

SATSANG
NEWSLETTER FROM THE SATSANG FOUNDATION
JUNE –2000 NO-1

A message from Sri “M”
THE JEWEL WITHIN THE LOTUS

Every human being is potentially divine. The radiance of the divinity within may have been temporarily veiled by the egoistic thought processes; nevertheless the jewel within the lotus of the heart cannot be hidden forever.

Sometime or the other the coverings are sure to fall revealing the glorious effulgence of truth.

Such a one in whom the core of consciousness shines forth in all its overwhelming splendour, exuding selfless love and bounteous beauty is called a perfected being: a Christ, a Buddha, a Paramahansa.

Selfless service to humanity at large expecting nothing in return is the beginning of this journey to perfection; an indication that the mind has evolved enough to sense the fact that the divine spark in oneself is no different from that in others.

When the heart thus begins to overflow with love towards the less privileged, they ‘that mourn’, the rock-hard shell that isolates and strengthens the selfish ego melts and by and by disappears.

That is the destruction of the little self and the spontaneous and instantaneous understanding of the Supreme Universal ‘That’ which pervades everything – the omnipresent ‘Isha’ that is described in the *Ishavasya Upanishad as Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam*.

So side by side with the practice of meditation, retrospection, contemplation and other devotional activities aimed at stilling the mind and delving deep into the recesses of one’s consciousness, one should engage in such activities that to the best extent possible allay the miseries of other living beings.

This two-pronged action is sure to dissolve the little ego - the cause of all misery - in course of time until the Supreme Self of all of us shines forth in all its majesty. The human has now been transformed into a God.

To be Free

*To be free
Is to be free from
The longing to be free.*

*Yonder tree is free,
Standing steady strong,
Her roots entering deep into
the earth.*

*To shift has no wish and,
Being free,
Shade, a place to rest for
weary pilgrims
Yearning to be free*

Therefore if we have meditated for 30 years, and seen all kinds of visions and yet there is not an iota of love and concern for those unfortunate ones who are in misery, we have to re-examine and re-assess where we have gone wrong. If the heart does not melt at the cries of pain around one, all the years of so called meditation have been futile. We have lived in a world of illusions and imagined ourselves to be saints.

A true saint's heart melts in compassion at the sight of misery and his or her hands immediately set about trying to alleviate to the best of his or her capacity.

So let us try to emulate those great ones to the best of our capacity by serving the lesser privileged Daridra Narayans who the great Swami Vivekananda referred to as the 'only God visible to our physical eyes'.

If we begin to move in this direction there is hope for a better and happier world for all of us. If we don't, no one's going to question us but we must at least have the decency to refrain from considering ourselves religious in the true sense of the term, no matter how many temples we build, how many Godmen we visit or how many hours we meditate.

After completing his spiritual training and discipleship under his great Himalayan Master, Sri 'M' was advised by his Master to go back to the plains and join the throng of humanity. He was to be in the world but not of the world, without losing the bliss that was to be his forever.

In 1994, 'M' launched The Satsang Foundation, the aim of which is to act as a meeting point for spiritual seekers and to extend a helping hand to the less privileged of our society. The Foundation is administered by a governing council of which Sri 'M' is the President.

Like-minded and interested friends, seekers and well-wishers are included in the mailing list and kept informed of the various activities of the Foundation to enable them to participate in and contribute to the goals of The Satsang. Now with the starting of these quarterly Newsletters, our friends will have more regular contact.

Over the years, Sri 'M' has been tirelessly meeting people from all walks of life, both within the country and abroad, young and old, poor and rich, individually or in groups, talking, advising, helping them to progress spiritually in their chosen paths and at the same time spreading the message of The Bhagavad Geeta that one cannot be religious without serving the less fortunate in society.

Talks & Satsangs

'M' says that during talks and satsangs, an inner contact, beyond the rational, thinking mind is established and it is through this contact that a transmission can take place. Sri 'M' has been giving public talks in such places as ADA Ranga Mandira, Theosophical Society, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, colleges and schools to reach interested people. He has been generously meeting smaller groups in homes and other places, both in India and abroad to clear doubts, both theoretical and practical, about different spiritual paths and also encourage spiritual aspirants. In August 1999, following an inner prompting, he suspended public talks for a while, to concentrate on meeting people in smaller groups and individually. Information about his programmes can be obtained by telephoning the secretaries of the Foundation, Sri Mohan at 080-5589546 or Sri Surya Deo at 080-3537120.

