

Sai Baba's
Songbird



Lightstorm

Songbird

By

Lightstorm

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Shanti Publishing Co.

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Through the direct Grace and Love of our Be-
loved,

Kesava, Lord of Creation,

**This small offering of personal insights into Truth
Is Dedicated to the Perfection within us all.**

The 'True Self', our Divine heritage

AWARENESS! BLISS! LOVE!



*Detachment is the key to immortality,
To merge into Those Lotus Feet standing in front
of me!*



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PROLOGUE

I was born in Los Angeles, California. My early childhood was pretty normal, except that my mother was interested in the ‘Spirit,’ rather than just the normal physical side of life. This exposed me to a lot of ideas that to other children may have seemed strange. For example, I accepted the idea of reincarnation by the time I was five years old.

My dearest friend as a twelve-year-old was my horse named “Sugarfoot.” Most of my free time was spent with him, since my father was always working and my mother was not too well. I graduated from high school, where my greatest joy was singing and being in the school plays.

During my last year in high school, I met Johnima, a singer of devotional songs. Together, as the group called Lightstorm,* we traveled all over the world singing Divine love songs. It was in 1968, when I discovered my beloved Sathya Sai Baba.

Within the next couple of years, we, as Lightstorm, went to Vietnam to sing for the troops. We did this simply to be of service and to bring Love and Light to this dark and war-torn place. Just picture as many as a thousand G.I.’s at a performance singing OM with us in the pits of hell! No words could describe it. During our second tour of duty in Vietnam, we took some vacation time and flew over to India to visit Sai Baba, who welcomed us with open arms. * ‘[Ten Steps to KESAVA](#)’ is a book, which includes some early adventures of Lightstorm with Sai Baba. From that time on, we have visited Him as often as we could. We have been privileged to sing for Him on many occasions during these visits. At one point, Swami told me to marry my best friend, Johnima, and have children, Sai Kodey and Sai Shanti.

I usually call Sai Baba, “Swami,” as He often refers to Himself by that name. In Sanskrit, “Swami” means a renunciate, a monk, or spiritual teacher. For me, ‘Swami’ is a term of endearment and it also reminds me of ‘the Swan in Me.’ Sai Baba has always pointed me towards the ‘Inner Swami!’

We have also traveled all over the world performing at Sai centers, as well as many other spiritual retreats and churches. We have been fortunate enough to record many devotional albums over the years, as well as write some books about our adventures. In the mid-eighties, Swami told us that it was time to leave city life and consequently guided us to a beautiful mountain community in McCall, Idaho. By Divine Grace, we were able to build a beautiful home on top of a mountain, surrounded by trees, and give the children a peaceful, healthy atmosphere close to nature.

Now, the children are grown and Swami is changing the game plan once more, just as He had told us He would a long time ago. In addition to the recording of new songs and the writing of books, we are starting once again to travel all over the world, whenever we are called upon and invited to do so, to sing, talk, and share Love with all.





*

INTRODUCTION

*T*his is the divinely enchanting story of the songbird, as it was explained to me back in 1974.

Once upon a time there lived a young village girl who was the personal attendant to a great holy man. The day of a grand and auspicious festival was just dawning. All of the various preparations for the ceremony were personally and meticulously watched and presided over by the holy man. Water was a very important part of the ceremony and the task of fetching water from the nearby sacred river was especially allotted to his young girl attendant. So, the young girl went off to the river to get the water at the appropriate time. She had to walk through the cool dark forest for a while in order to get to the riverbank. Singing beautiful divine songs, she made her way through the forest. The birds and other forest creatures were familiar with the village girl and often stopped their playful antics to listen to her beautiful songs. At times, she would stop and talk to one or several of her special animal friends that she had known since she was a little girl. Yet

she was mindful not to spend too much time, since the water had to be at the ceremony on time.

As she was strolling through the last grove of trees, she saw a handsome prince who just happened to be hunting in this part of the forest. She stopped dead in her tracks. She had never beheld such a delightful human form. The prince was so handsome, he almost glowed like a god. She was awestruck and instantly fell in love. The prince now saw her and was also immediately struck by Cupid's arrow. He approached this beautiful young village girl and professed his undying love for her. They embraced, and everything else in the world seemed to simply disappear for both of them. Arm in arm, they slowly walked to the riverbank which abruptly came into view. The prince's lavishly outfitted and wondrously decorated tent stood right there in front of them. The tent had been set up in the most beautiful spot at the riverbank, just where it made a sweeping turn, and one could see the picturesque valley across the river. The prince took her into his tent where they soon fell under Cupid's deep spell of love and passion. Everything was forgotten by the girl. Erased were all traces of her memory of the holy man, the festival, the ceremony, and her mission to fetch the water.

The holy man waited for the girl's return, but she was nowhere to be seen. The festivities were slightly delayed, but soon they began. At a certain point, the water was required in order to continue and conclude the holy ritual. The perturbed holy man picked up his walking cane and quickly followed the girl's tracks through the forest in order to find her. As he came upon the clearing by the river bank, he saw the prince's tent. With his inner vision, the holy man perceived everything that had happened.

He threw back the entrance to the tent, pulled the girl out of the arms of her prince and scolded her. At the same time, he beat the frightened prince with his cane. He then dragged the girl down to the river, had her fill the water jug, and said to her, "I leave you alone for a few minutes and see what happens? You get yourself into trouble. I will just have to keep you somewhere. ... somewhere I can always keep my eyes on you." So with a quick gesture

of his hand, he materialized a bird cage, then turned the crying young girl into a beautiful bird and placed her gently into the cage.

“Ahhh, that’s better. Now my beautiful songbird, we can keep you out of trouble, and help you clear up your karma.” He sighed deeply as he carried her, the cage, and the water back to the village to conclude the holy festivities. She was now truly his divine songbird. She was renowned for singing the most beautiful and often sad, haunting melodies to the holy man for the rest of his life.

The day came when the holy man died. After the villagers had taken care of the funeral, they felt great pity for the songbird who now sang only sad songs. One day, the villagers opened the cage door and let the bird fly free. The songbird flew and flew, until her wings could no longer carry her. She was over the ocean when she finally had to rest. By divine providence, she espied an old cargo ship bound for America. She quickly flew down and rested her weary exhausted body on its bow. Later, when the ship landed in America, our songbird settled and soon died in California.

“Nice fairy tale,” I thought smilingly when it was relayed to me, along with many other things, in 1974. It was one of the stories that was told to me from the book of Bhrgu*, in Bombay, where we had been invited to go by our dear friend, Mr. R. R. Kamani, and his family upon our arrival in India.

A few days later when we were at one of the morning darshans in Whitefield, Bangalore, Swami came right up to me, smiled very impishly, and said, “Ahhh, my songbird, ... we sing later.”



* **Bhrgu, a celestial sage, recorded the life of all incarnated souls with past and future probabilities. His direct descendants interpret the book.**



THE LOTTERY

***T*hroughout my life, I have worked to find out the true essence of ‘Self’. Since childhood, I have been aware that I had to be more than just this body, this mind, these thoughts, feelings, and memories. So, when I physically became aware of Sai Baba, back in 1968, I was graced beyond all hope.**

Swami told me once that He would come to me whenever I asked Him to, or whenever I had any questions. I thought, “Oh boy, how wonderful. Swami will materialize in front of me any time I wish. That’s awesome!”

Well, it did not exactly turn out to be quite like that. Sai Baba did not materialize in His physical form as I had imagined, but nonetheless, He comes to me, as my Inner Swami, just as promised, in meditation. Sometimes He comes in conscious dream flights, (astral or causal projection), and once in a while, He comes in the etheric body, so that I see a faint subtle out-

line of His physical form. He comes in order to tell me something or teach me what I am ready to learn, and to keep reminding me that we are all ONE.

Usually when I am ready to move ahead on the spiritual path, Divinity sets up a play or scenario, with proper words and feelings that touch my consciousness and heart, in order to enlighten my sometimes frustrated mind and to give me that full experience. As these experiences happen, they are as real to me as anything on this physical plane, maybe even more so in some sense. So, to me they are valid personal experiences that always advance my spiritual quest of "Complete Self-knowledge."

In the hope that some of these learning experiences can be of some small service to all of our other Atmaselves who are walking through this maze of life, I humbly lay them all at the Blue Lotus Feet of Iswara (God), to do with as He sees fit.

I have often wondered why most people who consciously choose to end this cycle of birth and death don't seem to have a lot of money. It seemed to me that it was a stigma of some kind that has plagued spiritual seekers more often than not. From early childhood I had been told that Jesus Christ said, "It is easier for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter heaven."

Wherever our attachment is, there our heart will also be. In my heart, I have always felt like a multi-millionaire. Johnima always says money is just "dinkies" as in "rinky-dink," and is indifferent how few or many "dinkies" there are available for our use. Still, we always have been given just enough to accomplish any necessary task.

I have felt most of my life that by God's Grace, I would clear the karmic slate this time and merge in the Lord. I knew that this time in a body would be my last, if I could finish off all of the karmic residues and keep my nose clean.

The emotional, mental dilemma I faced was this: Due to the selfishness of not wanting to be reborn, I was condemning Johnima and the kids to relative poverty. Quite an egotistical thought, I know. How could my stupid little ego even think that 'I' could ever be the 'Doer' of anything? Nonetheless, that was my thought at the time. I knew better, but the thought was still there, even though Divinity has always provided everything in all ways, and by no means was there ever any poverty. As I said, there was always just enough for everything that was ever required. So, after I spent some time asking my 'True Self' to tell me and enlighten me, I got my answer.

One evening in meditation I suddenly was transported to another level where a big lottery was in progress. The winning prize was unfathomable wealth. ... Gold castles filled with tons of precious jewels, mountains of gold, and altogether unimaginable treasures, more than earth could ever offer to anyone.

There were many chips, like casino gambling chips, in front of me on a huge playing field, a board-like contraption. One chip was placed right in front of me but it was not mine, although everyone thought it was. The chip that was actually mine was a little over to the side on my right. The excitement was tremendous; you could feel the expectation vibrating in the air. Suddenly, the lottery result was announced and everyone cheered, whistled, and clapped all around me. The noise was so loud it was almost deafening. To my utter amazement, everyone thought that I was the winner. They all pointed to the chip in front of me and started to congratulate me. I was stunned, and waited for someone to come forward to claim the chip. I waited and waited, but no one claimed it.

My mind was suddenly whirling, "Should I claim it? It seems to belong to no one! What shall I do? If I claim it, Johnima and the kids will no longer have to struggle and they can

live in luxury, even though I know that wealth is really an illusion, but I will incur negative karma because of the lie. I will probably have to return to another physical birth in order to clear the slate again.”

The thoughts continued to race like that through my feverish mind. What to do? Suddenly, I found myself sighing, and in my mind I said, ”Swami, I give up my desire and attachment to have this be my last life. I will sacrifice it so that Johnima and the kids don’t have to struggle.” I hung my head and resigned myself to accepting the prize.

Suddenly, I was literally jarred out of that scene to full physical consciousness. It was now about four o’clock in the morning. Johnima was asleep. I woke him up and explained the experience.

He asked me one question: “What is the truth, Kalassu? Always stand by the truth. Remember truth does not need us, but we are all lost without it.”

