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SATSANG



Walk of Hope: A Message from Sri M



Born human | Be human | Every step for **humanity**



What is Walk of Hope all about? To understand it, we must first understand India. India is a baffling nation, full of contradictions and disparities. Over the years, this disparity has given rise to trends good and bad.

A trend that disturbs all of us is the regular outbreaks of communal violence. A stretch of peace and prosperity is suddenly arrested during such an outbreak. Lives are lost in large numbers and the social fabric is torn. The progress of the nation comes to a grinding halt. By the time things return to normal, our nation has lost crucial opportunities in all areas of development. This recurring madness slowly erodes our nation's soul.

The Father of our Nation, Gandhiji, walked amongst us, across the country, to address communal differences. However, nothing seems to have succeeded despite efforts from all quarters. Problems still persist. Naturally the question arises—what good, what change will this Walk of Hope do to restore this nation's unity?

Yes, the time has come for us to do our part. It is completely up to us, the people of this country. What we need is peace and harmony, so that our nation can progress, so that we can build a better India for the sake of our future generations. It is for the non-political people to take the initiative. As I said, we must be determined to work for this country's well-being, to heal its soul. We will walk together carrying the message of true faith, to restore the spirit of hope,

love, peace, harmony and oneness.

Together, we will cover 15 to 20 kms walking everyday across the heat and dust of our nation. Each day, we will halt in the evening at a village or town on the way. We will have evening meetings with the local community. We will have meaningful dialogues and inter-faith prayers. Then we will eat together and, finally, rest overnight in their homes in a spirit of oneness.

The Rig Veda says: there is just one truth, and we call it by different names. The source of all life is one. But today, peace and harmony cannot flourish in such a divisive atmosphere. We are born to stay united, above all cultural and ideological differences. So uniting human beings, bringing them together as one, is our priority.

We are walking from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. On 12 January 2015, we will start the Walk of Hope from the southern most point of mainland India- the Gandhi Memorial Mandapam in Kanyakumari. The walk will end in the north of India in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It will be a journey of 6000 kms across 12 states of India spanning 15 to 18 months. We will walk as one in this challenging journey, understanding that despite all differences, all our hearts beat as one.

The day we begin our walk is also the birthday of a great prophet of interfaith harmony, Swami Vivekananda. Keeping in mind his walk across the length and breadth of our nation, we will march together on this difficult journey. We will walk together, not as members of groups or parties, but as

humans. I believe that one has to be in touch with people, engage with them, explore their areas of concern and walk with them to know their problems. We will walk to free society from fear and insecurity. We will walk for a society where opportunity is given to all, regardless of caste, religion, language, region or gender.

We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to humanity, the message that we are One. This country held an important place among nations since the dawn of history. People

from all over the world have come here to attain wisdom, peace and happiness. And if we are in this state of disarray, who will act as the source of spiritual comfort to the world? The role given to us long ago has since been abandoned.

So this is the reason why we are walking. It is also a spiritual exercise. A like-minded group of responsible citizens, who foresee a truly secular India, will accompany me. We will identify the real problems and collectively find solutions for them during this

walk. Together, we will spread the message, personally, to our fellow countrymen along the way.

You can join and step out at any place or time, depending on your available time and location. I invite you to join us in this Walk of Hope for peace and harmony. Come, be a part of this soul-seeking journey across India. Let's walk together, hand in hand, for a united India.

Think of Death Always and New Life Will Come

by Surendra Nath Dasgupta from his Memoirs of Swami Vivekananda

One day, with some of my young friends belonging to different colleges, I went to the Belur Math to see Swamiji. We sat round him—talks on various subjects were going on. No sooner was any question put to him, he gave the most conclusive answer to it. Suddenly he exclaimed, pointing at us, “You are all studying different schools of European philosophy and metaphysics and learning new facts about nationalities and countries; can you tell me what is the grandest of all the truths in life?”

We began to think, but could not make out what he wanted us to say. As none put forth any reply, he exclaimed in his inspiring language:

“Look here— we shall all die! Bear this in mind always, and then the spirit within will wake up. Then only, meanness will vanish from you, practicality in work will come, you will get new vigour in mind and body, and those who come in contact with you will also feel that they have really got something uplifting from you.”

Then the following conversation took place between him and myself:

Myself: But, Swamiji, will not the spirit break down at the thought of death and the heart be overpowered by despondency?

Swamiji: Quite so. At first, the heart will break down, and despondency and gloomy thoughts will occupy your mind. But persist; let days pass like that — and then? Then you will see that new strength has come into the heart, that the constant

thought of death is giving you a new life and is making you more and more thoughtful by bringing every moment before your mind's eye the truth of the saying, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! “ Wait! Let days, months, and years pass, and you will feel that the spirit within is waking up with the strength of a lion, that the little power within has transformed itself into a mighty power! Think of death always, and you will realise the truth of every word I say. What more shall I say in words!

One of my friends praised Swamiji in a low voice.