Weekly meetings

Thursday meeting between 5.30p.m and 7 p.m. being held at different aspirants' homes. Programme includes reading, meditation and bhajans. Information can be had from Smt Jyothi Narang at 3537120 or 3537098 or Smt Shobha Reddy at 5281867, Bangalore. Other groups of friends in different localities and cities or towns can start their own weekly meetings, with Sri M's blessings.

A study group is meeting every Sunday at 11a.m at the residence of Gr. Capt (Retd.) Ratnakar Sanadi, 4 Hayes Road, Bangalore Interested persons can contact him at 2273213.

Publications

'Jewel In The Lotus' and 'Towards Greater Glory and A Happier Life' both authored by 'M' have been published by Sterling Publishers and are available for sale in book shops and The Foundation office. He is planning to publish in the next few months a book on Three Upanishads and another book, which will be a compilation of some conversations. A book on Sufis is also on the cards. This quarterly Newsletter is also being brought out as a regular publication of Foundation.

Website

<http://www.satsang-foundation.org>

has been open for a few months. It is intended to make this website a source of comprehensive and up to date information on the activities of The Satsang Foundation and Sri 'M'. You can direct questions on spiritual and Satsang matters to Sri 'M' or the Foundation by e-mail facility available in the home page or directly to mumtazali_satsang@usa.net Quick responses will be sent by return e-mail, as soon as possible.

Satsang Vidyalaya

A free school for 50 Lambani children was started in July 1999 at Madanapalli, next to M's residence. A mid-day meal is provided. A more detailed write up is included elsewhere in this issue.

Manav Ekta Mission

Started by Sri 'M' to remind brothers and sisters that living in harmony, shedding sectarian views is the need of the hour. A more descriptive account of the two padayatras held in 1998 is included in this issue.

Spiritual Retreats

For more intense spiritual contact, 'M' has conducted two or three day spiritual retreats for twenty to thirty people in tucked away places such as the outskirts of Chikkaballapur, Shanti Dhama at the Sangam and Pulicherla (Andhra Pradesh). Aspirants get a chance to know 'M' more intimately and vice versa because 'M' believes that spiritual to individual basis and not with any mass formula.

Environment & Ecology

Mother Earth and the entire mankind is staring at a monumental environmental and ecological disaster in all realms of life, be it in earth, in waters, in air or in the skies. Acutely aware of the danger to humanity, 'M' would like The Satsang Foundation to make people, especially the younger generation, aware of the crisis and make them think and act in a way which will support caring and sensitive people, worldwide, to turn the tide back. Sri 'M' is concerned about the lack of public hygiene consciousness in our country and would like to conduct garbage cleaning picnics etc. to create awareness.

Sri 'M': a Profile

Sri Mumtaz Ali who prefers to call himself 'M' was born in the picturesque city of Trivandrum in Kerala in the year 1949.

He had his spiritual initiation from his great Master at the tender age of eight. The Master asked him to continue his normal education and informed him that he will come by a different kind of knowledge with proper guidance and instructions from time to time.

His life took a different turn from then on; he was drawn more and more towards things that are spiritual in nature. As the years went by 'M' read a number of important books on Yoga and Vedanta. During the period as prophesied by his Master 'M' had blessings and guidance of many masters and teachers. His appetite for knowledge took him to various masters living at that time which included illustrious souls like Poojapura Swami, Chempazhanti Swami, Maayi Ma of Kanyakumari, Poonthara Swami, Swami Tapasyananda and others.

Already acquainted with the teachings of Sufis by attending Sufi groups of the Amirs of the different Tariqats, he also met the gem among the Sufis the famous Kaladi Mastan at Bimapalli near Trivandrum. 'M's spiritual quest was not merely intellectual. Side by side with growing theoretical knowledge he meditated from long hours and got rigorous training in Ashtanga Yoga from teachers of repute in that subject.

When 'M' was 20, he decided to go to the Himalayas. Thus his mendicant life began. He covered most of the places in the Himalayas by foot. He went from Haridwar to Rishikesh to Uttarkashi to Gangotri to Yamunotri and Kedarnath via Batwari, then to Badrinath and returned to Rishikesh. Then he proceeded to Bombay. 'M' joined Ramakrishna Mission at Khar and spent three years as Brahmachari. He also met Swamy Ranganathananda and Swamy Tapasyananda. After a brief stay at Banares he went back to Haridwar and stayed in the Divine Life Society Ashram at Rishikesh. This gave a very good opportunity for him to meet many Sadhus and Mahatmas.

