Hahesh.

Sai Baba was able to show His powers to His student friends when they approached the Chitravathi river that was in flood, on their way to school. They chose to go home but Swami entered the water, despite their protestations. The boys were frightened and they ran to Sathya's house to inform Easwamma about it. Extremely concerned, she returned with them to the river bank only to find her Dearest One standing in mid-stream and smiling, as He bade 'good-bye'. His mother cried out for Him to turn back, only to see a mischievious smile on His lips, as He turned and continued safely across, on His way to school.

You people often say that you are Sai devotees but have you ever thought and tried to know whether the One whose devotees you claim to be, has also accepted you as such. -BABA.

The Highest Form of Right Living

Sathya Sai Baba has stated that, "*Non-violence is the highest form of right living, the divine law which is the highest of all virtues. The principle of non-*

violence means the promotion of mutual love along with achieving and maintaining goals of peace and unity. Non-violence means refraining from violence released by passionate feelings and controlling oneself. The non-violent are recognised by their patience. Violence is the sign of an animal nature.

As one of the five fundamental values espoused by Swami, it is also the essential tenet of many religions and can be viewed as a moral philosophy or as an action strategy or as both, according to Prof. N.K. Ambasht, in his article in "Sai International" newsletter.

He suggests, however, that Swami views it as moral human value; thus non-injury by thought, word and deed, is being pivotal to His concept, which leads to a humane, peaceful global society. Love, says Prof. Ambasht, is the overarching value and non-violence can be treated as its logical consequence.

Non-violence was officially endorsed at a global level on Nov. 10th, 1998 at the U.N. General Assembly, as a birthday tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, perhaps the greatest practitioner-exponent of Non-violence. His non-cooperation, civil disobedience and *Satyagraha* movements adopted Non-violence as a forceful and peaceful tool, said Prof. Ambasht.

Many individuals in our lifetime have been apostles of Non-violence; viz. Martin Luther King, Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela, stand out as prime examples.

Martin Luther King used say, "Meet physical force with soul force."

Aung San Suu Kyi said, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

St. Francis of Assisi calls us to be instruments of peace and healing by turning from weapons of violence, to acts of love. "Happy those who endure in peace."

Finally, Swami says, "*Action with Love is Right Conduct - Speak with Love and it*

becomes Truth - Thinking with Love results in Peace - Understanding with Love leads to Non-violence".

Whenever obstacles come in your way, call me and I will be there...

I have always protected My Bhaktas in My previous Avatars and now too. I am always at the service of My devotees. -BABA.

Attaining Swami's Grace

An American lady submitted to Swami, "Baba, there is no dearth of wealth and property. The coffers are full of diamonds and pearls. I need nothing but Your Grace. Lord, please permit me to stay in Prashanti Nilayam and serve you for the rest of my life."

Swami looked at her and said, "*You really need nothing?*" He then showed His palm to her, and she became alarmed at what she saw. "Please save my grandson!" she cried, as she viewed her grandson rolling down a hill.

Swami replied, "*If you had regarded the child as belonging to Me, you would have asked Me to save My grandson. But what you prayed and asked was to save your grandson. You still regard him as yours. If you have a grandson, you need money also to bring him up, to educate him and to marry him. You also need a family and a home where they should live happily. Isn't it? How do you say then that you do not need anything?*"

A Ceylonese couple was given an interview by Swami. The lady requested Him, "Baba, we invite you to our residence in Ceylon." Swami quietly said, "*Amma, the house built with lime and cement is not My home. It is your heart where I reside. My seat is in your heart, but unfortunately it is too narrow. Only one person can sit there. And I find Kama (desire) already occupying that seat, so how can I come?*"

In other words, where light and darkness cannot live together, Ram and Kama, also cannot exist side by side.

The following is a further lesson in seeking Swami's Grace. Swami was taking His morning darshan round, and He stood in front of some lady devotees, when a lady in the back row stood up and shouted, "Swami I need Your Grace," repeating it several times. Swami smiled and moved forward. Usually devotees sit down when Swami moves on, but this lady didn't and raised her voice a little more with the same request.