Swamiji: Do not praise me. Praise and censure have no value in this world of ours. They only rock a man as if in a swing. Praise I have had enough of; showers of censure I have also had to bear; but what avails thinking of them! Let everyone go on doing his own duty unconcerned. When the last moment arrives, praise and blame will be the same to you, to me, and to others. We are here to work, and will have to leave all when the call comes

Myself: How little we are, Swamiji!

Swamiji: True! You have well said! Think of this infinite universe with its millions and millions of solar systems, and think with what an infinite, incomprehensible power they are impelled, running as if to touch the Feet of the One Unknown — and how little we are! Where then is room here to allow ourselves to indulge in vileness and mean-mindedness? What should we gain here by fostering mutual enmity and par-

ty-spirit? Take my advice: Set yourselves wholly to the service of others, when you come from your colleges. Believe me, far greater happiness would then be yours than if you had had a whole treasury full of money and other valuables at your command. As you go on your way, serving others, you will advance accordingly in the path of knowledge.

Myself: But we are so very poor, Swamiji!

Swamiji: Leave aside your thoughts of poverty! In what respect are you poor? Do you feel regret because you have not a coach and pair or a retinue of servants at your beck and call? What of that? You little know how nothing would be impossible for you in life if you labour day and night for others with your heart's blood! And lo and behold! the other side of the hallowed river of life stands revealed before your eyes — the screen of Death has vanished, and you are the inheritors of the wondrous realm of immortality!

Myself: Oh, how we enjoy sitting before you, Swamiji, and hearing your life-giving words!

Swamiji: You see, in my travels throughout India all these years, I have come across many a great soul, many a heart overflowing with loving kindness, sitting at whose feet I used to feel a mighty current of strength coursing into my heart, and the few words I speak to you are only through the force of that current gained by coming in contact with them! Do not think I am myself something great!

Myself: But we look upon you, Swamiji, as one who has realised God!

No sooner did I say these words than those fascinating eyes of his were filled with tears (Oh, how vividly I, see that scene before my eyes even now), and he with a heart overflowing with love, softly and gently spoke: "At those Blessed Feet is the perfection of

Knowledge, sought by the Jnanis! At those Blessed Feet also is the fulfilment of Love sought by the Lovers! Oh, say, where else will men and women go for refuge but to those Blessed Feet!"

After a while he again said, "Alas! what folly for men in this world to spend their days fighting and quarrelling with one another as

they do! But how long can they go in that way? In the evening of life (At the end of one's whole course of transmigratory existence,) they must all come home, to the arms of the Mother."

Heart to Heart: A Visit to Hong Kong

by Shalini Kalra Jacob

I had read the Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramahansa Yoganandaji many years ago and it changed my life. Since then I always longed for a genuine teacher and after months of prayers to Sri Guru Babaji, my dear friend Pallavi introduced me to the book. On reading it, I knew my life was going to change again. I finally met Sir for the first time at the Jalandhar retreat last year. What I saw stunned me! I saw a man as simple as us with no paraphernalia around him at all. That was the most important thing that registered with me and I knew that I was at the right place.

The inner joy cannot be described, as it was my soul that was experiencing the blessings and the happiness of meeting my teacher, my Guru.

I also ended up thinking how late in life I was meeting Sir (Baba). There was always this yearning to spend more time with him, learn from him, talk to him, listen to him and just be in his presence even if there were no exchange of words. I continued to go for various retreats trying to get answers to my questions and to learn more from him.

While I was in Chennai last year, for the weeklong Ramayana discourses, I met Cmdr. Ravindranath Sir and he mentioned that Baba might be going to Hong Kong next year. I shared with him my keenness and he promised that as soon as things were finalized he would let me know. I was very apprehensive as I had never travelled to Hong Kong earlier and did not know anyone there. But I knew that I had to go. And so with butterflies in my stomach, happiness in my heart, feeling an indescribable joy, I landed at HK airport and thus started the most memorable week of my life. Baba was coming a little later and

we chose to wait for his arrival. All my apprehensions and hesitations disappeared as soon as I saw Baba and the same joy and bliss returned. I cannot even begin to describe how everything was so meticulously taken care of from the time I landed until I departed from HK airport. I did not feel, even for a minute, that I was alone in a new country where I did not know anyone. The hospitality extended by Ravi Uncle and all the HK Satsangis was overwhelming. Every morning we would assemble at Ravi Uncle's house for the meditation and the Mandukya Upanishad session. The devotees opened their hearts and homes to us. There were satsangs and informal Q&A's with Baba during the day and in the evening as well. Kamal ji was there from Bangalore and Cheryl & Vinay from Dubai and they shared that they were in HK for the same

reason as I was.

The morning Mandukya Upanishad lessons were very enlightening. Apart from the theoretical aspect, Baba taught us the practical aspect of Mandukya in connection with Om, the Pranava. He said that the Mandukya Upanishad starts and ends with Om. AUM represents the 3 states of consciousness. Jagrut, Swapna and Sushupti and the fourth state, the Turiya, which is represented by the sound after the prolonged mmmmm just like the ringing of the bell that continues even if it is not audible to the human ear.