The great Himalayas beckoned him again. 'M' proceeded to Badrinath by foot. Soon in his desire to meet more Sadhus, Yogis and Paramahansas he proceeded further towards Narayana Parvath beyond Badrinath. He walked into the 'Vyasa guha' cave and sat in meditation. Time stood still. When he opened his eyes he saw before him The Master, someone he saw years ago when he was a boy of eight. The Master sat beside him and they talked long into the night till dawn. This meeting thoroughly overhauled 'M's thought process and brought about a lasting change in his consciousness. The master blessed him by way of farewell and promised to monitor 'M' constantly and walked away from the cave.

A new phase of his life began. 'M' continued to travel. Following his Master's advice he spent many years observing the world without being blinded by its transient pleasures. He went back to the world, met many spiritual teachers and godmen, travelled all over India, took up difficult jobs to earn a living.

'M's spiritual pursuits brought him into close contact with J. Krishnamurti during the last two years of his life and 'M' was made a trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation which position he resigned after five years. It was at the foundation that he met Sunanda and married her. He is the founder of The Satsang Foundation, and a teacher who spreads the message of Vedanta to those in search of truth. He is at home in the lore of all religions and their inner mysticism.

'M' is the epitome of secular harmony depicting an enlightened soul. He is the founder of "The Manav Ekta Mission" an association of like-minded people to spread communal harmony.

Equally comfortable with The Gita and The Quran, this sagacious author is also an accomplished artist and his paintings have been exhibited in reputed galleries. At the invitation of spiritual seekers 'M' has travelled extensively in India and has also visited UK, Germany, France, Singapore, Malaysia and the USA on lecture tours.

Fund Raising

At present the activities of The Foundation are run with financial contributions from friends, admirers and well wishes of Sri 'M'. With the starting of the free school and other proposed service projects like an orphanage and old age home, the caring public has to be approached for generous financial support.

The Satsang Foundation is registered with the Registrar of Societies in Bangalore and the Income Tax Department has granted 80G exemption for donations made to the Foundation. Immediately a corpus fund of Rs.15 to 20 lakhs is being raised, interest from which will take care of the running of The Satsang Vidyalaya and free mid-day meal scheme at Madanapalli. All contributions are welcome and can be sent by cheque, payable to **The Satsang Foundation, 151 Jewellers Street, Bangalore 560001, India.**

Future Plans

At the Satsang Vidyalaya, Madanapalli, evening adult education classes have been started for men and women of the Lambani village. A well wisher has donated three sewing machines and sewing classes are being conducted for the women of nearby hamlets. Vocational training in crafts and other useful skills is proposed to be given to the villagers as and when volunteers with the necessary background come forward to spend some time in Madanapalli and impart these skills. Sri. 'M' is hoping that at least two more such vidyalaya and community development centers will be started in due course in nearby Lamina hamlets.

As and when dedicated people and funds become available, an old age home and an orphanage are planned to be started, perhaps in the vicinity of Bangalore. A retreat, with thatched kutias and basic living facilities is being developed on a two acre plot of land, near Madanapalli on the Cuddapah road by 'M' for holding spiritual camps and retreats.

Other plans and programmes will be intimated through these columns and suggestions from all are most welcome.

Clearing the mist....

First let me explain the chain of pleasant co-incidents leading to our meeting with 'M'. About two years back, I had gone to Anandashram, Kanhangad as suggested by my friend Rajmohan whom I had met incidentally a couple of months previously through my friend Shiva Prakash. There I used to see one quiet, bald, elderly person with very clean spectacles and shining complexion. I thought I had met him somewhere previously, but could not recollect. One day I did talk to him. He said he was from Bangalore. We exchanged phone numbers. The gentleman's name was Ramchandra Rao

A few months later, Mr. Ramchandra Rao called for the first time and told me about one Sufi and Vedantin, Mr. Mumtaz Ali who was to speak to a group of people in Malleswaram. Those days, my wife and I were reading a bit about Sufism. We decided to go to Malleswaram. There we heard Mr. Mumtaz Ali speaking on the Gita. My wife asked a question too.

