

SAI NEWSLETTER

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Centre of Toronto - York

**"The essence of education is humility."
- Baba**

My usual musings!

Volume No. 10, Issue No. 1

APRIL 2005

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COD leads to LOD

COD – Ceiling on Desires, and LOD – Liberation on Delivery - delivery of detachment. One attains liberation when one practices Ceiling on Desires. As all spiritual aspirants realize, the goal of devotees is liberation. Swami says that there are mainly four components in this COD – curb on excessive talk, curb on excessive desires and expenditure, control of consumption of food, check on waste of energy. Desire may be defined "as a continuous impulse of a person toward objects and/or experience which, when attained, are expected to give him/her some relief, satisfaction, pleasure, joy, happiness or even eternal and absolute Bliss (liberation)".

Also, as per Swami's instructions, one attains happiness if one completely eliminates desires. He gives us the following expression (Sai Gem 2 by Dr. Adivi Reddy) for happiness:

$H_Q = N_{DF} \div N_{DE}$, where H_Q is the quotient of happiness, N_{DF} is the number of desires fulfilled, and N_{DE} is the number of desires entertained. Obviously, if we want a high quotient of happiness, we must entertain fewer desires (N_{DE}).

Swami has been emphasizing the importance of establishing this program since January 1983 but devotees are paying little or no attention. I

understand that our Group 3 SSE students (girls) have designed and started a procedure to put into practice the COD program. I congratulate them for being the first in our Centre and perhaps the first in Canada.

There are some indications that this COD program is being launched with full-steam at the national (Canada) level. I urge you all to read the Discourse by Swami delivered during His Summer Course program in May-June 1990, the excerpts of which are given in this issue.

In continuation to my musings, I would also like to mention about 'Thought, Word and Deed' the practice of which, Swami says always is an important component for our spiritual progress.

The easiest way to interpret is - **Say what you Think, and Do what you Say.**

By the way, we have lots of interesting articles submitted for this issue by our youth, children and adults. We thank all of them for their articles.

Good news – the good news is that we have news from all our wings, submitted, despite their busy schedules, by our leaders of the wings and their associates. After all, there cannot be a Newsletter without news!

As noted in previous issues, the newsletter can only exist with your

You have been told, off and on, about the program of 'Ceiling on Desires', which has four important components. The **first** one is: '**Don't waste food**'. Why? Because food is God. Food is indispensable for human life, since the body cannot survive without food.

The **second** one is: '**Don't waste money**'. The misuse of money is evil. Today's youth especially, wasting money in a number of ways. This will lead to bad habits, loss of peace of mind and to the ruining of your life itself. Our country is, today, facing grave economic problems and therefore indiscriminate spending of money for selfish purposes should strictly be eschewed in the interest of the society at large. The spirit of co-operation has to be promoted. National unity and integrity should be safeguarded.

A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends upon maintaining the proper balance, whether it be walking, sitting, cycling or driving a car. Today, this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and its misuse. If knowledge is to be put into right use, it should be transformed into skill. However, instead of skill, young people in particular, are killing knowledge.

You are wasting knowledge and energy in seeing, hearing, talking thinking etc., in wrong manner and in excessive measure. Therefore, the **third** item in the 'Ceiling on Desires', says, '**Don't waste energy**'. A small illustration in this connection: you have tuned the radio to a particular station. Whether the volume is kept high or low, whether you listen or not, so many units of electrical energy will be wasted. Likewise, your body is a radio. You are constantly engaged in thinking as well as talking in loud or low tone, talking to others or to yourself, talking while awake and even while asleep! Due to such continuous talking day and night, how much of energy is being wasted, thereby causing allergy in your lives! Every action involves the use of energy.

If the energy in the body is properly utilized, then the balance will be maintained and the body will be in good shape.