Swami stopped and turned towards her and said, "*Grace, grace! Do you know the meaning of Grace?*" The lady replied, "Swami, it means your compassion, your blessing." Baba said, "*No, it means much more than that. If you really want My Grace you should prepare yourself to face every type of calamity. You will lose all your wealth and happiness, and still instead of crying and repenting you will have to completely merge yourself in meditating upon Me and utter My Name in your heart. Your near and dear ones will turn against you. People will implicate you in conspiracies with which you have nothing to do. They will find fault with you where you are totally innocent. Under all such circumstances, you will have simply to think of Me and Me alone, and suffer everything silently. Come on, are you prepared to face all these things?*"

The lady was stunned into silence, and sat down quietly.

However, Swami's Grace is always with us even when we do not ask for it, as in the case of the child, born into a Buddhist family in Burma. This child was alive although there was no external symptoms of life in him. He did not cry like other new-born children. His doctors were specialists in child-care and took an X-Ray of the child's heart only to find that it consisted of only three valves. The fourth was missing. It was agreed that the child would not survive more than a few hours.

The broken-hearted parents took the child and placed it at the lotus feet of Lord Buddha, and they noticed stirring in

the lifeless body and then the child started crying. The parents saw this as a boon from God Himself.

Raised now as a Buddhist, the child grew-up receiving the best education the parents could provide, as he became a scholar in both worldly and spiritual learning. He went to America and as a young man was appointed to a senior position in the Land Survey Department. Later, he attended an International Conference of Geo-physicists that was held in Bangalore, representing the U.S.A.

With friends he went to Whitefield for Bhagavan's darshan, and he had the good fortune to have an interview. During the interview Swami presented him with a small casket along with Vubhuti Prasadam. Upon opening the casket he was astonished to see that it contained a diagram of the heart. Instead of four valves the heart had only three! The very valve the young man did not have since his birth was missing. Nobody had known of this except his parents and himself. How did Swami know?

Swami smiled at the young man's curiosity and said, "*You are thinking how this man, five feet and three inches tall and with a frail body, could know about this secret? You think I stay here only. But you are mistaken, I live in Burma, too, and also in America where you are serving. As a matter of fact I am Omnipresent. I don't have any particular form. Besides the one you are seeing, all other forms are mine. I am in your house as well as in the form of the idols of Buddha. Your parents had placed your lifeless body at My Lotus Feet, and prayed for your safety. Since it was a prayer from the heart I gave you a new lease of life. It is I Who makes your heart function even without a valve. Thus you have been living under My protection and will continue to live so even in future.*"

With tears of gratitude rolling down his cheeks, he said to himself, "Here is the Lord Himself who is protecting me all

these years, and not for once during the span of forty years have I thanked Him.”

With this thought, he fell at the Lotus Feet and offered his heartfelt salutations to Bhagavan. What else could he offer?

During the Shivarathri Discourse in 2003, Swami stated the following:-

If you pose the question as to “Where is God? some people will say, “He is in me,” pointing to their body. Body is not permanent. Hence, this is not a proper answer. When I say the flower is in My hand, the flower is smaller than me. In the same manner, when you say God is in you, you are bigger than God! In fact, the whole world is in the hands of God. Hence, it is not proper to say that God is in you. You are in God. All are in God. The world itself is a manifestation of God. This is the Transcendental Truth. This is the changeless Truth.

...Whatever you see, whatever you experience is but a manifestation of God. In fact, you are God yourself. Hence, the Veda exhorts man to develop faith that, “I am God and God is none other than myself.” Names and forms are many, but God is One.

How Blessed We Are!

The Grace of God is always with us. One only has to ask for it.

There are many examples of Swami taking care of the needs of His devotees. All the essentials of life, i.e. like earth, water, fire, air and space, are absolutely free. For those who cannot raise themselves, the merciful Lord performs leelas even on the physical plane so that the faith of the common man is not shaken and he does not go astray.

A piece I read recently is a lovely example:- In the village of Birpur of Gujarat, Swami gave a staff and a waterpot to Bhakta Jalaram which was wishfulfilling. The result is that even today the natives of that village worship the staff and kamandalu (waterpot) and

run free meals for one and all who visit that village. Similarly a number of families are in possession of Ekmukhi Rudraksha and rare precious stones. Their regular worship saves them from unforeseen calamities, diseases, famine and death.

The Akshaya Patra that was given by Swami to those in the Gufa, was one such thing and unique in this respect.

It is written, “Wealth and prosperity flow to the virtuous in the same way as rivers flow to the ocean even though the ocean has no such desire.”