He laughed and thought it silly that I even had the idea that my desire for merging would put him or the kids to any hardship. After clearly talking it all through on the physical plane in that way, I knew exactly what had to be done.

I went back to my meditation. In the blink of an eye, I was back exactly where I had been before, looking down at the chip in front of me and all of the unfathomable wealth it offered. The cheering was just as loud as before, and everyone was patting me on the back congratulating me exuberantly.

“Oh, Heavenly Father, You test me so!” was my thought.

I looked around, smiled sadly, and said out loud, “This is not my chip; that one over there is.” I pointed to the one that was actually mine.

Everyone seemed surprised by my statement, and then the whole scene just dissolved in front of my eyes. There was Sai Baba standing in front of me clapping his hands together, nodding and smiling.

I understood and experienced everything that He was telling me. First and foremost, I realized that the desire to merge had to be given up, in order to move on spiritually. Only the ego would care about having or not having, for myself or for anyone else. Only the ego would think that it was the doer of anything. So, by giving up this selfish, binding desire of caring whether this part of God returns in a physical form or not cleared the way for God to grace this part of Him and wake me to full consciousness, choose the correct path, and then give my answer on all levels.

Lord Yama (the Lord of Death) once asked Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava brother, several questions. In the great mystic epic of the Mahabharatha the five Pandava brothers are the central characters. One of the questions Lord Yama asked was, "Who is the wealthiest amongst all of humanity."

After careful consideration and contemplation Yudhishthira answered, "The one without any desires, is the wealthiest!"

Swami has used the example of the 'shoes of life.' He said the 'shoes' (money, possessions, desires, attachments) should fit just right, so that our walk through life will be comfortable. If the shoes fit too tight, then there is discomfort and pain on the walk. If the shoes are too big, then there is discomfort and pain which also hinders our walk through life. By God's Grace the 'shoes' will fit perfect for us all.





THE CASTLE OF FEAR

***E*ver since I was a little girl, I have been told about reincarnation. The first time my mother sat me down to talk about it was at the age of five. I remember it vividly, because the next day when I was on my way to school, I thought to myself, “Oh my God, this is just awful. I don’t want to have to go through all of this trouble of being a kid, growing up and going to school again! This is sort of miserable having to learn everything all over again. Why Lord, why?”**

Of course, later as I began my ‘Self inquiry’ and learning about my ‘True Self,’ I began to understand the sound reason for it all. Yet, somehow over all the years I still had that

subconscious nagging feeling, “Why would anyone want to come back here? We must all be crazy! Look around. Human justice is almost nonexistent. Only the bullies and petty tyrants seem to be in charge. War, murder, molestation, rape, deception, theft, greed, lust, insane violence, and mayhem are prevalent. I know it’s all illusion, but still, why? Why do we keep returning to this physical form, or any form, for that matter? Are we insane?”

I always thought that if there is such a thing as Hell at all, than this has to be it. Earth plane is just one great big insane asylum. I know, of course, that all karma has to be cleared up from all past intentions, thoughts, words, and deeds, which can be accomplished most effectively on the physical plane. It is the fastest and easiest way to do so; but still, what a pain!

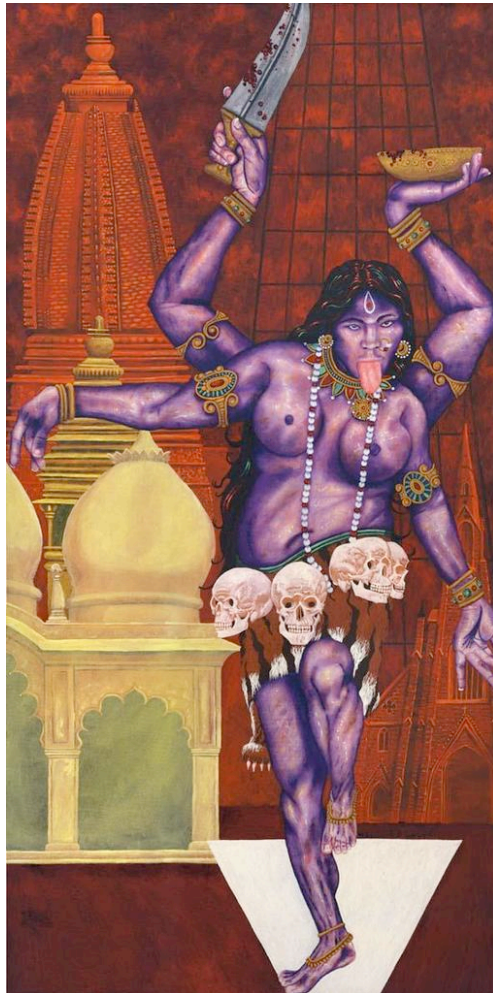
Anyway, I had long relinquished all of my ego thoughts and ideas about reincarnation, hell, heaven and God twenty-some odd years ago, or at least so I thought. On the other hand, I still had some attachment to Mother Earth.

One beautiful winter day, I was skiing down the mountain enjoying the feeling of flying almost free with the wind and the snow, when the positive side of earth life flashed into my mind like it had many times before. “Oh Mother Earth, you truly are beautiful!” Another time, I was on my way home in an airplane, and as I looked down at the scenery spread out like a wonderful moving picture below me, I started to cry, and in my mind thanked Divine Mother for all of Her glorious splendor. So it was again this time skiing. Suddenly, God’s clear voice as my inner intuition rang out, “Careful, don’t get emotional and too attached to this ever-changing dream. You know Mother Maya can just wink ever so slightly, and just like that you’ll be caught up in the illusion.”

Before bedtime that same day, I contemplated my attachment to the beauty of the earth and my disgust with our

human conduct, and that we would have to be insane to choose to come back here. I realized then that both feelings had not been rooted out of my subconscious completely. So, as usual, I asked my 'True Self' to help me out. As I was getting ready to go to sleep, I mentally bowed my head and asked for guidance.

Within moments, I was transported to another level which appeared to be on the causal plane. I suddenly found myself with Swami, who was standing in front of a pool of water. He pointed at the water and told me to watch. As I looked closely, I saw pictures, just like at the movies, reflected in the dark blue pool.



Without any warning, I was suddenly within the scene pictured in the pool. I was inside a castle-like building that had a thousand rooms somewhere on a very low astral level. I was frantically opening one door after another looking for a dear friend who was being kept prisoner in the castle. I wanted both to rescue my friend and to find a way out of this dreadful place.

Each door that I opened had the most hideous sights -- horror beyond all earthly imagination. I saw everything from cannibalistic creatures with rivers of blood and gore flowing from every orifice, to alien monsters that were scary beyond any horror flick. I became almost deranged with fear at all of these insane sights before me. The creatures all leered at me and laughed, and the more I screamed and ran away from them, the larger they grew. It appeared as if they were feeding on my fear. After opening dozens of doors and being pursued by all sorts of monsters, I finally called on Swami to rescue me and show me the way out. I soon found the front gate and was running out of this 'Castle of Fear.' On the brink of madness, I forgot all about my noble intentions.

Half-way down the street, I heard my imprisoned friend yelling for me. I stopped and turned, but was too frightened to take even one little step to help. (What a chicken!) When I saw that my friend had also made it out behind me, all I did was wave her on frantically. We were still being pursued by the monsters looming ever larger behind us, and I was feeling more and more ashamed of my cowardice. Suddenly, I felt myself whisked away. In an instant, I was right back with Swami looking down at the pool, seeing myself running from the 'Castle of Fear' like some crazy woman.

As Swami looked at me and smiled, I suddenly knew exactly what I should have done. Stamping my feet like an impatient child and pulling on his robe, I pleaded, "Oh, I know exactly what to do now. How silly, how stupid of me. Oh please

Swami, please, send me down right now. I know I can do it much better. Please, send me back right this instant.”

I knew that all I had to do in the ‘Castle of Fear’ was to remember the truth. Namely, that everything is only a momentary illusion, no matter what it appears to be to us. All we ever have to do is to send love and in the laughter of truth remember that all is really only ONE. Only my ‘True Self’ playing all the various parts. I should have simply reached out my arms and hugged the monstrous demons. That would have dissolved them all instantly or transformed them into more agreeable parts of myself. Or with laughter in my heart, I could have turned around, faced them, and playfully yelled, “BOO!” and stuck my tongue out at them, or made a funny face. This most likely would have sent them running for cover. “So please, Swami, please, send me back down right now, I can do better!” was my pleading request once again. “Send me back!!!!”

Swami just smiled that mischievous smile of His and then everything faded away. I found myself once again in my normal physical body reality. I started to smile as I re-examined the entire experience. I understood that all of us want to be such good children. We want to do everything so perfectly, so absolutely correct, that when we find ourselves in our Spirit bodies we know exactly what we should have done under all of our various circumstances in the physical life. We beg to be reincarnated as soon as possible in order to correct all of our screw-ups and to act like the God that we truly are.

Heck, I was willing, no, even eager, to jump right back into that hell-hole which my mind created, and which was a thousand times more hideous than any earth plane. So, I can imagine what we all do when we review our earth life in the hall of records (akashic records). We want to correct it all instantly because we know better. We are of a higher consciousness, and so we hurry back here in a new body to do it right the next time.

In my life, I still get an initial impulse of fear or anger now and then. It is usually about some silly misconception, but right along with it I start to remember the truth. I take a deep breath, smile, send love, and remember what Sai Baba told me: “Why fear when I am here?” This makes all of the silly little frustrations and fears in life vanish like the early morning mist.

After I realized fully what Swami had shown me, I started to put it into practice. I now take each day at a time and do the absolute best I know how. I know that I don’t have to wait for another lifetime to correct anything. We have time and opportunity right here and now, on earth, to rectify any mistake the moment we become consciously aware of it.





SERVICE

***E*ver since I have known Sai Baba, I have consciously worked on following His teachings to the best of my ability. He has firmly installed the 'Inner Swami' in the temple of my heart, but for years I created a worship-type of relationship with the form. In almost unnoticeable stages I had put Sai Baba on this high pedestal, which made Him hard for us normal mortals to reach.**

Yet Sai Baba, Himself, ever since I can remember, has always shown me that there should only be the awareness of our Oneness. He has time and time again destroyed this imaginary idea of separation, of pedestal worship of name and form. It was not easy for me to relinquish this idea, that there would always be someone to protect me. I'm pretty slow and stubborn, so it took a few years for Swami to beat this idea of separation out of me.

Usually whenever I would start asking Him a question with, “Swami?... ” He would turn and address me with, “Yes, Swami?” Or at other times He would say to Johnima and me when touching our heads, “These are my bodies now, we are One.” Yet still, somehow my emotion and ego seemed to want to put Him on a pedestal and worship at His feet, separating my divinity from His. Finally, several years ago, Swami literally lifted me out of this delusion.



One evening when I was just drifting off into meditation, I suddenly found myself transported to India. It was darshan time and Swami was just coming out of the gate at Whitefield. The crowd was large and unruly. Swami radiated such tremendous Love that everyone was almost intoxicated with the desire to rush at Him. The rows of students and volunteers were desperately trying to hold back the surging crowd.