He went on to say that OM is the only combination of sounds which has a link with the mind and the centers of consciousness called the chakras and has the capacity to take one very slowly from the lower to the higher levels of awareness. Hence Omkar



uccharan is very important.

If you want to change the mind's vibrations and the effect to take place in your own centers, Om should be chanted with stress on the last syllable—short O and deeper mmmm. The sound of mmm is the most soothing sound that comes in the end. This is called Bhramari and Bhramari is the beginning of the understanding of the Mandukya Upanishad.

At one of the satsangs, Baba made us practice the Bhramari and at another satsang he told Sufi stories full of humor and wisdom. In between the satsangs, there were one to one sessions for the Satsangis and I got the

opportunity to spend time with Baba and get the guidance that I was seeking. Earlier, whenever I had a one to one with Baba, there would be more tears of joy on seeing him than talking. I shared with Baba that I wanted to speak to him and listen to Him and for the first time, I was able to do so with a lot of happiness and joy in my heart.

We all visited the ten thousand Buddha temple with Baba and on the last day, the boat ride along the shoreline of HK was very enjoyable with Him and all the other Satsangis.

The sweet nectar of love and wisdom was flowing and I did not want it to end ever.

Every moment spent with Baba is carved in golden words in my memory lane and will continue to soothe my inner being right through my life.

It was all Guru Kripa.

Dhyaana moolam guror murtih;
Pooja moolam guror padam;
Mantra moolam guror vakyam;
Moksha moolam guror kripa

And it continues...

Shivaratri 2014

by Pallavi Verma

6 am on the Satsang campus in Madanapalle is usually a quiet time when the loudest sounds are those of the birds and the wind. However at 6 a.m on 27th February 2014, which was Maha Shivaratri, this quiet was filled with the melodious chanting of the Soundarya Lahiri. The occasion was the Praana Pratishtha of the Sri Yantra. A year ago on Maha Shivaratri 2013, Sri M had established the presence of the Shivalinga and Sri Ganesha. The Sri Yantra represents the Devi, the Goddess, in her abstract form. For all those present, it was a beautiful occasion, watching the love and devotion with which Sri M bathed, decorated and invoked the Goddess' presence into Her beautiful black stone representation placed next to Shiva. During the morning satsang, Sri M spoke about Shakti - that this world, the Universe, everything that we see, is the manifestation of Shakti. In activity there is Shakti and the silent centre from where the move-

ment starts is Shiva. Without Shakti, Shiva is peaceful and with no movement, no creation happens. He quoted the Soundarya Lahiri's description of this and said, "Though we speak of Shiva, in truth we only know Shakti since that is manifest all around us. Only when we befriend this Shakti do we reach Shiva." Sir also differentiated between the form of Shankara that we usually see and the Shiva that he refers to, which is actually Shivam - bliss, auspiciousness. He then went on to explain the Sri Yantra and what it represents in his simple, clear and practical manner. The morning Satsang ended with Sir sharing a mantra and instructing all to practice this prior to lunch. It was a wonderful sight to see the campus full of little groups sitting in silence and following the instructions of the Master - some with blissful smiles and others with emotions flowing through their tears.

The evening's program began with the sweet voices of the Satsang Vidyalyaya students and teachers singing hymns in praise of The Lord. Some of the younger children also presented a local dance form that was enjoyed by all. Sir then began the evening Satsang and spoke about Shiva. He explained how the form of

Shiva is meant to help us understand the un-definable. He said Shiva is shown as the perfect description of the Maha yogi, fully absorbed in the supreme bliss of the Supreme Being. The snake that sits around his neck represents the Kundalini, which is Shakti itself. The crescent moon on the head of Shiva is also a symbol of Durga. Shiva sits in the posture of the siddha-asana and even a cremation ground is comfortable for Him. Sir then spoke about the significance of Shivaratri and ended the satsang by describing what would be done once the Dhuni was lit in the evening. Sir then instructed us on the mental attitude we need to be in while sitting with the Dhuni. In the light of the setting sun, the Satsangis then individually took His blessings on this auspicious day and readied themselves for the main event in front of the Dhuni.

The Maha Shivaratri program began with the chanting of the Shivananda Lahiri. Sir then lit the Dhuni and some of the Satsangis took turns to sing bhajans in praise of Lord Shiva creating a spiritually charged environment. Sri M then led the Satsangis in chanting mantras before the sacred fire, which continued until a little after midnight.

Most Satsangis had dinner and went to snatch a few hours of sleep or returned to Bangalore. Some brave hearts maintained a night-long vigil by the fire. The morning of the 28th February saw the end of the Maha Shivaratri program with meditation with the Master. As always, Shivaratri 2014 was a divine memorable experience for all that were blessed to be there.