At the end of the talk, we were introduced to him by Mr. Ramdas Haldipur. 'M' invited us to meet him if we wanted any clarification. A day later, we met him in Panchayan, Nandidurg Road. It was so nice to talk to him. So satisfying, I have had this burning desire to meet a genuine Yogi, a genuine Sadhaka. He gave us the book "Jewel In The Lotus". It was my wife who read it first and kept on telling me what she read. Then I read the book. It was for the first time that I was reading a book on the subject without simmering doubts. That immediately established our rapport with 'M'.

I have always had a desire for spiritual development, for spiritual experiences. But, I have had doubts too. I have been talking to friends - the origin, the evolution, the present and future stages of the world including man, can be perfectly explained in two seemingly entirely different ways - one purely 'scientific', the other purely religious/ spiritual. Which one is the right, the real, the true explanation? Are they mutually exclusive? I do not know. Is Truth combination of the two? I do not know. Is it possible for us to know the truth? I do not know. Is there only one ultimate Truth or many truths? I do not know. These questions, naturally, have been affecting my path, my efforts, my tareeqa. And I have made hardly any progress. May be some deep imperceptible changes have been taking place. I do not know.

We can talk to 'M' about our doubts without any hesitation. He explains things to us in a language we can understand. We can seek clarifications. We can lay bare our weakness. And 'M' has been understanding and patient. He acts like an upretentious friend who provides gentle guidance, keeping in mind our peculiar situation and background.

For many years, I have schooled myself to think that if I continue to do my **duty-duty** as a Police Officer and duty as a house-holder, that is enough for my spiritual development. No extra efforts are necessary. Certainly no rituals or poojas or visit to temples etc. Honesty and sincerity are enough, I have thought, and taken inspiration from Sanskrita 'Naham Balaka' story which I read in my 9th standard.

In our first or second meeting with 'M' I put across these thoughts to him. He accepted the importance and benefits of honesty and sincerity in doing our duty. But, he explained that alone was not enough. If one depends only on that, one's spiritual progress would be quite slow. To hasten the process, something more has to be done. Something in the form of meditation, satsang, japa, he explained. I was not unfamiliar with these practices particularly meditation and satsanga, but their perspective and importance was never so clear and convincing.

We can talk to 'M' about our doubts without any hesitation. He explains things to us in a language we can understand. We can lay bare our weakness. And 'M' has been understanding and patient. He acts like an unpretentious friend who provides gentle guidance, keeping in mind our peculiar situation and background. The mystical quality of Quantum Physics, Theory of Relativity, Theories about Time have always fascinated me, may be, because I have hardly understood them. In his discussions, 'M' so effortlessly and smoothly brings in these 'scientific' principles to bear upon our understanding of the world, our selves, spirituality and science. This adds to our awareness which is so vital for any progress.

Not that we have hit the Rajpath of spirituality, not that all our doubts have subsided, not that there has been a quantum jump in our progress, but in the person of 'M' we have somebody with whom we can discuss things threadbare and clear the mist. Perhaps, that is the only help one must expect. All else has to be done by us ourselves.

I thank Mr. Ramchandra Rao and Mr. Mr. Ramdas Haldipur for introducing us to 'M'. And many thanks to Mr. Surya Deo and all others at Panchayan for making our meetings with 'M' possible at quite some inconveniences to themselves. It will be preposterous to thank 'M'.

Ajay Kumar Singh.

Compassion – love in Action

The specter of famine for food and water looms large over vast stretches of our nation. Malaria, Tuberculosis. AIDS, malnutrition, mortality of infants and women at childbirth continue to devastate and debilitate hundreds of millions. Squalor and deprivation around us abound and are growing. In essence, suffering among largest number of our people is a norm, with islands of plenty, so called progress, providing stark contrast. If we are inhabitants of these islands, most often our feelings tend to be pity, occasional charity, but mostly insularity, either born out of helplessness or lack of real concern.

In the midst of such massive suffering it is easy to step into a feeling of hopelessness and despair. Despair is the product of hearts filled with pity. Compassion on the other hand when it fills the hearts, gives rise to hope. When we pity the weak, we walk away, when compassion overtakes us, we help and stay. Pity is mostly an emotional response. Compassion on the other hand is an action response. While pity touches our feelings producing tears and keeping a comfortable distance from another's problem, compassion engages our will, let us get involved, accept, and experience the pains and penury of the others.