Johnima, Shanti and I were sitting in a car along the driveway by the gate. There was a blanket draped over the front passenger seat and Johnima was sitting behind the wheel. Shanti and I were sitting in the back seat. Sai Baba had seen that the crowd was just breaking through the rank and file of the students and volunteers. He saw us, and quickly approached the car. Looking inside the passenger window, He asked, “May I come in?”

I instantly whipped off the blanket from the front seat and said, “Oh, yes, of course, Swami!” At the same time Johnima scrambled out of the driver’s seat, ran around to the other side of the car and kneeled down in front of Swami in the dirt in order to be a step stool for Swami. (The car was a little

high off the ground, so the step to get into the door was unusually high.) At that exact moment, the crowd started to rush upon Swami.

Some volunteers had seen that now there was no one in the driver's seat of our car that Swami was getting into, since Johnima was kneeling on all fours on the ground in front of Swami. They immediately waved another waiting car over and ushered Swami into it post-haste, and drove off quickly, just as the crowd swarmed around us and engulfed our car.

Well, let me tell you, I was livid, I was beside myself! Sparks were flying from my eyes like red-hot daggers at Johnima, who looked around realizing what had happened as he brushed himself off. "You stupid idiot, what kind of dumb stunt was that? Why must you always act like such a goody-good, Johnima? We could have been Swami's get-away car and had him all to ourselves; now look at what you've done! God, I can't believe how stupid you acted." On and on I ragged on Johnima, venting my anger and frustrated desire. Shanti and I were both fuming, to say it mildly.

Suddenly, the crowd disappeared and Swami drove back. We were alone, so He got out of His car and walked up to us. My heart leapt as a deep sigh escaped from my lips. Swami quickly sat down in the front passenger seat of our car next to Johnima who was sitting in the driver's seat again. Swami looked at me and said, "What was he doing?" as he pointed at Johnima. I did not quite know what He wanted me to answer, so Swami gestured with His hand and repeated the question, "Come on, what was he doing?"

"Ah ... he was ..." I hesitated, so Swami coaxed me mischievously once more, "What?"

"... ah ... service?" I answered hesitantly.

“Ah, ... yes, service!” Swami sarcastically prodded nodding His head. “... And you? ... What were you doing?” He asked innocently while looking deep into my eyes. Suddenly, I got that sinking feeling in my chest as I realized what He was pointing out. “I ... I ... was ... er... wanting?” My answer was barely audible as I lowered my eyes and head.

“What was that? You were what?” He pushed the point at me again with an amused twinkle in His eyes.

“... er ... wanting ...” I answered with a sigh, and then quickly added, “But I was only wanting You, Swami.”

Swami shook His head and said lovingly, “No, no, that is only worship and it is still duality. It still projects a false ego separation from Swami. Now is time to work, time to be Swami, you are Swami. Now act like it.”

As the scene slowly faded, I realized that this is the message Swami has been giving all along. Over the last few years, Swami has pointed out to everyone again and again the same thing. Go and be of service. That is the real worship, that is the work. It does not mean that everyone should rush out and do some sort of community service if they have no like or inclination for it. From all that I can surmise, it means the inner willingness to be ready at all times to be Love and of service in the moment, to the best of our ability in all situations, under all circumstances.

How would Christ or Swami act in this situation? What would a saint do? What would Love say? How would the Buddha react or view this or that? These are the questions we need to ask ourselves every time we are faced with a new challenge when it arises for each of us.

Doing some sort of valuable community service is wonderful, and, of course, a nice easy way to break into this idea of being of service to all. But we must remember that it is

our true inner intent that really counts. We must always be totally honest with ourselves and expose everything to the light of truth.

Are we doing this service to look good to others? Are we doing it to be noticed and maybe glorified in some way? Are we doing it because we feel we have to, otherwise we will not feel spiritual enough? Or are we doing it just for the doing, for the service, out of compassion and love? Remember, the only one we maybe fooling here is ourself.

In the end, I have found that service must be a natural part of our life of Love; otherwise we have not quite understood the principle. Service is the most natural expression of Love. It never needs prompting, or any kind of effort in its true state. Also, remember there are a thousand and one ways to be of service to all of creation.

Maybe you will indulge me and let me tell you about a small example that shows how we always test ourselves, or how creation always gives us the chance to see exactly where we are at with our learning status. Since the time of Swami's 'service lesson,' I have diligently tried to put it into practice in every aspect of my life.

One winter morning I awoke to another one of those frequent beautiful, sunny winter days here in McCall. It had snowed the night before and the runs on the ski hill were groomed to perfection. It was my kind of ski day.

Johnima went off to the hill early since he teaches skiing and snow-boarding. The kids left a little while later to catch some fresh powder, and I was hurrying to prepare some food for dinner, knowing that we would all be hungry after skiing and too tired to cook. I quickly finished the cooking and housework, put my ski clothes on and headed up to the hill. I

got there, put on my ski gear as quickly as I could and rushed outside.

As soon as I got out of the lodge, I put on my skis. I was just about to push off and slide down to the lift line, when my son, Kodey, skied right in front of me, stopped, and out of breath hurriedly asked, “Mom, watch my skis, I have to hit the bathroom.”

“No way!” was my automatic selfish reply, as I pushed off towards the lift line. “Oh #xx#,” I had just blown it, but it was too late to go back. I would have had to walk up a long hill to get back to the lodge, so I opted to take the chair lift to the top. On the chair, my ego was giving me all the lame excuses for not being of service to Kodey. I had taken care of the home-front, prepared food, let everyone else go early, and now it was my turn. My turn! Me! I had just missed a perfect opportunity to be selfless. The truth is, there is no more Me. Damn you, ego!

Well, I skied down the fastest run. Lord, I did not even take the time to enjoy it, and then I simply waited for twenty minutes until Kodey came down from his run. I apologized for my selfishness and told him that I missed a great opportunity to be of service to myself. He just laughed and probably thought I was crazy to even think about something so silly and unimportant, because he hadn’t cared at all that I took off. He said, “Hey, I would have done the same thing, Mom.” But we all know that that was not the point.

The ego is so prone to be self-important, so tricky and devious in so many ways. Even though my mistake was really nothing in the grand scheme of things, it is important for me now to immediately correct any slight ploy of the ego-mind-personality illusion by bringing it out in the open, by exposing it to the entire world around me. Besides, who am I fooling? No one but myself. After some diligent practice, I find now I can often catch my ego right before a selfish act actually com-

mences. Eventually, I know that our natural state of Love will erase any trace of the ego and then I will be ready each time for any service that might be required.

To my understanding, the greatest service that any of us can do for all of creation is to realize our 'True Self,' to always live in the true knowledge of 'Who We Really Are.' Then automatically we will act like our 'Perfect Self,' the God that we have always been, always are, and that we are now, once more, remembering to consciously be, with Swami's loving help.

For many years, Swami has prompted us to stay away, shielded and isolated on top of our beautiful mountain, and told us that He would send people from all over the world to us. That is how it has been for many years while the children were growing up and finishing their School days. Now, that dharma (duty) is almost completed and some new adventures are visible on the horizon as Divinity is designing them for these parts of us.

The very next morning after the last 'Service experience,' we received a phone call that asked us to come off of our mountain retreat, to once again sing and share our experiences with our brothers and sisters all over the world. It is all happening as Swami had long ago explained to us. When creation is seen as Love, life can be very playful!





SHOW AND TELL

Somewhere in the same time frame, I had another experience that my ‘True Self’ graced me with, in order to drive the point home that it was time to stop the worship and to start acting like the Divine Self. I guess I needed a repeat performance. God alone knows what a slow learner I am at times. Work done as service from the Heart is real worship in this age of Kali.

I was drifting off into the repetition of ‘Sohum’ [I am That (or God)] when without warning I found myself in a large room somewhere. I instinctively knew that Swami was nearby. I did not see Him, but there were a number of ladies present. They were all sitting on the floor chatting about various trivialities. I noticed that a small group was constantly looking in my direction and pointing as inconspicuously as they could at me. At first, I paid no attention, but as the whispering continued, I could not help but overhear some of the bits and pieces of their hushed conversation. Actually, it sounded a lot like gossip. I became curious and walked over to them and politely inquired, “I keep seeing you look at me. Is there anything I can do for you ladies?”

For a moment they were awkwardly silent, but then one of the older ladies smiled at me and asked, “You are one of the Lightstorm group, yes?”

I returned her smile and answered, “Yes, I am Kalassu. Johnima and I are Lightstorm. Can we be of service to you?”

“Ah ... no, we were just wondering,” was her hesitant reply.

“What about?” was my frank comeback. “If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them. I will be more than happy to answer them for you if I can,” I added.

Another younger lady joined in, insistently curious, and said, “To be quite frank there are a lot of stories about Lightstorm. It seems that some people are saying unkind things about you.”

“Like what?” I inquired.

“Well, things in the past, dealing with sex, drugs, sinful living, and overcharging for your music,” was her reply.

I started to laugh. In my mind, I said, “Oh Lord, what a game.” Then I answered, “Through Johnima, Lightstorm came into being, and I have been around from the very beginning. I have never witnessed any of these supposed allegations. Who is telling these tall tales? Do these people know us at all? And if they say they do, then I must state that it is their personal problem. It does not in any way involve us. I will give you just one little example for this.”

“Once a young man met Lightstorm, and when he felt the love, the joy, the laughter and freedom that was always an integral part of us, he wanted to be part of our life. He came and lived with us. Over the years, so have many others, and

they keep wanting to, even now. They were all able to for a while, mainly because Johnima could never deny anyone's wish."

"Well, this particular young man, as well as a few others before and after him, had some pretty strong sex thoughts, or problems, like most young men who do not know how to deal with their sexuality. I was in no mood to deal with any of it. So I became cold and maybe even a little bitchy. At that time, I didn't know any other way to protect myself from his onslaught of thoughts. I have always been extremely sensitive to thoughts and vibrations. In a way, I am too sensitive to live in close proximity with earth-minded people. Egos are very hard to confront. I won't put up with my own, so why should I put up with any other ego, especially in my home. Needless to say, I must have been a very difficult person to be around. So, this particular young man did not last long with us, and he went away angry and very frustrated."

"As far as prices are concerned for books, tapes etc., know that we give away as much as we sell, and the prices barely cover all the costs involved. But, of course, God always provides. To us, it is all only God's Grace, and we really want nothing. We share in any way we know, and however Love prompts us to, and that is all. If any of these people have any questions about us, why don't they confront us personally, like you are doing now? Divinity alone has guided, sustained, blessed, designed, and prompted each step of our lives. So, whatever you may have heard is gossip, simply false gossip."

"When I was about six or seven and on my way to School one morning, I had to cross a particular intersection. I had just been thinking about something that my Mom had told me. She had said, 'God knows and sees everything, you can't hide anything from Him. He knows your innermost thoughts and true intent. He is always right there, invisible, sitting on your shoulder.'"

“I stopped at the crosswalk, when suddenly a gust of wind, which felt like a giant hand, pushed me away from the corner down the sidewalk. The push was so forceful that it caused my feet to run. Within a split second an out-of-control car smashed into the corner, where I would have been. I thank God, I know it was Him, watching over me.”