After creating everything, God gave man complete freedom to do as he liked. But God has imposed a condition. You may do what you want and enjoy what you desire, but you cannot escape the consequence. You have to face the result. Therefore, you alone are responsible for what happens to you. The good and the bad that happen to you were brought about by you alone. -BABA

The Unbelievable Prophecy

“At Bukkapatnam, people laughed at us; they thought all of us were mad believing in the miraculous powers of that boy”.

A 16 year old boy calling Himself Sai Baba, consoling the dispirited, curing the ill, exorcising ghosts and teaching the old! This was the early 1940's. Yet the small family group consisting of a woman, “mad since two years”, made it to Puttaparthi by bullock cart, hired for twelve annas, and left them by a group of little houses along narrow tracks. Peeping inside a Brahmin's house he saw a boy and asked, “I hear there is a boy in this village who has become Sai Baba; it seems he cures madness. Which is his house, can you tell me?”

The boy looked at the man lovingly and replied, “*Poor fellow! The mad woman you brought with you is giving terrible trouble to her husband in the river! Go and take a bath; and bring them also after their bath is over. I shall then show*

you the boy you are after.” While returning from the river, the woman ran wildly hither and thither making it difficult to take her to the house of the Brahmin. The boy was none other than Sai Baba. “I will call you one by one,” the boy said, creating Vibhuti. As they had bought bananas at Bukkapatnam for Sai Baba, Swami gave the woman one banana to eat.

It was early in the evening by the time they came out on the street and the woman said to her husband, “Well, what about our meal? Get some rice from the shop and ask for vessels. I shall cook food for us, pretty quick.” Her madness had left her and her husband was overjoyed!

Swami called them in for a meal, and Baba mixed all the items served by Subbamma into tolerably big balls and gave one to each person

The following morning after a disturbed night, Swami asked, “No sleep? Too many snakes in this place. This is a very holy place, but under a curse! Sai will save it.”

He later added, “The Sai Pravesh (Advent) will make it the Prasanthi Pradesh (Region). Up that hill I shall have a grand Bhavan. By that time, hundreds, (why hundreds?) thousands, (why thousands?) lakhs, all India will be here. The whole world will come and wait for Sai Darshan.”

The man replied, “What? I cannot believe this will happen.” Swami laughed and said, “You will have to believe it when you will be standing at a distance, trying to catch a glimpse of Me.”

That man, in 1972, stood at a distance and yearned for Sai Darshan, and believed the Prophecy Swami made in 1943!

“HAVE COURAGE” -BABA.

“Everything can be achieved with courage. If you are devoid of courage, you will lose everything. Hence, you should never lose courage. This courage is energy”.

“Do not feel dispirited. If you lose heart, it will pain Me”.

Sai To The Rescue

The occasions when Swami came to the rescue to His devotees, have been legion; appearing in many books.

The heart of Sai hears our call for help and instantly He responds, as in the case of Alex and Louse, who were returning from a Bhgajan session and a later showing of a video of Swami.

As they drive along a narrow road, and chatting happily of the evening, when Louse suddenly cried out, “Watch out!” and she knelt down beneath the dash-board. Alex saw two sets of headlights coming straight for him, as two cars were racing each other at high speed, with the inevitable danger of a crash. Louse prayed for Sai Baba to save them.

As the two sets of lights came closer, a strange thing happened: one moment the lights were in front, then inexplicably, the two cars were behind them, and nothing happened!

How they went through the two cars without colliding with them, they could not understand. There was a ditch on his left and the approaching car was on his side of the road and could not move over! They knew Swami steered them through the two cars but couldn’t say how this happened.

In shock, Louse emerged from beneath the dash-board to ask, “What happened?” Alex replied that he didn’t know but that they were miraculously saved, and were without a scratch. They could not understand how a crash did not take place and that they were not killed.

There have been many instances when Swami has revealed that He has been taking care of us. He expects nothing in return but for us to serve humanity with love.

That pleases Him the most!

Beware the pride of wealth, scholarship, station that drag you into

egoism. Do not seek the faults of others; seek your own. Be happy when you see others prosper; share your joy with others. -BABA.

What's a miracle?

It is said that miracles are a part of Divine Nature. Swami elucidates on this point with the help of a simple scientific principle.