Satsang Swasthya Kendra Annual Health Camp 2014

by Dr. Priyamvada, Programme Manager, Satsang Swasthya Kendra

It is a matter of great pleasure to share that Satsang Swasthya Kendra, a unique healthcare initiative of The Satsang Foundation has completed a year. Last year, on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivarathri, our beloved Guruji, Sri M inaugurated and blessed this program. To commemorate the year's completion in a meaningful manner, with the blessings of Sri M, a three day Annual Health Camp was organised from 24th February 2014 to 26th February 2014. These camps at the Satsang Campus, Madanapalle and Peepal Grove School, Sadum ran in parallel. At Madanapalle, the camp was inaugurated by Sri M and at Sadum by Sri Dwarakanath Reddy, MD, PLR Company. Lead partners for this event were Department of Community Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi and ICCIDD (Indian Coalition of Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders) headed by Dr. Chandrakant S. Pandav and BGS Global Hospitals, headed by Dr. Venkataramana. Local participation was very encouraging and included partners like Arogyavaram Medical Centre, Gupta Hospitals, Amrutha Hospitals, Bhavya Hospitals, Anoo's Dental Clinic and Implant Centre, and Dr. Khasim Specialty Dental Clinic. From the Satsang Family,

Madhuri Hospitals, Hyderabad, Pavithra Diagnostics, Chittoor, Prakriti Ayurveda, Chennai and Naseema Institute of Speech and Hearing, Bangalore rendered their services. Our Local MLA Sri Shahjahan helped immensely to spread the word around. Dwarakanath Reddy Ramanarpanam Trust (DRRT) headed by Smt. Anita Reddy was instrumental in motivating the rural community for participation. Indian Medical Association, Madanapalle Chapter (IMA) also actively participated in this event. Services rendered at the camp were screening, diagnostic, specialist consultation and medicine distribution. Specialities which participated were Neurology, Cardiology, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Dental, Orthopedics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Speech Language Pathology, Oncology, Pediatrics, and Ayurveda. The event was a huge success with generous donations of time and resources from lead partners as well as Satsang Family Members. Additionally, First Aid and CPR programs were conducted for School teachers and support staff of Satsang Vidyalaya, Peepal Grove School, Nursing Students of Arogyavaram Medical Centre, and women of SWECHA, a self-empowerment initiative of DRRT.

A Continuing Medical Education Program (CME) was organised for the IMA and Dr. Vivek Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology, NIMHANS made a presentation for the participant doctors on noncommunicable diseases.

On the evening of 26th February, 2014, a concluding program was organised, which was yet again very kindly graced by Sri M. All the dignitaries present, shared their words of encouragement and appreciation for the initiative. On this august occasion a souvenir, Niramaya was also released. It details the annual report of Swasthya Kendra along with interesting medical articles from various doctors. To encourage us, the entire Satsang Family was present. Tiny tots from Satsang Rural School entertained the crowd with their folk dance. Teachers and students from Satsang Vidyalaya also sang invocation melodiously. Ms. Deepthi Sudhinda, excellently conducted the events for the evening. Team Swasthya Kendra would like to thank everyone who participated and supported us during the camp as well as helped us in post camp data entry work (Smt. Malathi Muddapur and Dr. Sushmita Muddapur).

1. Total Partners	18
2. Total No. of Participating Doctors	20
3. Total No. of Specialities	11
4. Total No. of Volunteers	21
5. Total No. of Beneficiaries	1972
6. Total No. of Lab Investigations	96
7. Total No. of Participants for First Aid and CPR	63
8. Villages Covered Around Madanapalle	18
9. Villages Covered Around Sadum	24



Light of Hope

by Uma Singh

During the **Delhi Talks in October 2012:**

M: "...Isha vasya idam sarvam – Isha Vasya Upanishad – 'That Supreme Isha pervades everything here.' Now, if you are part of that essence, then you are also all-pervading. This is another way of saying this whole globe, this whole world is one vast network and nothing can be isolated from It. All problems begin because we want to isolate ourselves and have our own system. We are one. In fact if you think like that, all concerns, including environmental concerns, can be sorted out. This whole world is one...network; we cannot take anything out from that and separate it..."

Soon after Swamiji's Birthday:

Like a Light-house you stood on the Rock!

Having cut across the turbulent waters of the East and the West, you took stock.

Your glistening brilliance came from the wet garment of Truth,

Lit by the flame of Love and drenched by the tears of pain!

You cried, "Man is potentially Divine. We are One! Brother, see, we are One!"

And on your coming birthday, 12.1.2015, My Master will take the first step of The Walk of Hope, at your feet, on the Rock – Bless him! Walk with him!

He carries the Light of Hope; his heart overflows with Love; his hands reach out to all. Full of tender concern, he too, cries, "Brother, we are One! Do see, we are One!" Each step is a prayer, a hope...

To clear the air of the smog of violence, hate, mistrust!

To show a ray of peace, love, harmony and prosperity!

With this message, that there is sunshine,

after the storm,

My countrymen, you count! O citizen of the world, you count!

Life is short! Let not violence enter your heart. Give peace a chance!

I have faith in my Master's Hope and I will walk behind him.

Will you too take a step or two?

Every drop makes the ocean – each one counts.

Each one is a brick that paves the way to strengthen the road to peace.

Nothing is loose – no thought or word is lost – it solidifies in action. Choose!

Peace and harmony between man and man, respect for each other and Mother Nature.