“Even as a little girl, I knew deep in my heart that in this life, I would have to be so good. I felt that I had to be extra careful not to get into trouble. I remember this determination so clearly. Some part of me must have known how much mischief I got into in my previous lives. That is why I was so stubborn about my conduct, because somehow I felt that this was my last earth life and I couldn’t let my ego get away with anything anymore.

“I grew up in Hollywood in the sixties, and we all know what that was like. I was probably one of the only virgins that graduated Hollywood High School. I never got into drugs, smoked, or drank. I became a vegetarian at the age of fourteen, because I was sick and tired of meat.”

Later on, I became interested in Eastern philosophy, was celibate, and practiced Hatha Yoga with Indra Devi for a while. Basically, I lived as a yogini, a student of the ‘Self.’”

“As far as Johnima is concerned, let me just tell you what Swami personally said to me about him: ‘Johnima is married only to God. He is a good man, you listen to him!’”

“As long as I have known Johnima, all he has ever done is to share his understanding, be of service in all situations, and be generous to a fault. He has always been only married to God, Jesus, the Divine Mother or Swami throughout all of his physical existence. To my knowledge he has not touched an illicit drug in his life; he will barely even take an aspirin.”

“Singing for God has been his life, and if anyone cares to look, his message. So, the next time someone tells you some sort of juicy story, tell them to take care of the mess in their own backyard, before they venture into someone else’s.”

It was a rather longwinded, somewhat detailed explanation, because for years now I had heard weird, distorted, false stories and allegations through the grapevine, so to speak, and it had often annoyed me to no end.

From the first rumors on, I had often asked Johnima to publicly expose and counter all of this weirdness, but he just smiled, shrugged his shoulders and said, “Why? Why even pay attention to it? Everyone will still do and believe whatever they want. They are welcome to it. It is all only illusion and God’s business, and has no meaning to us. For us, it simply does not exist, Sweetheart. Our other parts will have to live, and probably have lived for many years, with all of their judgments based on gossip, hearsay, and warped ego perceptions, but we don’t have to. Besides ... God is the only doer, so enjoy the circus, as Swami would say.”

“We should all remember what Swami tells us all of the time, ‘Do not use poisonous words against anyone, for words wound more fatally than even arrows.’ Gossip is a waste of precious energy and time, it harms the one who thinks and speaks it, not the one it is about,” was my final comment to the ladies. Besides, a yogi means student of oneself, not anyone else!

At that moment Swami entered the room saying, “Ah, everyone is here. Today we have show and tell.”

He was in a real jovial mood and that sparked a wave of giggles and laughter from all of us. The group of ladies that I had been talking to genuinely smiled at me now. They started to hug me one by one, apologizing for even dealing in all of this silly gossip stuff.

Swami watched with a big grin on His face and then asked one of the other ladies present to show and tell. Basically, it was a session of exposing our innermost secrets, desires, frustrations, and ego separations. One by one, He went down the line until He came to me.

Swami standing in front of me, lifted up His robe and wiggled His toes invitingly at me. Without hesitation, I fell on the floor in front of Him in order to clasp those cute little feet. Ooops, ... I missed them. Swami had swiftly stepped back just as I was leaning forward to touch His feet.

I was surprised, but did not think too much about it as I scooted forward to try again. He was lifting His robe even higher for me, beckoning me to touch His now fully exposed feet. I tried repeatedly, but each time with the same result. Swami moved away.

Tears soon flooded my eyes. I could not understand why Swami was teasing me so cruelly. So I asked, "Why are you teasing me so, Swami? What have I done wrong?"

Full of sympathy and concern, He quickly walked up to me, took both of my hands in His and lifted me off of the floor. "Work, not worship! You are Swami, no more separation!"

I understood. My show and tell had exposed, along with many other hidden things, this old and imagined separation once again. Swami loved me so tenderly with His fathomless eyes, it ripped the root of this ego separation right out. Somewhere in my emotion, it hurt just a little bit to give up this comfortable habit of worship, but as I drifted into His eyes and lost myself, I felt a new feeling of indescribable laughter and inner equilibrium enter my conscious awareness.

Swami had told me once in one of my private interviews that soon I would be even. Soon there would be no more

ups and downs of the unbalanced emotional body, no more ego identification, only the evenness of constantly being in the Oneness of 'Self.' He had moved His hand sideways with an even movement to doubly imprint it on my consciousness. I was so relieved, yet still tears ran down my cheeks as I asked quickly, "Soon, Swami? How soon? This lifetime 'soon'?" Swami was squeezing my hand, actually kneading it, and full of compassion, He answered, "Yes, yes, this life, soon."

It felt as though He was actually massaging my heart in my chest, and since then I have often used that as a visualization whenever I am holding someone's hand while sharing with them.

Exposing desires and attachments, gossip and ego, like Swami did with all of us in our show and tell session, has been my personal way of working on conquering that crafty little creep called ego-mind. Actually, I don't know any other way I can do it. I find that by exposing it openly to whoever is around, it has no place to hide and recuperate. I can actually feel the ego shrivel up and disappear as soon as it is exposed. As Swami always tells us, crush the ego, and let the mind die, then you will meet your 'True Self.'

So now it is war. Our own personal Mahabharatha which we all have to fight within. Now we have Swami as our charioteer, so this false idea of ego, which has been deluding us, lying to us, telling us that we are not this Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being - Awareness - Bliss) for thousands of lifetimes, will be destroyed once and for all. To think that in our ignorance we lied for it, even protected it, is insane. We are and have always been that pure Divine LOVE, the same love that attracts us to Swami, so, no more buster! This is war! Now each time the mind runs wild or the ego crops up, I just expose it, and it gets smaller ... and smaller and smaller ...





LIBERATION

Whenever I am graced to be physically close to the Sai form, I inevitably hear someone ask for liberation. I have often thought about the concept, and I have come to the conclusion that most of us use the word, but don't really have a clue what it means. It sounds so wonderful, so 'liberating' to our egos, but these very same ego personalities will have to dissolve in order to reach the goal.

We are all already liberated; we have always been liberated. It is only our mind and ego identification that keep us bound to this momentary illusive dream of life. Our constant desires, our age old and ever new attachments keep creating new future existences for each of us, and thus forge an endless chain of reincarnations.

Swami once said laughingly, "What makes you think God wants everyone liberated right now? There would be no 'Divine Play' if it were so."

One evening I was contemplating Swami's joking words. I looked at them closely from all sides. Before long, I started to drift off.

Without any warning, I found myself sitting at darshan in India. Swami was walking around, as usual, blessing the crowd. It was very hot that day, and everyone was looking pretty miserable in the oppressive heat. I looked up at the sky and asked Swami in my head to send some cooling clouds our way to make it more comfortable for everyone. Swami did not halt His slow and steady stride; He never looked up, but within a few moments a dark cloud appeared over our heads to block out the scorching sun. A sigh of relief was audible all around.

After some time, Swami walked by where I was sitting and waved for me to follow Him. I waited until He finished the darshan, and then got up and followed Him inside.

He walked straight to a small, dark room. As I entered the room right behind Him, I was pleasantly surprised by the coolness that greeted me. Swami sat down on His chair that stood near the back of the little room and motioned for me to sit right in front of Him, almost touching His feet. No one else was in the room.

“So, you want liberation, yes?” was the first question Swami directed at me in a very straight manner. His question felt very nonchalant, flat somehow, and it took me by surprise. Secretly in my heart I had been contemplating the idea of asking Him this the next time I got the chance.

I was quiet, but my mind was racing a hundred miles an hour. Here was my chance! The first thought that struck me was the exhilaration of finally getting out of the game. The idea of merging was a delicate illusion that I had nurtured for so long, my mind said, “Oh yes, Swami. Ahhh ... finally I can merge in You. For so long we’ve seemed apart, but now we will be one forever.” But right after this first onslaught of positivity, another barrage of thoughts jumped up in my consciousness. “Oh, but I would really love to see Sai Shanti’s and Sai Kodey’s children, watch them grow up, and see the Divine

Play manifest. I would also miss my dearest friend, Johnima, etc. etc. etc.”

All the while, Swami was looking at me without any special expression. He was just gazing and waiting patiently. I looked up at Him and then it hit me right between the eyes.

“Wait a minute, Swami, this is all illusion! What do You mean, ‘I want?’” I started to laugh and continued, “This is God’s body, He’ll decide whether He has a use of this part of Him or whether it is time to merge. There is no more separate ‘I’. No, Swami. It is God’s decision, and His alone!” By now I was laughing out loud, and Swami joined in the merriment.

I jerked out of that experience with a start, only to find myself still laughing out loud. My first thought after that experience was, “That was sneaky, Swami!”





I SURRENDER

In one of my private interviews with Sai Baba, He told me that I had to watch out much more for my emotional body than for my ego. I remember that at the time I was very frustrated with my ego because to my perception, it was this illusion of ego that had kept me apart from my “True Self” for so many lifetimes. I remember, I was so emotionally charged that when Swami called me in for an interview, I clasped His hands in mine, and with tears rolling down my cheeks, I pleaded with Him to destroy this ego which seemed to have kept me separate from God for so long. He laughingly replied, “Not ego ... emotion.”

Like a lot of my other female parts, emotion seems to get the best of me at times, and once I get on a roll, so to speak, it just gets way out of control. So, with Divine Grace we have

been working on emotional control ever since. That brings us to another experience which was so beautifully arranged. Here is what happened.

For a few days, Johnima had been busy with some new songs that were flowing through. He had been next door in the guest house working on music. He called me over to listen to the new material. One of the songs which had been written for me was called 'I Surrender.' As he sang it for me, I started to cry. When he sang the lines,

“... For so long, we've seemed apart,
But forever now we are one heart,
One Love, One Heart, Yes, One All!”

the words just overwhelmed me. They expressed exactly how I felt deep in my heart. Just the line, “...For so long, we've seemed apart ...” tore me up. My thoughts drifted to all of the many, many lifetimes I have lost sight of God, and the complete Love that we are.

Here are the words to the song which was recorded on the 'GOD IS ...' album.

I Surrender

*I surrender all to You Lord,
All my Love I give to You,
With that Love we mold creation,
But in truth, there's only YOU!*

*I love You only, Sweet LORD of Creation,
Forever and always, Sweet LORD of Creation,
We're One Heart, One Love,
Sweet LORD of Creation!*

*For so long, we've seemed apart,
But forever now we are One Heart,
One Love, One Heart, yes One All!
One Love, One Heart, and One All!*

The only thing that I could say to Johnima was that the song was just beautiful. But deep in my heart, I felt almost unworthy to sing this precious song. I was aware that it was some sort of reverse ego problem that prompted that feeling, so I did not say anything to Johnima.

That night, right before I went to bed, I kept thinking about the new song, and I told my 'True Self' what was in my heart. Tears were still streaming down my face, every time I recalled the words, "... For so long, we've seemed apart. ..." Finally, I fell asleep.

The next thing I knew, I was on darshan line. There was a big celebration in progress. Swami was just coming out and walking through the center aisle towards the elevated platform where His chair stood.

I heard Johnima singing the sweet melody of 'I Surrender' in his high, lilting voice. It was like a siren call of Love and it moved me deeply, but again I felt unworthy of being up there singing with Johnima. Swami walked up to me and frowned, saying, "Why are you here? Go! Go!" He waved His hand, telling me to get up there with Johnima.