“You get electricity when the positive and negative forces come in contact with each other. A miracle is also the result of two such forces. The positive current spreads My Divinity. It is always prepared to perform a miracle, but a miracle will only happen when the negative current of some real devotee meets it. What do we mean by the negative current? The negative current represents that stage of devotion where there is a total negation of Ego. When a devotee becomes egoless, he surrenders himself totally to Me and that is the moment when My Grace, in the form of positive current is ready to protect him from all evils.

And this is what people call a miracle.”

Before you speak, ask yourself is it kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve on the silence? -BABA.

The Times of India Interviews Sai Baba.

On the 12 March 1999 the “Times of India” recorded the following;

“Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is easily one of the most popular spiritual leaders of contemporary India. He has attracted a following which runs into crores, (crore=10,000,000 Ed.) cutting across barriers of caste, language, region and nation. He shot into fame because of the miracles performed by Him, specifically His ability to materialise the holy ash and other material things from out of thin air. The rationalists consistently targeted him. But, Baba, as He is referred to both of

reverence and affection by His devotees, only emerged stronger from these controversies. Today, the 74 year old Baba is known for working out miracles of a difference kind. Miracles in the form of a Super Speciality hospital where free treatment is given or a massive drinking water scheme in the parched hinterland of Andhra Pradesh or a massive educational complex. The high and the mighty of the land touch His feet and seek His blessings, so do ordinary people from all walks of life. Baba gives them all the same message of love. He has never given an interview to a journalist in the past 25 years. But, recently, He spoke to S. Balakrishnan and a group of journalists from Mumbai in a small room at His ashram in Puttaparthi, in Andhra Pradesh.

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Indians are increasingly turning to godmen and godwomen. Is this a sign of growing insecurity within them? Or is it something else?

This is basically a search for God. The divinity is there within each person. The search is for this divinity. God realisation cannot be seen as a sign of insecurity. It is a positive aspiration to be one with God. It is a good sign.

Even as mankind is relentlessly searching for god, he finds himself engulfed by more and more misery. What is the reason for this state of affairs?

Attachment to the body is the root cause of all suffering and misery. Once this attachment ends, then one can experience divine bliss. There is no doubt about that. Since God does not have any bodily attachment, He does not attach any importance to the suffering of His body.

What is the best way to serve God?

Serve the poor, the weak, the downtrodden and the underprivileged. There is divinity in each of us, hence love and serve fellow human beings selflessly. Give those around you pure love. Religion can be best pursued through the axiom “Dil mein Ram, Haath mein Kaam.” There is only one

religion - the religion of love; one caste - the caste of humanity; one language - the language of the heart ; one law - the law of Karma and there is only one God - He is Omnipresent. All of us should remember these simple yet profound truths. These truths lead us to God.

Is there no escape from human misery?

It is all karma. The need is to adapt the path of righteousness. One should surrender oneself to the Almighty.

Why do You perform miracles like materialising a ring, a medallion, a necklace, vibhuti and other objects? What are You trying to prove by performing these miracles?

Miracle is a cheap word for what I do. A magician performs his tricks to earn a livelihood and worldly fame. But, I materialise these talismans as My visiting card, as evidence that divinity can transform earth into sky and vice versa. To doubt this is to betray an inability to grasp the grandeur of the universe. I get a lot of satisfaction while gifting these talismans to my devotees.

The suffering millions flock to You. They want to pass on their problems and suffering to You. How much of these suffering can you take on?

I am only performing a divine mission.

How do you spend Your day?

My day begins with granting darshan to my devotees, interviews to people, bhajans, attending to all projects taken up for human welfare. Same cycle is repeated from post noon till evening. Although I know the contents of all letters which I receive, I read all of them for the trupti or satisfaction of my devotees.

I avoid milk, green fruits, dry fruits, sweets, ghee, butter, tea, coffee, etc. I take a skimpy meal of ragi and green grams. For the past 60 years My weight has remained unchanged at 108 pounds. When the world sleeps, I go to My devotees, give them My vision, comfort them, console them and solve their problems. I willingly take on the suffering of My devotees on Myself.

Have You gone abroad, any time?

Yes, only once - East Africa, that too because of the pure love of a devotee, who is no more now. I did not go at the invitation of the government.

Do You have any plans to visit foreign nations and spread Your message?

No. Where there is sugar, the ant comes there; the sugar does not go chasing after the ants. My first task is to clean up our own country first, then go to other countries.

You wield enormous influence over the top politicians of the country. Why don't You impress on them the need to inculcate values in public life? If this is done, India will be a much better place.