With this prayer we take each step in this Walk of Hope, from Kanyakumari to Kash-

mir. This land which once felt the footsteps of rishis, sages, saints, Sufis, where Buddha,

Swamiji, Babaji and Bapu Mahatma walked. We too will walk together, with a hope!

A Soulcry Answered

by a Satsangi

As I fleet dreamily through many a human form
Lost in life's mazes of myriad forms

Eternal Quest to reach my heavenly Home
Where abounds perennial bliss as a norm.

My clarion soul cry echoes in the hallways of space

Every birth ever forward at a snail's pace

Tossed up and down back and forth

Ego, desires, and karmic broth.

Whence and where will the Mayic veil

Finally lift and fill my sail?

My little boat rocks precarious

In waves of create, preserve and dissolve mysterious.

O Lord! String this lifeboat to your lotus feet!

Release me from these seemingly endless feats!

Caste, power, position wealth and health

every birth

Just a fleeting dream in a mortal rebirth.

There is more to it than meets the senses
Who attract and repel as the mind chooses
Oscillating in ethereal pleasure and pain
Eternal joy and peace lost in bargain.

Your child's perennial soul-cry for liberation

Was heard by You with Compassion

Cosmic forces of many a hue

Worked their wonders in ether blue.

Master and disciple finally met

In time and space that you perfectly set

Waves of gratitude and relief

Swept my heart in some disbelief!

Heart and mind lightened immense

Some light at the end of the tunnel could sense.

There is no coincidence Master said

Events happen for a reason instead

Father and Master to you I eternally bow

May this arduous journey be the only vow.

Will, courage and faith of mine not wobble
Stumble or fall will I, but rise again to battle
Life's countless blessings and simple pleasures

Remind and thank Thee in countless measure.

Strength and perseverance I seek

Humility and a compassionate streak

Masters teachings, guidance and a hand to hold on

Babaji's grace and silver feet to anchor on.

Homeward bound we are to you Father

Cleanse and heal us in divine lather

Dissolve us little sparks in your bosom of eternal life

Bringing to an end this endless mortal strife.

Om Shri Gurubhyoh Namah!

The Song of Hari - Part 1

Translation and Commentary by Shri Vijay Chandran

Hari Nama Keerthanam is a medieval devotional and philosophical text in Malayalam. Its title translates into English as "The Song of the Holy Name Hari". It was composed by Thunchaththu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan in Kerala around the 16th century and is immensely popular for its lyrical and devotional quality.

1.

Aum, the sound, the secret essence,
 Into three it split and soon became,
 One again, 'I', the sense.
 Self, the witness of all this,
 This, the lore you gave to me,
 Oh, my Guru, the Lord, the Master.

Aum, pronounced and often spelt 'Om' is, in Indian thought, the primordial sound. This is the Pranava mantra or the mantra of origin. It is from this sound that everything originated. The idea of creations beginning from a sound is not a stranger to the other systems of thought. It is echoed in the Bible. "In the beginning was word. The word was with God. The word was God" (John).

According to the Samkhya school of Indian thought, as long as the three 'gunas' remained in balance the sound continued without any creation. The gunas are qualities or aspects that pervade everything. They are also the building blocks of life. They are Satva denoting calmness, light, peace and such qualities, Rajas denoting activity and Tamas, standing for darkness, lethargy and ignorance. These three exist in varying degrees in every man. When Satva prevails, knowledge comes, when Rajas, activity and when Tamas, darkness, lassitude, idleness and ignorance. What there was before creation was undefined : that is, in which there is no distinction of form or name, a state in which these three materials are held in perfect balance. When the balance is disturbed, the three gunas begin to mingle in various fashions, and the result is the universe.

The more pronounced expression of the concept of trinity in Indian thought is that of the three stages of life and of the universe, namely, creation, preservation and dissolution and the three gods responsible for it, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The three gods and therefore the three activities

emerged from the primordial sound.

Another presence of the three in us is the three states we pass through in our day-to-day living. These three are wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep. When we are awake we are conscious of external objects and our mind is active, stimulated by them or by our memories. When we dream, we are conscious only of the dreams, and we enjoy the subtle impressions on our mind of the deeds done in the past. But when we are in dreamless sleep, these subtle impressions on the mind apparently vanish and a veil of unconsciousness envelops our thought and knowledge. We experience bliss and wake up and say 'I had a good sleep'. But the philosophers do not stop there. They ask the question who is this experiencer of bliss. Where is he during the dreamless sleep? We are not aware of him, but he is there. He is the witness. Beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression is He. It is pure unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world and of multiplicity is completely obliterated. It is ineffable peace. It is the supreme good. It is One without a second. It is the Self.

The Self beyond all words is the sound Aum. This syllable, though indivisible, can be broken up into three parts: Aaa, Uuu and Mmm. According to the Mandukya Upanishad the first represents the wakeful state, the second, the dream state and the third, deep sleep. When you enunciate the sound Aum properly, there is the vibration, which trails off. Even after the vibration ceases to be heard, it continues in apparent silence as Anahata Sabda, meaning the sound that comes without impact. Some have said it is this state of the utterance of Aum that represents the Self.