Only compassionate action can give hope, which is the most important ingredient for us to become caring and action oriented. When we pity, we protest against deprivation, discrimination and injustice. But we stop at that. If we are compassionate, we change our life style, harness our personal resources to care for the same victims. Pity notices human suffering but compassion suffers with the suffering. Mother Theresa of Calcutta and St. Francis of Assisi are great examples and personifications of compassion in terms of action responses. Compassion demands direct involvement.

Nothing can be more powerful describing compassion than Mother Theresa's conviction that we should **give** till it **hurts**. Compassion gives us hope for a better world and is the beginning of seeing the redemption from hopeless situations. Looking from compassionate viewpoint, it will enable us to discover the best in human behaviour, push us from despair to hope, and from paralysis to participation.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me some thing to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes, you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to visit me ", (Mathew 25:35,36). This universal edict of compassion underlines the deep consciousness of man. Compassion is what has driven both believers and non-believers (if there are any!) in the direction of service to the less fortunate, deprived and the suffering.

Even the clinically, seemingly unemotional and unsentimental theorems in economics, health care issues etc propounded by scholars with no foundation or leanings on spirituality or religions, in regard to the needs of suffering and deprived population, have a basic foundation stone in compassion - an action oriented, God - given nature of Man.

P R Krishnaswamy

The Master

When the time is ripe, the master comes. You don't have to search for him in the Himalayas. He may be living next door but you do not know. Your ignorance and arrogance effectively help him to remain hidden.

If you are a sincere aspirant, if your only goal in life is to meet your beloved 'Self', if you constantly meditate and pray for guidance, the master shall surely come if so required.

You may or may not recognise him but he guides you silently. The true master is the Lord Himself who takes on various forms to guide the devotee.

Test the master well before you accept him. If there is even a trace of lust or selfishness in him, he is not of the highest status. Test him thoroughly but have patience. Do not judge in haste, for many a time the actions of a master have been misunderstood. Mysterious are his ways. Do not judge actions without finding out the motives.

Once you have decided after careful reflection, treat him with the greatest respect and beg that you be accepted as a disciple. You are fortunate if he does, because a true master is not fond of collecting hundreds of disciples. Rarely does he agree to be the guru.

A guide is necessary in almost all cases because you are starting on a voyage of largely uncharted territory. You may find here and there a greatly advanced spiritual being who does not seem to have had a guide. But these are exception and though they may not have a guide in human form, understand that God himself guides them and looks after their needs.

Don't imitate them, for they belong to a special category. Do not even imitate your own teacher for you are not he. Follow his teachings and instructions instead and you'll bloom into a master in your own original way and not turn to be a faint imitation; a shadow of the original.

A master may be young, old, male, female, fair or dark. The externals do not matter at all. What matters is his inner spiritual status. He may if he so decides help you wipe your heart clear of all the accumulated vasanas and make you free. May such a master guide you.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Sri, 'M' answers spiritual queries and clear doubts whenever they are raised in satsangs and meetings by the seekers. We will regularly publish select questions and answers in the newsletter. The following is the first in that series

- ❑ **Q : Is there an end to spiritual realization?**
- ❑ **M :** It is so infinite. It has no end. Everything else has an end. Suppose I say I want something, then I want to get it. And you know the limit of it. Your mind can conceive of the limit and you get it and then that is finished. But this is such a wide expanse. Such an infinite thing. It has no end. Nobody can say he has finished.
- ❑ **Oh! Even Ramakrishna Paramahamsaa, Sir?**
- ❑ **M :** No, he never said that. It is endless. That's why it is infinite. And that is also, precisely, the reason why I object to people saying that God is with form or without form. Because if IT is an infinite Supreme Being, IT can be with form or without form, at the same time, not even different times. If IT is not then it is not infinite. IT is finite. A finite object can be with form or without form. An infinite can be with form, without form at the same time or in between. No one can make a guideline and say this is like this.

- ❑ **Sir, what was the purpose of your month long retreat into the Himalayas?**
- ❑ **M** : the purpose for my going was that for a long period, I have not been able to spend a long time immersed in meditation. There was no other reason. It was not for tapasya as such. Tapasya has all been done for a long time and over with. But I, for so many years now, after The Satsang Foundation was started, especially after that, I have not been able to have an extended period of enjoying the, what shall we call it, 'liquor'. It is like having one peg and then you know how it is. You like to have more and more. If you ask an alcoholic he will tell you so. We people on this path are also some kind of alcoholics, in a way. No sane person can, totally sane person, can enter the spiritual path because he has to sacrifice many things and get addicted to this. So, once you have the drink you feel it inside, then the taste for it is such that, that is the most important thing for us. And for an extended period, I have not been able to immerse myself completely in it for long periods, sustained long periods. So, I thought, let me go and do it... the result was that the batteries were beginning to run a little slow. So it's mostly, sort of a recharging. And recharging was not conscious recharging. It is to remain absorbed in the joy of the inner experience.