Politicians have a choice to pursue good or bad governance; they do covet power with a frenzy. But I tell them that politics without principles, science without humanity, education without character and commerce without morality, are not only useless but can prove to be positively dangerous and harm people at large.

You are the Chancellor of the Sathya Sai University and You attach tremendous importance to education. Why do You think that education in India has now become a mechanical exercise?

This is because that education has been divorced from values. Education bereft of values is meaningless. The need is to restore values to education.

What are Your views on different political parties in India?

All parties do good work as well as bad; the problem lies with ourselves. We should insist on principles.

Who will lead the Sathya Sai movement after You?

My devotees. God will continue to guide them.

Swami Inspires

The young student from Bangalore journeyed to P. N. with his student friends from Madras, for Sai Baba's darshan. The Lord cast a loving glance at the group and

gave one Vibhuti. All partook of the sacred ash smearing it on their foreheads and placing it on their tongues.

Later the Bangalore student expressed gratitude for being there. but did not revere Swami as did the others, saying, "That we take Sai Baba as a great soul with spiritual powers and benefit by the darshan, stand with folded hands out of regard and respect, listen to His teachings and try to emulate Him to make life more meaningful, is understandable. But I dislike to see people touch His feet, lie prostrate on the ground, smear their foreheads with the sands He has walked on, and address Him as God." The young man continued commenting in this way for some time. His Madras friends listened with patience and surprise, and said, "Quite possible that in days to come you may surpass all of us in your reverence and worship to Lord Sai, in singing His glory and in touching His holy feet. We say so because in the past there are instances of people who came here roaring like lions, but had to return as a subdued and humbled lambs."

It was the following day that Swami called the Bangalore student for an interview, only to experience Swami admonishing him, "*Inspite of your being born into a devout family, you express doubts like an atheist. Why do you hurt your simple and religious-minded parents by doing so?*"

The student was stunned and began to realise that Swami knew everything he had said to his friends. Swami continued to say that he would go abroad adding, "*I will take care of everything when you return.*"

The student was shocked and extremely agitated, and was thinking on what Swami said about his remarks regarding atheism which were quite correct, and that he would be going abroad. This seemed impossible, saying, "There is nothing like this on the cards. It is absolutely wrong."

The student returned to Madras with his friends and upon the day of his results,

returned to Bangalore to be told of his success by the Principle, and that they would like him to go to California University in the US, to attend a debate on the topic, whether the Vedas are primeval or eternal.

"All students up to post-graduate standard can participate in it...and we are of the opinion that with the spiritual background of your family and the rich knowledge of the Vedas you have, you will be the fittest person to represent our college. The Government will bear all your expenses."

Swami's words continued to ring in his ears, he thought, "Lord Sai seems to be Omniscient One, else how could He forecast the events of my life...maybe my friends are right. Maybe Baba is God. If this is so it should not be at all difficult for Him to help me win."

Arriving in California, the debate went on for three consecutive days, with arguments and counter arguments, offered by both sides. However, the Bangalore student with sheer intelligence, knowledge and logic won the day and his side was awarded several special prizes for his individual performance. He could not understand how he could argue the points the way he did. He thought, "Normally, in such situations people forget all that they have memorised and get nervous. But with me everything was different. Most certainly Baba has been guiding me through remote control." Upon his return, he went straight to P.N. to be blessed with an interview with Swami, and singing His glories quietly within his heart. Swami declared to him, "*Look, I affected your birth in a prosperous and pious family. Don't therefore take interest in things temporal. You will have to devote yourself to spiritual pursuits. Go meet your parents and return here.*"

After spending time with his parents, he returned to P.N. for yet another audience with Swami, Who told him finally to go to the forest and meditate there. "*It was because of Me that you won in California.*"

Since that day I had accepted you in alms till this day, I have been with you every moment and shall continue to do so in future.”

He put aside all thought as to how he would live since he would be meditating, and was fortunate to meet with an old and realised Mahatma, Swami Vamadeva. The student devoted himself to rigorous penance for six years. He practised Pranayam as told by Swami and in the course of time could hold his breath for over an hour, and gradually acquiring selfcontrol on his senses and developing a kind of serenity.

Swami took him under His care, and indeed has all of us under His care, until we attain Moksha.

A thing not existing in the past and not going to exist in the future, has a fake ‘present’ and its ‘present’ is just an illusion. -Krishna, (Gita).

For Centre & Group Meetings

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