How does the Self become the witness? We have first to ask the question who is a witness. When we are awake, our mind is nearly always engaged in thought. They keep on coming, one after the other whether you like it or not. In some cases they are even audible and at times, visuals are added to these soundtracks. If you want a respite from these thoughts, you have to take a moment to observe these thoughts. That brief moment, without thought, is the moment of the observer or the witness. It is in

these witnessing moments that you realise that you are something beyond the mind. In fact, by its chattering, the mind is drawing you away from your Self. If you can lengthen, by practice, these moments of realisation you can control the mind and use it for practical purposes instead of it using you. The mind dwells on the past and the future. It does not bother about the now. When you are the witness you are in the present moment.

This knowledge has come to the poet from the ultimate teacher or Guru, God Himself. It is by praying to God that he could 'experience' this knowledge, and not, as one would imagine, by reading books. Hari is the name he calls God by. Hari and Narayana are different names of Vishnu, the god of preservation. The book itself is titled Hari Nama Keertanam or the song in praise of Hari. Each four-line stanza ends with the last line as "Harinarayanaya nama-ha", meaning I pray to Harinarayana. The question arises whether the poet considers Vishnu to be "superior" to Brahma and Siva, the other two gods in the trilogy and to the countless others in the Hindu pantheon. We can look for an answer to that in the next stanza.

2.

One you are and only one,
 As two I saw, the fool I was.
 Pain I went through all that while.
 One again I want to see
 Like olden days; and so help me
 Oh my Guru, the Lord, the Master

The first line can be taken to emphasise that there is only one God, though called by different names. While one can easily understand different races or religions giving different names to God, a Hindu who worships several, speaking about the oneness of God is enigmatic.

But it is not the different names and shapes of God that is the thrust of this stanza. That is 'non-duality' (Advaita), one of the main schools of Indian thought. This school is built on the idea that 'I' and the universe outside are not dual, but one and the same. We all start with the concept of two. When we think, 'we' are there and our thoughts are there, as two different entities. But when we start asking who we are and

what this universe is and contemplating on these questions, the concept of unity arises, negating both the 'I' and the universe. To realise this non-duality is the aim of life. Several lives may have to be gone through to achieve this. This non-duality is our very nature, where we start from. Only when we commence our journey back towards this origin do we realise how painful an experience the duality has been. This non-duality is the Self and one who knows the Self becomes the Self.

3.

Oh the blissful, oh the merriful
I, the ego let me not feel.
If at all I feel the 'I'
Let 'I' be all and everything.
Help me to see the all in all,
Giver of boon, Hari Narayana.

The Lord is not only blissful, but full of merriment also. The allusion here is to the various games (leelas) of Krishna, especially with the maidens (gopikas) of Vrindavan. In fact, the word in the original text is gopikaramana or one who made the gopikas happy. Many question the propriety of gods making merry with their consorts and indulging in human like activities of pleasure seeking. The Hindu Gods are a projection of human nature. They encompass everything. It is a telling lesson to the ordinary mortals that one need not forsake all the worldly things to attain the higher Self. There are many examples of holy men who continued to live with their consorts while pursuing a spiritual path. This also emphasises the basic plurality of Hinduism. Everything is laid before you. There is no one path. You have to choose what is best for you. Here, a proper Guru can help you.

The prayer is to remove the ego, that is, the feeling of I, or ahamkara in Sanskrit. It is this feeling that is the root cause of our sorrow. But if this 'I' is merged with all that is apparently outside the 'I', then sorrows end and bliss comes. This *advaitic* concept is reiterated here. Not only one is in all, all is also in one.

4.

The eye that sees the Sun and all,
The mind that is the eye of the eye.
What is the eye of the mind?
It's the Self, the eye of eye of eye.
Bliss endless this knowledge brings,
Oh my Guru, the Lord, the Master.

How do we perceive with our sense-organs? The light rays from an object fall on our retina. But without the particular centre of the brain that interprets them we cannot see. Often we do not 'notice' all the objects that send their light rays to the retina that in turn send them to the brain centre. A man may be asleep with his eyes wide open. The mind has to be joined to the brain centre. But something more is required. Here we can seek the help of Swami Vivekananda. In his Raja Yoga he says:

"The mind takes the impression farther in, and presents it to the determinative faculty—Buddhi—which reacts. Along with this reaction flashes the idea of egoism. Then this mixture of action and reaction is presented to the Purusha, the real Soul, who perceives an object in this mixture. The organs (Indriyas), together with the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi), the egoism (Ahamkara) form the group called Antahkarana (the internal instrument). So we see that the mind is not intelligent; yet it appears to be intelligent.

Why? Because the intelligent soul is behind it. You are the only sentient being; mind is only the instrument through which you catch the external world.

The bottom of a lake we cannot see, because its surface is covered with ripples. It is only possible for us to catch a glimpse of the bottom, when the ripples have subsided, and water is calm. If the water is muddy or agitated all the time, the bottom will not be seen. If it is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the bottom. The bottom of the lake is our own true Self: the lake is the Chitta (mind) and the waves the Vrittis (activities of the mind).