- ❑ **Sir, what is the first realization?**
- ❑ **M** : The first realization is the glimmer of an understanding that we are much more than this limited body and its limited little circle of association. First, once it takes place even a little bit... then you are related to the entire universe. You are not any more limited to the little being... to the birds, to the trees, to the forests... everything is related to us. We are all connected together... one whole.
- ❑ We are all individual sparks coming from the same fire. This is the first realization. If you understand this deeply enough, that itself is a freedom. No? **One whole you know it! This much you know (laughs).**
- ❑ And after that, what happens? There is a certain deep feeling of... of affection, goodwill towards all beings. I don't want to call it compassion because compassion, somehow, most people think compassion means somebody is superior and... Love is better. But not the love of the cinemas. This is a word we have to be very careful of using because it has been so terribly misinterpreted and misused. When the heart opens up, that is love, that is affection, that does't expect anything in return. It is an overflowing.

- ❑ **We have had so much discussion on the Brahman, but will it remain on the theoretical level, or the verbal level, or the academic level, or can one really experience this which we are talking about and if we can, what is the role of teacher?**
- ❑ **M** : Now the guide, teacher, is one who points the way. He says; "This is the way you have to take, now follow it". To find out and to experiment with the methods, which the teacher, has given, is the job of the seeker. The teacher cannot work for him, he can be a catalyst often, but the actual experience has to be got by the seeker. For instance, suppose I stand on this junction out here and a man comes, let's say that he cannot read. It's written here in big letters - Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan – this man comes along and asks me where Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is and how can he get there. I give him the directions, now what should he do? Should he proceed along the way and go to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan or should he stay there and garland me and sing songs saying; "Sir, you are the greatest teacher, you have guided me to the B.V.B.". The function of the teacher is to show, **and once the path and not stay with the teacher and pray with him.** A true teacher would not like to be prayed to and pampered. He would say; "You do what I have asked you to perform, if you want to find the truth". So, the role of a teacher has been derived from a word in the 'Upanishads' and also the Vedas - Gu and Ru. Ru means 'rudra' the destroyer and 'Gu' means darkness or hidden. So it is one who brings what is hidden outside or one who reveals the truth and who removes the darkness. In Vedantic parlance a Guru can be best illustrated by this example.
- ❑ Eleven people went on an excursion, they crossed a stream and went to the other side. Suddenly, they got a doubt as to whether anybody was left behind and they decided to count. One of them counted and said. "There are only ten people here, there's one chap missing". Then another person in the group said that his could not be as he could see everybody and then he began to count.
- ❑ After he had counted he said, "Yes that's true, there is one person less, where is this mayaviroopa who's missing?" While all this was going on they were being watched by a man who had climbed a palm tree to tap toddy. He got down from the tree and said, "You fools, why not let me count?" They agreed, and he got all of them together and counted and said; "There are eleven". The chap who was counting before forgot to count himself. The toddy tapper is the guru... because he looked at it from a totally different point of view, he didn't add anything, all he did was remind them and made them aware that here is the essential person. This in Vedantic terms is the function of the teacher.

SATSANG VIDYALAYA, MADANAPALLI

HOPE FOR THE UNDER PRIVILEGED

The Satsang Vidyalaya is built in the land adjacent to the residence of its founder, Sri 'M' situated on the outskirts of Madanapalli. Stretches of paddy fields, coconut trees and the surrounding hills make the setting truly picturesque. The school built in the environs is a simple structure with thatched roof. It aims to bring quality education to disadvantaged children. As there are plenty of schools offering quality education to the rich, the poor are neglected. To fill this gap, this is our humble beginning in bringing about an all round development of the children including the spiritual aspect in life. There are no caste, creed or religious preferences involved.

This tribal village settlement of the Lambanis, called The Sugali Thanda, is off the Bangalore road, turning towards Sri 'M's residence. The people here are very poor and are one of the most backward communities. With a network of resources involving the community members, students and families, our endeavour is to provide quality education to the children and bring them into the mainstream.