My heart leapt with joy, as I made sure and said, "Really, Swami?"

"Go! Go!" was His laughing reply. I jumped up and quickly followed Swami to the stage.

Johnima was just finishing his high wailing, so I started singing the song. Swami sat down in such a way that I could look directly at Him. He was sending out the most overwhelming Love vibration. My body was so full of emotion that it was shaking. Tears were starting to fill my eyes, but I knew that it was my job to control this excess emotion. If I let it go, I would be unable to sing at all, and that would never do.

So, with iron resolve and unbending intent I held on to the emotion and sang. But the more I exercised control the more Swami turned on the charm. He was so unbelievably glowing with tenderness and overwhelming Love that I thought I would literally melt.

Yet, somehow, I held on to the emotion surging up inside of me and finished the song. Swami laughed out loud and patted me on the back as if to say, “Good job!”

At the exact same time, I woke up to full consciousness. I immediately woke Johnima up and told him the entire dream darshan, so that I would not forget even the smallest detail.

To this very day, every time I sing that song, I start to cry when I get to the line ...‘For so long, we’ve seemed apart ...’

Someday soon, I know, with Divine Grace, I will have full control over that old, runaway emotion.

“Lord, please make it very soon!”





THE FLUTE

Since we just talked about singing, let me tell you another cute episode dealing with the same subject.

This particular experience happened rather recently. It was at one of the yearly Sai retreats in California. It was some time after Swami had finally coaxed us off of our mountain in order to sing and share our experiences with our brothers and sisters of Love once again.

On the second day we were asked to please sing for the ‘young adults’ group. The gathering had been arranged outdoors just after sunset.

We had finished our second day of sharing and singing earlier that afternoon. We began with a couple of songs, and then we called the young people up on stage to do one of the songs with us. We had all practiced the songs for a little while in the late afternoon, just before the concert. It went well and the kids sounded terrific. By now, the night was starting to get damp and a bit chilly.

As we started our next song, I opened my mouth and only a squeak came out. “Oh boy,” I thought, “what is this, Lord?”

I tried again, nothing came out, only a hoarse whisper. By now, Johnima looked at me with a puzzled look, but he kept on singing the song.

“Oh God, please let this pass,” I pleaded inwardly.

At that moment Swami’s face flashed before my eyes. He nodded to me as if to tell me to sing. I tried again. To my great surprise the voice was back. Not just back, but it sounded so clear, so beautiful, it was a flute-like sound which sounded almost surrealistic.

Johnima looked at me again with his eyes raised in surprise and a big smile on his face. Obviously, I was not the only one who was hearing the difference.

As the song went on, I lost my inner focus on Swami’s face, and presto, the voice was gone again. Only a faint squeak came out of my mouth. I immediately closed my eyes again and pictured Swami in my mind. You guessed it, the clear voice was back again. It took all of my concentration to visualize Swami’s face as I was singing the song. After the first song, it became a little easier. Still, every time I lost His mental image for a split second, the voice started to fade.

Well, we made it through the entire program, without any major disasters. I guess my voice, being slightly tired from our earlier performance and practice with the kids, could not handle the damp, cool air. Or maybe Swami was just teaching me again to solely focus on the ‘Inner Swami.’

Thank You, for that most wonderful rescue, and loaning me a beautiful voice for the lesson in concentration.

From that day on, I have worked on the 'Inner Swami' whenever I sing, or else who knows what might happen?

This last experience also reminded me again of what Swami had told me while patting my head, "This is now my body, so go, play the 'Game of Life,' play it well; but without attachment."

Swami asked me to marry Johnima and to have children, He said it was all His 'Divine Plan.' He said, "You go do this for Swami, play the game well, but remember, without attachment!" Oh Swami, how You test us so! You are a strict disciplinarian and the following situation was one of my hardest lessons as a mother in detachment.

One day, Sai Shanti came down with what seemed to be nothing more than a stomach flu. However, the next day it turned out to be life-threatening spinal meningitis. We rushed her to the emergency room of our small local hospital. They had to 'Life-Flight' Shanti in a helicopter to Boise to a larger hospital, since our local hospital did not have the proper facilities to give her the best care. Johnima asked the doctor what Shanti's chances were. He did not want to answer the question at all, but when Johnima pressured him, and since we knew the doctor personally, he sighed and answered, "I really don't know, but her chances of survival are not good at all. She might die on the flight to Boise"

Before she was flown to Boise, we applied vibhuti to her body and asked Divine Mother to protect her. We could not fly with her in the helicopter, so Johnima and I drove to Boise. It took us two hours and in that time I had a lot to contemplate.

Johnima, very wisely and sweetly, stayed silent, knowing that this was my test to see where I stand within myself. What is real, and what is false (maya) Once you remember the

TRUTH, everything else no longer has importance. Primarily, the children that were born by this body, do not belong to me! In fact I do not even own my own body! Nothing on this physical plane belongs to me. The truth is, Sai Shanti is Spirit, her body (as all bodies) is a dream. So, if she is finished with this earth-plane and ready to move on, we should celebrate.

Intellectually, I knew all these answers and truths. Yet, I found it so hard to separate my love from attachment. My heart was breaking, because I am Shanti's mother, and she my child. Immediately Swami's words flashed before my eyes, "Have babies for Swami, but without attachment."

"Oh yeah I guess I forgot the attachment part!"

By the time we reached Boise, I had given up questioning "Why, Swami?" and reminded myself that only a fool would ever try, or attempt, to interpret God's divine play. My mind, heart, and spirit were all aligned again with the truth, namely this is all an illusion, a momentary dream, and Shanti does not belong to me. Yes, I will miss her beautiful spirit and smile while I am still in the physical, but that smile, that spirit is an integral part of me forever, so what is there really to miss?

By Divine Grace, Sai Shanti fully recovered (100%), against all the odds. Shanti and Kodey are truly God's children as we all are. Only our ego identification and attachment make us think that we are separate.

Attachment, attachment! Throughout my life I have been working on just that, getting rid of attachments, desires, and in general the ego, which believes that it is the 'Doer.' Here is a story I recall which expresses this completely.

Once high on a beautiful mountain top, Lord Shiva was dancing with His consort Parvati. Suddenly, Lord Shiva stopped dancing. Parvati inquired, "My Lord, where are you

going?” He answered, “One of my devotees is about to be beaten with sticks, so I must rescue him.”

At the same time on earth, the devotee was deeply engrossed in repeating God’s name. He unintentionally walked across the village laundry that was lying on the ground to dry, leaving muddy footprints on the clean clothes. This enraged the villagers, so they picked up sticks to beat him off.

Back on the mountain-top, Shiva reappeared almost instantly. Parvati was puzzled, so she asked, “My Lord, why have you returned so quickly?”

Lord Shiva smiled gently as He resumed the dance. He explained, “Oh, I was not needed. The devotee decided to take matters into his own hands and defend himself. He picked up a big stick to beat off his attackers.”

As we all are walking through this ‘Game of Life,’ let us all remember not to pick up the stick. God can do a much better job than our miserable little egos can. Let us be empty of ego, like Krishna’s flute, “Murali,” and then the breath of God can play beautiful melodies through us.





OH, SO SPIRITUAL

During the early years of Lightstorm, I was on the beginning quest of working on my inner ‘Self.’ I rigorously meditated every day, and worked on controlling the mind. This method seemed the perfect way to advance on the spiritual path. All of the various Yoga books, as well as the saints and sages suggested meditation. Often, it was a struggle for me to sit cross-legged for long periods of time.

During that time, another young man came to stay with us. His dearest wish was to be part of the spiritual living atmosphere. Please remember, this was during the late sixties and early seventies, the time when other youngsters were into drugs and sex. We, as Lightstorm, on the other hand, lived like yogis. Spiritual ‘Satsang’ (gathering of like-minded people) was our constant, daily practice. “Singing about the glory of God” and being of service was our life.

The young man I just mentioned was an ardent spiritual seeker. He meditated every day, sometimes for hours, and had an air about him that proclaimed, "Oh, look how spiritual I am!"

As I watched his performance day in and day out, I thought to myself, "Maybe this is a reflection of myself." Oh, how it turned my stomach!

I would watch him go into the meditation room somewhat funky, but pretending that all was fine. He acted as though he only wanted to communicate with God, and the rest of us were simply a burden. (He obviously did not understand that we are all part of that God!)

Well, he came out of the meditation room exactly the same way, funky and pretending everything was fine. Yuck! This turned me off completely. I started to question my own intent. Was I becoming like that? The thought was actually scary. Who was he fooling? Only himself. His ego was in control, even though the idea of meditation was so wonderfully spiritual. Where was the Love? Where was the sharing, the communication, the joy and the laughter? Where was the true understanding of the ONENESS that comes from real meditation? My God, he meditated enough!

I inwardly vowed right then and there that I would only meditate when I felt that inner calling and the yearning in my heart. Needless to say, I did not meditate that often, and was looked down upon by those who were obviously far more spiritual than myself. To the best of my ability I was being real unto myself. To me, that was all that mattered. Besides, true meditation is only when we think solely of God.

Witnessing this type of phony baloney spirituality made me determined never to be like that. To my understanding, spirituality is all inclusive, a sharing of Joy and Love with

all animate and inanimate beings in creation, and an exposure of all hidden ego agendas and games. In my life, I have come across many people acting holier than thou, pretending to be 'Oh, so spiritual,' and then I see Swami, walking amongst the masses of people declaring, "You are Swami, You are God!"

You see, the intent of this young man was not honest, in my opinion. His life was not his message, and his meditation, no matter how great he thought it was, caught him up in self-deception. Why do we do this? To look spiritual and holy to others? To feel spiritually superior in some twisted way? To hide our deep insecurities and earth desires? To escape from the world of the senses? Well, whatever it may be for any of us, this young man forced something that should only be a natural expansion of a loving, open, heart, a heart that yearns to know God, the 'True Self.'

In later years, I was very fortunate to be able to ask Swami about this very subject of meditation. He told me that in the beginning, meditation is very good in order to control the 'monkey mind', but if our life is not our meditation, then we are only working on concentration, not true meditation.

In true meditation, we lose all awareness of form and name. We merge into that inner Light of eternal Love expansion, which is always all inclusive!

I remember one time Swami asked someone if that person wanted to be a guru, a spiritual teacher. I was clearly aware that this person had that secret desire. Swami waited for an answer. Maybe because of an ego fear of exposing this desire and the illusion of having to act spiritual, the individual finally answered hesitantly, " ... Ahh ... no Swami," as if the desire of being a spiritual teacher was something bad. Due to His eternal Love, God will give us that which will help us the most to quickly get through our karma, desires, attachments and games.

What a tremendous opportunity missed. If that individual would have only said, "Yes!" Exposed the ego desire and said, "Swami, it appears that there is this desire inside, so please, do whatever is best for me. Let's get done with these games and ego delusions so that all traces of separation will finally dissolve!"

Throughout all of the years of witnessing Swami with various devotees, He always asks, "What do you want? ... What do you want?"

In my understanding, Swami asks us to bring Him all of our desires, attachment, egos, fears and deepest, darkest secrets, so that He can help us to get rid of them.