The Chitta is always trying to get back to its natural pure state, but the organs draw it out. To restrain it, to check this outward tendency, and to start on the return journey to the essence of intelligence is the first step in Yoga.

The Self has been called by various names. Brahman is the more common name of it in Indian philosophical writings. Some call it just "That". God is another name, though often it is taken to mean a personified entity. Kena Upanisad sums up the description: "What cannot be spoken with words, but that by which words are spoken. Know that alone to be Brahman, the spirit, and not what people here adore.

What cannot be thought with the mind, but whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the spirit, and not what people here adore."

End of Part 1

(The author is a senior retired bureaucrat with deep interest in Indian spirituality and scriptures. He is also engaged in translating Shankracharya's commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita into English. He is available at : vijaychandran@rocketmail.com)

Upcoming Events (For details visit www.satsang-foundation.org)

1. Talk at Mitra Jyoti	Bangalore	June 15th
2. Discourse and Group Meetings	Dharwad	June 28th
3. Group Meetings	Hubli	June 29th
4. Guru Purnima	Madanapalle	July 12th
5. Health Camp	Madanapalle	July 13th to 15th
6. Health Camp	Sadum	July 17th to 19th
7. Visit to USA	USA	Aug. 18th to Sept. 23rd

A Hero

You came into our lives as a breath of fresh air,
You gave it your all for cricket not an ounce of energy did you spare.

You were devoted to your Guru,

He loved you dearly too.

You brought joy and laughter to your family & friends,

You touched them deeply.

A mentor to youngsters, a loyal soldier to seniors.

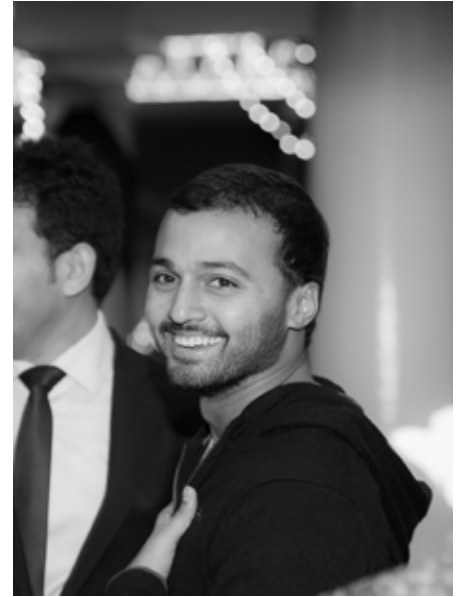
Oh! you lived like a hero, you died a Hero!

Ashwath Aiyappa (Born: 18th November 1983) was a wicket-keeper batsman who played Ranji Trophy for Karnataka. He was also a visiting coach and mentor to students at The Peepal Grove School. He

has authored a book, "When God bowls a Googly" with a forward by Rahul Dravid which is due to be published soon.

More than anything else he was a sincere sadhak and beloved student of Sri M.

His present life was cut short on April 17th, 2014 while trying to save his elder brother, Dr. Akhil Kuttappa, from drowning in a reservoir. Dr. Kuttappa was a young dentist practicing in Bangalore. Our prayers go out to the parents, Mr Raghu Madappa and Mrs Anita Madappa. His loss is also deeply felt by his friends whom he touched very deeply.



Release of Braille Version of Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master

“Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography” in Braille was released by Sri M at the Blind Relief Association, Lodhi Road, New Delhi on May 6th, 2014.

Shri KC Pandey, Executive Director, Blind Relief Association, Delhi, Shri Prasanna Kumar Pincha, Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government

of India, Smt Venunath Singh, and Ms Poonam Pardesi were present.

Ms Poonam Pardesi read “About the Author” and “Introduction” from the book in Braille format with perfection.

Shri Prasanna Kumar Pincha expressed his gratitude to Sri M and mentioned that Shri J.L. Kaul, Secretary General, All India Confederation of the Blind, Delhi has been very helpful in bringing out the Braille edi-

tion of the book in a very short time. He expressed that this book would lead many visually challenged friends to a remarkable spiritual journey.

Sri M expressed that visually challenged persons are better in many ways than the persons with visual abilities and that they would tread the spiritual path much faster than the rest. He showered his blessings on all present.



An Inter-religious Visit

On his trip to Delhi, in March 2014, Sri M visited various places of worship and met with their respective religious leaders. This was part of his initiative to spread the message of peace, harmony, oneness and the Walk of Hope 2015.

Remembering Guru Har Krishan at Gurudwara Bangla Sahib

He first visited Delhi's Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, or the Sikh house of worship. It is dedicated to the eighth Sikh Guru, Guru Har Krishan, who is said to have helped those suffering from an epidemic by giving them water from his well without sparing a thought for his own well-being.

Offering prayers at the Jama Masjid

His next stop was at Delhi's largest and the best-known mosque in India - the Jama Masjid. More than 6000 artisans were employed to build this last architectural work

of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. Carvings, calligraphy and verses from the Quran decorate the many walls and edifices of the Jama Masjid.