The founder of The Satsang Foundation, Sri 'M' says that "When you serve a less fortunate person in anyway, material or spiritual, you are not doing him a favor as it helps you to evolve and move closer to the Divine Blissful Being, who in reality is within us and in the hearts of all beings". This has moved the Satsang to take up the task of setting up this school. Though Sri 'M' with the help of Sri Naeemullah and other friends, set up the school within a short span of two months, he will not be involved in the day to day running of the school. Others of The Satsang Foundation, who also regard looking after their fellow human beings as their duty, involve themselves with its activities, visiting the school regularly and interacting with teachers and children. The children and those involved in the school benefit by keeping in touch with Sri "M" who guides and advises them when he is in residence. The Satsang Vidyalaya was inaugurated in early July 1999 with forty-five girls and boys in the age group of four to seven. The school is entirely free and a simple nutritious free midday meal is given.

All like-minded people could help us run the school. We request you to kindly contribute to this noble cause generously and involve yourself in any possible way. All contributions are to be made to The Satsang Foundation, 151 Jewellers Street, Bangalore 560001, India. Sri Mohan, Secretary is available on telephone at 080-5589546 or on e-mail. Contributions are exempt from Income Tax under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act. We look forward to your kind and heart felt response to one of the two schemes below:

- 1) It is desired to create a Corpus Fund to the tune of Rs 15 lakh or 20 lakh and the interest received from it is to be used to run the school. Your contribution to this fund will be greatly appreciated and will go a long way in fulfilling the most cherished desire of Sri 'M', which is to educate the poor and neglected children.
- 2) Scheme two provides for the sponsoring of a child at Rs 350 per month for a minimum period of one year, payable in one or two installment. On doing so you will see them grow with love and attention under the care of Sri 'M'.

MANAVA EKTA MISSION

In January 1989, 'MANAV EKTA MISSION', a body of like minded people and an apolitical organization committed to the unity of mankind, held a 'Padayatra' to reiterate the universal truth that love, peace and happiness are the values which all human beings seek, whether they be theists, atheists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, Budhists, Jains or others. Unfortunately, we continue to experience periodic disturbances, when we are exposed to an atmosphere surcharged with tension and hatred.

Mission, headed by Sri 'M' had therefore this simple message to convey: "Even as one might be aligned with politics or religion, one should be able to look beyond them and work for the welfare of fellow citizens.

This is possible, if and only if, we can see through the designs of few wily politicians and charlatans who in the name of politics, religion, caste or language divide the soul of the nation and misguide the people for personal gain. One must guard against this and work ceaselessly keeping in mind that in the ultimate analysis, we are one and the same. A true feeling of the nature will extinguish hatred and bring all-

round peace and amity. Towards this end we are embarking on a modest programme to remind our brothers and sisters that living in harmony, shedding sectarian view is the need of the hour”.

The programme, in Bangalore, was flagged off by the veteran Gandhian and former Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court Sri. Nittoor Srinivasa Rau, at the Mahatma Gandhi Statue with a prayer at 10 a.m.

Thereafter a procession visited various places of worship, offering silent prayers at St. Marks Church, Darga in Cottonpet, Shirdi Sai Baba Temple, Chinmaya Mission, Mahabodhi Society and Gurudwara. Besides Satsang Foundation, YMCA, Ashirwad, Centre for Study of World Religions, Khwaja-Garib-Un-Nawaz welfare centre, Banjara Academy, Institute of Universal Consciousness and Temple of Understanding participated in the padayatra. At the culmination of the march, there was a public meeting in St. Joseph's School Hall at 5.30p.m. Eminent personalities engaged in this endeavour and conveners of the organization that participated in the march addressed the meeting.

Later in the year, on 15 August, our Independence Day, a similar padayatra was held in Madanapalli, Andra Pradesh. The Sub Collector, Madanapalli, Sri Girija Shankar flagged it off. Various organizations with their banners, school children and large sections of local people participated, visiting temples, mosques, and churches. The programme culminated in the public ground where eminent personalities of Madanapalli, along with various religious heads addressed the gathering. These events were covered well by the newspapers both in Madanapalli and Bangalore. Sri 'M' plans to hold similar "padayatra" in other cities under the banner of MANAV EKTA MISSION, making people from all walks of life aware that all human beings, regardless of caste, creed, colour or religion are one and the same.