Swami has said, "I will give you what you want so that someday you will want what I have come to give!"

No matter what desire is within our hearts, whether money, sex, fame, glory, or whatever, let us simply say to our 'True Self' silently, "There is still this desire for this or that, please, so, please help me get done with it, send me whatever it is that will quickly bring me to the understanding that all of this is only silly illusion." I mean, who are we fooling? Who are we hiding from? God is our innermost 'SELF,' He knows all!

Through all of my learning experiences, I have come to the conclusion that before any of us can expand our consciousness, we must be real and truthful.

With Divinity's loving help we can then root out our deepest darkest desires and fears, by exposing them to our conscious 'Self.' That will allow Divine Grace to set up the exact situation that will help us overcome these ego illusions. Bottom line: expose it and be done with it, then Love has a chance to unfold.

One evening in Puttaparthi, while caring for a very sick lady, I was in dire need of assistance. Out of nowhere, there appeared a distinguished Indian gentleman who inquired about my dilemma. Repeatedly, he had watched my encounter with uncaring, dogmatic, bureaucratic, “spiritual” egos. Obviously, he was deeply respected by these individuals since they immediately listened to him. Lovingly, he offered his assistance and then helped to solve the problem. I introduced myself, and as we talked, he remembered Lightstorm from the old days.

When I, in turn, asked him his name he replied, “Oh, I have no name. This is only Swami’s body,”. His answer struck me so deeply that I had to tell you about it.

That wonderful, loving man had been Swami right then and there for me. He was not the orange-robed version, but nonetheless he was Divinity coming to my rescue. This man reflected true spirituality, reinforcing my conviction that we can all choose to be that Swan, that Swami.





FINISHED WITH THE GAMES

*H*ave you ever noticed how our egos and emotions always want to live in the past, with some sort of recollection? Usually, if we are ruthlessly honest about it, we find that the reality was not nearly as great, or as bad, as the mind makes it out to have been.

Then, on the other hand, the mind constantly wants to live in some future that does not exist. We end up dreaming and projecting all of the wonderful (or terrible) things that the future will hold for us.

My 'True Self' has shown me time and time again that all of these projections are nothing more than an uncontrolled mind game. If we spend most of our valuable moments reminiscing about the past or projecting the future, we tend to miss the present moment.

The NOW, the present moment, is a present from God and all we ever truly have with us. It is the only moment that is always present. That is why Swami told us the "NOW" is

eternity itself. There is only right now, nothing else. So, if we all pay attention in this eternal NOW, then we can focus on what needs to be done at this moment. This awareness will also enable us to focus on making better choices, since our mind is not diffused and sidetracked by thinking of the past and the future.

Oh God, I remember playing so many games, on so many levels. And you know the worst thing of it all? The mind and ego still want to play games any chance they get! Their projection of new or old desires along with attachments continually creates for us a new future birth on some level or other. Attachments and desires will most certainly disappear some day. Then what will be left? Only the intent for all of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Well, with God's Grace, I will finally clean up all of the karma that was created with all of the souls I have encountered. Swami told me in an interview once, "Past karma coming back. Swami will take most, and give you only what you can handle. So, from now on, be good, be Swami!"

So, let me share with you one experience in which Swami took me on a trip all through creation. We visited all of my old haunts, so that I would know consciously if I was done or if my heart and mind were still drawn to any of these levels.

Late one night, I had just finished reading the Mahabharata once again and turned out the light. Instantly, I felt myself leaving the physical body. It is really strange, but often I cannot wait to get the heck out of my body, which feels so heavy and tired.

As I looked back and saw my body lying on the bed, I had the feeling that maybe Swami was close by. I slowly looked around. Sure enough, there He was, hovering in the upper left hand corner near the ceiling. He was beckoning me

to follow Him. My immediate thought was, “Oh, how wonderful.”

I followed Him by drifting through the ceiling and into the glorious, star-studded night sky. At first, it was a nice gentle rising, but soon the speed increased as I followed in His wake of bright light. At each acceleration of speed, I became aware of a new dimension (loka). I saw the people and the beauty of each place, and I remembered having been there before. Every single time, I heard my name called by someone on that level who was familiar to me. They were all inviting me to come back and be with them, play with them, and live with them.

In my heart I said, “No way, I don’t want any of this anymore. I just want GOD!” as I continued to follow Swami’s trail of light.

As the speed increased, it was harder and harder to continue flying in my astral form. At one point, I had to use all of my concentration to force myself through what felt like a sticky elastic membrane in order to keep up with Swami. As I popped through each loka, straining and pushing, I knew that we were now on the lower causal fields. Here again, I saw various levels, people, and places.

“Kalassu, ... Kalassu, come play with us. We’re having a great time, come on. We miss you, come on down!” was the cry I heard frequently.

“No way, I’m done, I’m not getting caught again!” was my intense reply.

Throughout all the levels, someone was calling out my name. They were inviting me to be with them again. These places were so wondrous, so beautiful, that it sometimes took my breath away. But I wanted nothing to do with those levels of separation, those levels I have karmically been caught on

many, many times before. These beings all knew me, on ALL the levels! I must have had a good time, and played a lot of games often, throughout many lifetimes, with a lot of souls.

“I am done! I am finished! No more!” was my cry, as I was speeding through creation.

Swami and I flew on, ever faster and faster! Each time now when we passed another section, I had to strain with all of my concentration, in order to pass through that same type of sticky, elastic membrane.

This extraordinary experience, I would like to remind you, was all happening only on the inner plane. The illusion of “outside” is just a mind projection. The elastic membranes correspond to the five body sheaths that Sai Baba often talks about along with the five senses. So, you see, an astral or causal flight could be described as just breaking through the different sheaths of the body, to reach another level of perception, from the gross physical to more and more subtle dimensions. We all have these experiences in different ways, depending on our mind projection.

The flight was arduous, exhilarating, wild, and indescribable. All of these words don’t seem to be able to do justice to the experience. I felt as if we were shooting through all of the levels. I felt merged in the blinding shaft of Swami’s Light, which was piercing the very fabric of creation.

Suddenly, there was nothing. Only Swami stood in front of me in the middle of nothingness. He smiled at me. All I said was, “I am done, my Love. I am ready to merge!”

The next thing I knew I was floating above my sleeping physical body and gently swaying back and forth for my re-entry into it. I awoke, fully conscious, remembering every precise detail. Needless to say, I woke Johnima up at three-thirty a.m., to share my adventure. Thank You, Divine Self, for

giving me Johnima, and all of these wonderful learning experiences.

Leaving and re-entering the body consciously is a way of practicing dying. The Tibetan monks call this 'The Little Death.' It is really quite amazing that in our society we practice just about everything except dying. When my mother died and I saw her cold lifeless shell, it was very obvious that the 'Spirit' I had known as my mother was no longer in this body.

Let me tell you how it all happened and how I finally realized that God is my only true Mother and Father.

A relative called me on the telephone and informed me that my mother had collapsed and was dying in the hospital. This came as no great surprise since she had been ill for a long time. Her body was riddled with cancer, but Sai Baba had taken away most of her pain as He had promised her a year earlier when Johnima and I had taken her to see Him. Her almost painless state completely mystified the doctors because to their understanding she should have been in excruciating, crippling pain twenty-four hours a day. I was told that her end was near.

At the time of the phone call, Johnima, the kids, and I were still in the process of building our house. Money or 'dinkies' were in very short supply. We could not afford the plane ticket to fly to Los Angeles where my mother was on her death bed. I knew that I needed to be there so I called a close relative to borrow the money for the air fare. We were expecting a check which would have covered the debt within the month. My humble request was answered with a rude, callous remark and followed by an abrupt hang-up. I was in shock! Tears started to flood my eyes. Here I was at a low point in my life, my mother was dying, we were out of money, and we were far away. Instead of help, I received a swift kick which pushed me down even further. None of it made sense to me. I knew that I had to be at my mother's side to be of service to her by

helping her through the transition. Since time was of the essence and we had nobody else whom we could call for assistance, I had to sell my beautiful horse-trailer for a fraction of what it was worth in order to pay for the airfare. This took two extra days, which delayed me long enough so that my mother died before I reached her. I remember being on the plane about one hour before we landed when I felt her dying.

A girlfriend picked me up at the airport and drove me straight to the hospital. Upon our arrival, I was informed that my mother had passed away about an hour ago, and that they had already taken her to the morgue. I demanded to see her body. This did not sit well with the hospital staff, but in the end they sent me down accompanied by a nurse to view the body.

In my heart, I felt that I needed to say good-bye and remind my mother to call out for Christ or Sai to help her pass over. I requested to be left alone with the body. The nurse hesitantly agreed, but she was very nervous about it. I guess she was afraid that I might flip out or do something weird. Well, I stayed with the body until I felt my mother's spirit. When I reminded her of Sai Baba, I heard her distinct voice in my head exclaiming, "Oh ... Yeah ...!"

I now knew that we had connected and that she remembered. I rubbed vibhuti (sacred ash) on her lifeless body shell and re-affirmed for her that in this life she had been a beautiful, giving person and a good mother who filled my heart with Love; she should have no regrets in any way. I told her that because of her, I was the person that I am today, and that she should ask for Divine guidance and happily move on to higher planes.

I placed the beautiful silver medallion which Sai Baba had materialized for her a year earlier on the body right before it was cremated. To me, this was the proper send off.

A few days after the funeral, all of my mother's worldly possessions were stolen from me by a relative. Well, I could not understand any of it.

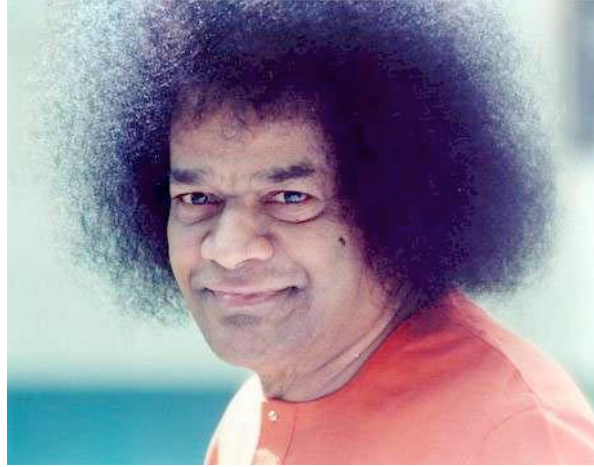
First, the uncaring, heartless reaction to my plea for help to be by my dying mother's bedside; we are only talking about two hundred dollars for an airline ticket and this person just recently purchased a car worth more than sixty thousand dollars. Then the money and jewelry, which my mother had willed to me, were ruthlessly stolen. This small inheritance would have lifted a heavy burden by providing the 'dinkies' to help with the house which we were building alone with our own hands from the ground up. God's Divine Grace alone provided and sustained our energy.

It was not until a few days later when I was expressing my feelings to a friend that I began to understand it all. Johnima was back in Idaho, so I had to talk to someone else about my feelings. My friend was quite psychic in a way, so when I unloaded all of my feelings it was pointed out to me quite clearly that it was all my reaction from past life karma. "They just paid you back when you were at your lowest, Kalassu. You have just paid your karmic debt. Boy, you must have really done something awful to these male individuals in other lifetimes," was the excited reply.