Paying respects at the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin

Sri M then visited the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin, a renowned Sufi saint of the Chisti order, fondly known as Nizamuddin Auliya. Hugely popular for its qawwalis, held every Thursday, the Dargah is visited by thousands of devotees, not only by Muslims but by people of diverse faiths. Nizamuddin's vision of the world was marked by a highly evolved sense of secularity and kindness.

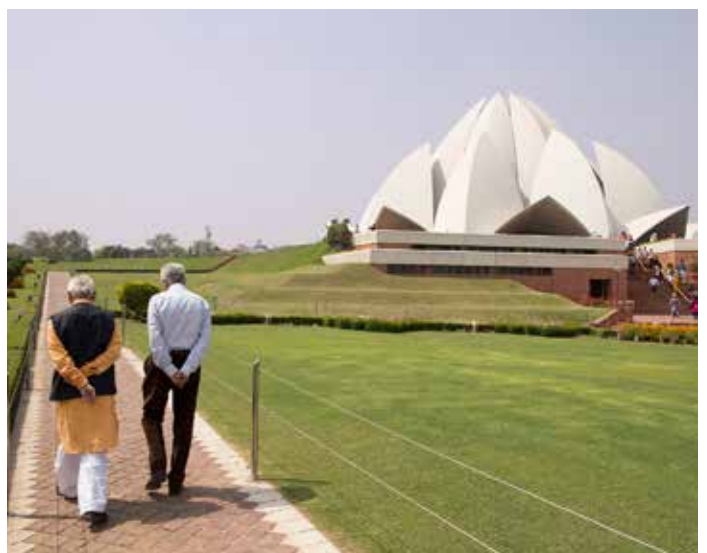
Visiting the Judah Hyam Synagogue

Sri M also visited the Judah Hyam Synagogue. A place that caters to the growing religious, social and cultural needs of the

Jews, the synagogue has a library and an inter-faith study centre to promote goodwill and understanding among all religions. People of all faiths and religions have access to it. Judaism is the religion, philosophy and a way of life of the Jews. The tradition, principles and beliefs of Judaism are articulated in the Torah and other texts like Mishnah and Talmud.

Peace at Bahá'í Lotus Temple

Sri M's last stop was at the Bahá'í House of Worship - Lotus Temple. As emphasized in the Bahá'í texts, the Lotus Temple is open to people of all religions, faiths and beliefs. The Bahá'í faith was founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 19th century Persia. He was exiled for his teachings and unfortunately, died a prisoner. This faith sees all religious leaders as messengers who established religions that suited the need and the capacity of the people at the time.



Meeting with His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Sri M met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in March this year. After gifting him the autobiography, Sri M briefed him about the Walk of Hope, 2015. His Holiness was curious to know more about the initiative. He blessed the Walk of Hope and expressed his support.



Launch of Peace Education Programme

The Peace Education Programme was launched in Jalandhar on May 03, 2014.

The Peace Education Programme is part of the Youth Initiatives of the Walk of Hope—a padayatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir being undertaken by Sri M to rekindle true faith and rejuvenating the spirit of hope, love, peace, harmony and oneness. The Peace Education Programme, involving nearly 10000 students, seeks to engage children, youth and youth leaders from schools and communities to nurture awareness and essential skills for preparing individuals for peace and to instill in them a genuine appreciation of our humanitarian traditions and values such as non-violence, tolerance, understanding, cooperation and peace.

The event was presided over by Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, Secretary, National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH). NFCH is an autonomous organization, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, that envisages an

India free from communal and all other forms of violence and where all citizens, especially children and youth, live together in peace and harmony.

Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar emphasized on the relevance and right timing of the Peace Education Initiative, especially when our country is still prone to communal violence that affects the fabric of brotherhood and human oneness that our ancients have preached for over 10,000 years. He stated that the youth are the only hope for a sustainable and peaceful future.

Sri M, President of The Satsang Foundation and the ManavEkta Mission, graced the occasion. Sri M remarked, “We owe an atmosphere of peace and harmony to ourselves and the world. This country has held an important place among nations since the dawn of history. People from all over the world have come here to attain wisdom, peace and happiness. And if we are in this state of disarray, who will act as the source of spiritual comfort to the world?”

The Peace Education Programme, as part of Walk of Hope, is being undertaken to address this need.

Shri. S.N. Sharma, Zonal Director, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sanghathan (NYKS), Shri. Gurdeep Singh Bhatti, Programme Director, NSS Regional Centre and zonal representatives of the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports were present at the launch and they assured wholehearted support for the Peace Education Programme.

During the launch, a curriculum that articulates the relevant knowledge, attitudes, essential values and learning outcomes that learners are expected to acquire was presented. Teacher training will form an integral part of the Programme.

The Department of Posts, India released Special Covers on the occasion to commemorate the launch of ManavEkta Mission Youth Initiative's Peace Education Programme



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Walk of Hope 2015-16
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