It suddenly made complete sense. Yes, I even remembered that Swami had told me briefly about all this karma from men. Oh, what a great way to get it all cleared up. My depression lifted instantly; I no longer felt like the victim. I actually was elated that my karma was being cleared so quickly. Yes, how wonderful! My victim mode was utterly shattered, and I realized how all of us tend to hide in that mode rather than searching for the truth. Thank you, my 'True Self,' for helping to clear the karmic slate.

Through all of this, I realized that I can not depend on anything outside of myself, and that God is truly my only 'Relative,' and that relative dwells within me.





WHO IS SAI BABA?

For many of us, it is such an inconceivable idea that 'God' would descend in a human form. Our reason can not digest it very well. Why do we think it so strange that the Father of all of creation should keep a close eye on His children wherever they may be?

He is omnipresent, omnipotent, and altogether capable of doing whatever He pleases, in any way, in any and all forms. So, what is so strange about Him showing up in this or that human guise in order to save us from our self-made hell of feeling separate from Him? Any loving parent would do this without hesitation. Let me share with you a little story to illustrate the point.

Once upon a time, one of the Mogul emperors invited all of the wise men in His kingdom to come to the court and explain to him why God, who is all powerful and could send an army of Angels, would personally come down in human form to save mankind. He laughed at the very idea.

For days, the wisest men explained to the emperor all of the various reasons, and they cited examples to prove their belief. But the king was not convinced by any of them.

“Is there no one in all the land who can prove to me why God Himself would take a human birth?” the king tauntingly challenged the entire country.

The emperor’s own minister was a very wise man. He thought to himself, “I better satisfy my king before he gets angry and takes it out on the people.”

So he humbly approached the king and said, “Sire, will you give me three days to prove it to you?”

The king was feeling kind, so he said, “So be it.”

The wise minister made his preparations. You see, the king loved his young son more than anything in the world. So the minister made a life-size doll, which resembled the king’s son, put the prince’s garments on the doll, and got ready for a picnic outing at the lake, an event which the king loved.

As per schedule, the king and his entourage of servants and guests entered a magnificent barge which was rowed to the center of the beautiful lake. This was just the opportunity that the minister had been waiting for. He dropped the doll image of the prince into the water and shouted anxiously, “My Lord, my Lord, the prince is drowning!”

The king, who saw the doll and thought it was his beloved child, jumped immediately into the lake to rescue his son. He did so without a second thought or the slightest hesitation.

Well, when he found out that it was just a doll, the king was furious. He immediately had the minister put in chains.

He could not understand why his own trusted minister would pull such a malicious prank.

After the king had calmed down, he became curious, so before ordering the execution of the minister, the minister was brought before the king in chains and asked why he had done such a thing.

The wise minister smiled, "My lord, I meant no disrespect. But in order to prove to you the validity of the belief that God descends in human form to save mankind, I employed this ruse. You, the great emperor, who commands mighty armies and thousands of servants, you could have just snapped a finger and a dozen men would have rescued your son whom you thought was drowning. But you did not do this. Instead you, Sire, jumped into the water to rescue your beloved son yourself.

The king said, "Of course, there was no time to lose. You know how much I love my son!"

"Yes," smiled the minister, "... and how much more do you think God's love is for His children?"

The emperor was very quiet for a few moments, then tears came to his eyes as he rushed towards the minister, took off his chains, and embraced him.

I have consciously known of Bhagavan for twenty-eight years now, as I stated earlier. I spent the first ten years loving, worshipping, and in general accepting Swami as a great Teacher.

I have personally witnessed dozens of miracles. The miracles seemed all very normal and natural coming from Swami. In my mind, they were part and parcel of any 'Full Avatar' (Divine Incarnation). To me, He represented the Father,

the Beloved, the Best Friend, and another extension of my 'True Self.'

Yet, this tricky ego of mine still contended that we were separate. 'God' could never be contained in just me or a small human form. In some religions like the Islamic and Jewish faiths, God can be worshipped only in the formless. Anyone in human form can only be called a great prophet. And yet the Jewish people are still waiting for the Messiah to come. Jesus Christ is called the Son of God, so who is the Father? Jesus Himself told us, "He who sees me also sees the Father," and "The Father and I are ONE."

In any event, I continued to say the words, "Oh yes, all is God, Swami is God, I am God ..." and in my heart, I believed this, but the personal experience was lacking. Swami Himself has said that out of all of the millions of people who know of Him, only a handful will ever truly understand.

Over and over again, I have seen some devotees crash into this mental abyss of everything being God. Oh, it is all right to let the thought come and go when everything is happy and our lives are running smooth, but the moment Divinity allows us to test ourselves with obstacles in this world of illusion, in order to see where we truly are at, we end up having this Love - Hate relationship with God. Some of us recover, others do not.

I know from personal experience that it is a real struggle to vanquish the ego and emotional impulses and thoughts. Let me share a small example with you about this very subject.

It was in 1982 when I was told that I had a large ovarian cyst. Now remember, I was a vegetarian and in general lived a very healthy lifestyle. It was a surprise, but I did not give the problem a lot of energy. I knew that Swami would take care of it. After taking vibhuti and praying for Him to dissolve it, I almost forgot about the cyst. But the next

checkup showed that the darn thing had grown! I was puzzled. I thought, "Okay Swami, I'll use alternative means to get rid of it."

Well, I tried everything under the sun. I mean every alternative method that I could dig up. Nothing! The darn thing just kept happily growing, as if I was feeding it. I was beside myself. "Lord, why? I know Divinity can take care of it instantly, so why is this happening?"

To make a long story short, I tried for over a year with alternative treatments and medicines, but the cyst continued to grow in size. The doctor was very angry at me for being such a silly fool and putting off the operation for so long. He said that soon I would look pregnant, and then other complications could arise due to the pressure on my internal organs.

I was lost. I did not know what to do. Finally, I cried and with resignation in my heart said, "All right Creation, you want me to have this operation, I guess it's karma, so please God, let it be simple and easy."

Guess again. It was a living nightmare. It was downright horrible! The surgeon turned out to be an uncaring, nasty, chauvinistic individual. The nurses were rude and one was totally incompetent; I almost lost an arm in the process.

At first, I felt like an orphan. My Father, Swami, had not taken care of me. I wanted to feel like a martyr, but my temperament is not really suited for that. I sulked and then yelled, but to no avail. Nothing got any better in the hospital. Johnima was the only one who showed me kindness and care. After the first week of unnecessary suffering, I got angry. I left the hospital at the earliest opportunity and went home to fully recover.

By this time, I was fuming. I was angry at Swami, angry at my body, angry at the medical people, angry at just about

everything. I kept a lot of this anger bottled up inside which was really stupid, because it could have made me very ill.

Somehow, my ego blamed Swami for making such a hardship out of a relatively simple operation. For almost a year, I felt like Swami had abandoned me. My ego was so tricky; it wanted me to go and indulge in the world since this spiritual stuff did not work when I needed it.

With Divine Grace, I was able to employ a bit of reason instead of following my emotion headlong down the greased track of self-deception. I remembered what Swami had told me a couple of times in private: "Past karma coming back. Swami will take most and give you only what you can handle."

I also remembered that the book of Bhrgu had foreseen this operation. It was supposed to happen later in my life, but Swami sped up the process because it was a much better time to take care of it. I slowly started to relax and find some sort of inner equilibrium with all of this. It took almost two years before I finally let it all go. I just forgave all of creation.

Still, something had changed in my attitude through all of this. I no longer acted dependent on the outer Swami; I started to explore the communication with the 'Inner Swami,' the one Bhagavan always points us to as the 'Real Swami.'

My anger soon gave way to a stubborn, persistent inquiry into the true nature of myself. I used the ego to hold on to that determination. It was finally good for something.

Soon, the 'Inner Swami' guided me back to the balance within, through many inner experiences and lessons.

During my entire life, I have learned deep spiritual lessons, always at the perfect time, for my understanding and spiritual growth. So, when the time was right Swami showed me His glory. This is how it happened.

Once again I was flying through space in my mental, causal form. All around me, I could see the multiple layers of creation in vivid detail. All of the various game-fields of creation were above, below and on all sides of me.

I looked around with great curiosity, knowing that something was up. Without any warning, Swami materialized right in front of me. He was smiling so tenderly that it melted my heart as I drank in His form bathed in the most brilliant light.

As I stood there gazing at Him, this thought flashed in my mind and I said: "Swami. You know, I've always wondered how many levels, or lokas of creation, you take care of.... This many?"

I pointed at a myriad of levels visible beneath us. A small shaft of light extended from my right forefinger. It illuminated the levels I was pointing at.

"Or this many?" I pointed to all of the levels that were around and above us.

Swami reflected eternity in His laughing, star-filled, eyes, which appeared to be two endless pools of sparkling universes. He shook His head solemnly, and then lifted His right hand with pointed finger.

Instantly, there appeared a tremendous shaft of brilliant, indescribable light, which enveloped us and reached from eternity to eternity, beyond all fathomable comprehension.

He moved His hand up and down and engulfed us both in His magnificent brilliance. There are no words to describe it.

"ALL!" was His strong, yet simple reply.

As I was bathed in that absolute, that all and everything, ... yet nothing ... for that moment I lost myself, at that exact instant, and I comprehended the magnitude of the Self, of Sai in my heart. Only the shaft of that glorious light existed, the totality of Creation. I knew myself as part of Him, as all, the One Omnipresent GOD of creation.

Then, out of nowhere, I felt a strong impulse -- deep compassion, almost pity, thinking that Swami was doing it ALL! It brought me back to form and name.

Streams of tears flowed from my eyes, as my heart pounded. I said to Him, "Ohhh ... Swami can I help you?"

I regained my physical awareness still crying, but with the firm conviction and experience of knowing who we are. So, if anybody asks me, without a shadow of a doubt, I say, "I am God! Swami is God!"

"... And so are we all!!! ..."





THE WHY & THE WHAT

Have you ever wondered why this creation exists? What this momentary, physical dream of life is? Why this illusion is here at all? Well, I have. From the very beginning of my quest for the 'True Self' I have heard a multitude of answers. I always just accepted them at face value, or I ignored the whole premise. The illusion part did not concern me, since obviously it was all here and I was experiencing it. So to me, at that time, it seemed unimportant why it was the way it was.

I have heard all of the metaphysical answers: it is God's play; His game so that God can be glorified through it; God's pleasure of expressing Himself; God's nature is Love, so He di-

vides Himself into multiple parts to fulfill His nature by loving Himself; and a thousand and one different intellectual explanations. But none of them satisfied me.

Then when I was reading the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha for the umpteenth time, this very strong and prevalent thought flashed into my mind. It was, "WHY? ... Why all the games? We were all perfectly happy merged in that omnipresence, so why this? Why did you do this to yourself, Divine Self? Whatever for?"

It was after midnight by the time I put the Ramayana down and started to contemplate all of the various reasons that I remembered hearing over the last thirty years. They all made perfect logical sense, but not to me.

"I mean, come on, Swami. Since when does God need glorification? That's silly, utter nonsense. God is, He needs nothing. He is everything, so why does He need to love Himself? That makes God sound as insecure as us imaginary humans. What nonsense!" My thoughts ran on and on in that vein, until I had just about exhausted all of the possibilities.

By then, my mind was utterly frustrated. So, I woke up Johnima and started to pester him with my dilemma. He said, "Why worry about it? The whole thing is illusion and does not really exist." His reply really got my goat. Yes, sure, intellectually I knew all of that, but creation was still here, and I was still identifying with the pain of it all. He smiled at me, sort of laughing at my intensity, and told me again that it is all only a momentary perception of the outward reaching mind, and to relax.

"You're right," I thought, "but who created this mind and why?" By now, I was actually getting angry at Johnima and at the idea that God made Himself into Kalassu in order to have this experience of Himself. Well, I was not about to let Joh-

nima, or Swami, off the hook with some silly, patronizing platitude. No more, buster!

We went through all of the different explanations once more, until finally Johnima laughingly said, "Well, think of it this way, maybe God was simply bored!"

God was bored!!! Now there is an idea! Somehow I started to laugh, I felt my good humor coming back again. It seemed to have totally vanished in the midst of all this. Bored! Yeah, I could relate to that. I knew, of course, that that was no real answer, but it satisfied some part of my mind and allowed me to drop the subject for the rest of the night. We both laughed at the whole situation for a while, and then we went to sleep.

The next day, I started talking out loud to my 'True Self' as I was doing work in the house and barn. I was yelling at Swami to give me an answer that I could finally understand. I was no longer going to accept some childish, patronizing explanation.

"Give me the experience, Swami!" I yelled out loud while I was cleaning the stables in the barn. I yelled so loud that the horses, who were out in the corral, turned around and looked at me. One of the horses even started to walk over to see what was going on.

"Mahatma," I cried sarcastically, "Why did God create you separate from me? Was He just bored with the human form?"

By the time the evening rolled around once more, I was ready to start in on it again. I drifted off into meditation with one constant thought, "Okay, Swami, tell me!" I lost all physical awareness, all mental perception, all identification and ... fell asleep!

“Great! That’s not at all what I had in mind, Swami!” was my first thought upon returning to my normal waking consciousness.

As the days went by, I became more and more belligerent and sarcastic in my inner conversations with Swami. “Well, what is it, Swami? Can’t you answer the question? Are You ducking me? Has no one confronted You with this lately? Maybe You have no answer at all? Or maybe You think I can’t handle the answer?” Thoughts like these kept popping up in my consciousness.

Still, every time I started to meditate and contemplate the subject, I fell asleep.

Swami was definitely playing with me, and I knew it. Finally I got tired of all the belligerence and I just gave up my deep intensity about it and relaxed. Yes, I wanted an answer, but only when God was willing to give it. Maybe I just was not ready for an answer. Our True Self knows best.

A couple of nights later, I finally got my answer. Swami came to me, looked at me with the most humorous expression, as if to say, “Well, are we sane again?” I had to laugh.

“What do you want?” was His laughing question to me after I settled down. (As if He didn’t know!) So I immediately started in on Him.

I asked, “Why Swami, why is there a You and a me, a creation, yugas (ages, cycles), universes, galaxies, different dimensional levels, lokas, planets, ... why? Why???”

In the Mahabharatha, as Krishna, You upheld righteousness against unrighteousness. Who created this unrighteousness, or righteousness for that matter?

In the Ramayana, as Rama, You vanquished the Rakshasas (demons). Who created them in the first place? Yeah, we can say our ego, our mind, our desire, our ignorance, but who created them? Mother Maya (Delusion)? But who is Her LORD? Only YOU! So, for what purpose, what reason? God is glorious and needs no glory! God is Love and needs no love. At times, I get momentary glimpses of being God, of being merged in that glory of our ‘True Self’. Why did You create these dualities?”

“I have read the Ramayana, the Bible, the Mahabharatha, the Koran, and Buddha’s story over and over again. Yet I can’t recall any of the great sages in those yugas asking You the question of ‘Why.’ So I’m asking, why are You creating these plays, these scenarios? Because I can’t think of any one else to blame. Bottom line: there is only You. Remember the old saying, ‘In the beginning there was God?’ So, explain Yourself, were You bored?”

Swami smiled so very mischievously, with such a bemused expression. It curled His lips in the most delightful way. His eyes sparkled like a million glittering suns, as He bent his head close to mine. He came so close that our noses almost touched.



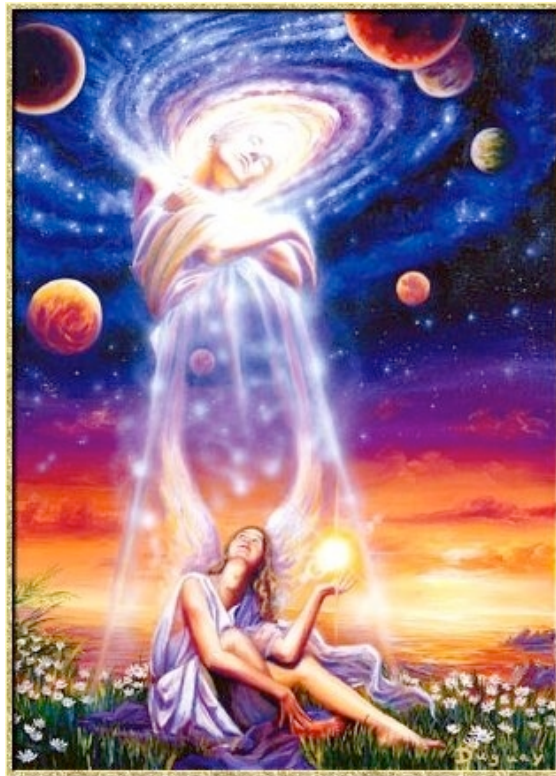
He just looked at me like that for the longest time and then almost in a whisper, He said, “Why ... (a slight pause) ... WHAT?”

I was stunned. I understood! There was no Him, there was no me, none of this existed, it was all a figment of my imagination, a mind projection that truly does not exist. It was as if I had closed my eyes and expanded into this ONE consciousness, which simply IS. In that instant I was in the WHAT, Swami, Love, All, Nothing, yet everything. With two little words Swami explained it all. Why ... WHAT???

I knew that to God, our 'True Self', the 'Eternal Awareness' that we are, our true 'Being' state, none of this exists at all! ... God does not even acknowledge this illusion! So let us all consciously live in 'The WHAT.'

"Why ... **WHAT?**" How simple and perfect.

Yes, "**Why ... WHAT?**"





SO dear Atmaself, and Embodiments of Love,
BE REAL!

Follow your personal experiences.

**Not what you've read,
not what you've heard,**

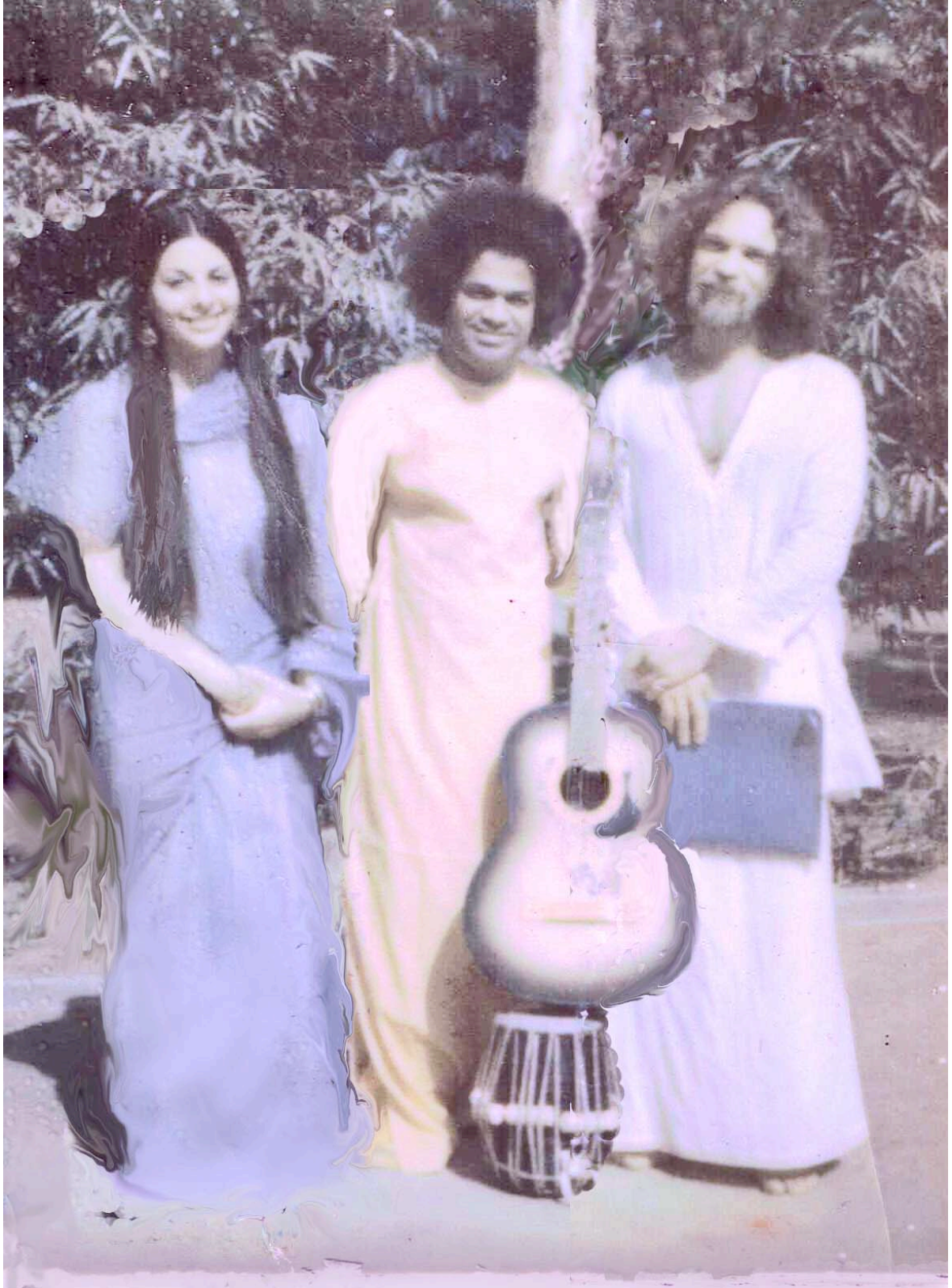
but what your Heart tells you!

Express it! Expose it! Live it!

Right here, right now.

Listen forever to your "Inner Swami!"





ॐ

Sai Ram
To my Divine Self
As YOU



ॐ

In this book of deep personal experiences
the reader will be spellbound and riveted to the simple yet
profound understanding that is expressed as each
“Life Lesson” is learned and revealed.
The author’s realness, directness, and the uncompromising
exposure of the ego and the emotions are truly refreshing!

BE REAL! Is the underlying message.

Follow your *personal* experiences.

Not what you’ve read, not what you’ve heard,
but what your Heart tells you!

Express it! Expose it! Live It! right here, right now.

Listen forever to your “*Inner Swami!*”



JOHNIMA



SATHYA SAI BABA



KALASSU

Lightstorm