The **fourth** dictum of the 'Ceiling on Desires' is '**Don't waste time**'. Students! Only when the body is strong, healthy and happy can you enjoy the proper state of balance in life. Man's life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man's sorrow and sickness? Not being content in what he has, and hankering after what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to think about what is past or about what is in store for the future. Of what avail is to think of the past, which is irrevocable, or to worry about the future, which is uncertain? It is a sheer waste of time. Past is past, and future is future. You can do nothing about either. What is most important is the present. This is not ordinary present. It is Omnipresent. The result of the past and the result of the future are both present in the present. You are reaping in the present what you had sown in the past. And what you are sowing in the present, you will reap in the future. Thus both present and the future are contained in the present only. So, make the best use of the present. Give up all sorts of worry and lead ideal lives leading to immortality and fulfillment of the purpose of human life.

TSUNAMI

What Science observed.....

On 26 December 2004 off the northern end of Sumatra (Indonesia) began to rupture at 58 minutes, 47 seconds past midnight (Grrewich Mean Time). The rupture continued for approximately seven minutes, extending northward along the Sunda Trench for roughly 1200 km to the Andaman Islands. The sea floor displacement generated a massive tsunami that swept ashore with 10-m amplitude in northern Sumatra

and expanded across the Indian Ocean and Andaman Sea, striking Sri Lanka and Thailand within two hours of the rupture. Confirmed deaths along the coastlines of 11 Indian Ocean nations exceed 220,000, marking this as one of the most lethal natural disasters in human history.

The 2004 Sumatra-Andaman earthquake is the largest event since the 1964 Good Friday Alaskan earthquake, releasing approximately as much (strain) energy as all global earthquakes between 1976 and 1990 combined. Displacement occurred across the shallow-dipping thrust fault and may have exceeded 20 m in some areas. This is the first earthquake of this size to occur since the advent of digital seismometry. Its 'energy' released is eight times that of the previous largest event, the great Peru earthquake of 23 June 2001.

As the fault ruptured, it radiated seismic waves into the surrounding rock. These seismic waves sounded alarms at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii as they were recorded by telemetered seismographic stations worldwide.

The ground began to shake in Sri Lanka when the first seismic waves arrived 4 minutes after the onset of rupture. After 12 minutes, these waves had reached Europe and Antarctica. Every position on Earth's surface began to vibrate within 21 minutes. The ground shaking was detected by thousands of seismometers worldwide.

(from a recent account appeared in the American Geophysical Union, Transactions, February 2005)

What Swami told

Last month (December 2004), the tsunami caused untold misery and suffering to a large number of people. It is only man's evil deeds that are responsible for such a calamity. Therefore never indulge in wrong actions and evil deeds. It is possible that

compared to last year more troubles may occur during this year (2005). However, we should face all problems with courage and fortitude. These are all passing clouds and you need not be perturbed by these occurrences. Be bold and courageous to face them. It is man who is responsible for the calamity caused by the tsunami, and NOT God. But man thinks that all such calamities are thrust upon him by God. Never! God always provides happiness to man. He has no anger or hatred. **His nature is love.**

(from Swami's Sankranti Discourse delivered on 14 January 2005)

How **Swami's devotees** responded...

The following are the highlights (excerpts) of relief efforts in Sri Lanka, from two teams - one led by Dr. Mahesh Ghayal. The Canadinas who represented in this team were:

Mr. Shiva Gopie, Mr. Chetan Vora and Mr. Gautam Billimoria.

Dr. Aoon Yusuf, the National Youth Coordinator for Canada was the team leader for the second team. The members of his team were: Dr. Jorge Luis Berra, Mrs. Shanta Goswami, Mr. Sohail Haroon, Dr. Jayant Jhaveri, Mr. Janarthanan Kankesan, Mr. Pradeep Mahalingam, Dr. Sivaprakash Rajoo, Dr. Ellyn Shander, Dr. Dinesh Thavendiranathan, Mr. Ganeshan (local translator), Mr. N. Parameswaran (local translator), and Mr. Sayeeshan (local translator).

1) Dr. Mahesh Ghayal:

The Sai Tsunami Relief Team under the direction of the International Medical Committee of the Prashanti Council went to Sri Lanka to serve the survivors from January 31st until February 9th. The team consisted of fourteen Sai devotees from the USA and Canada and included doctors, a psychotherapist, emergency medical personnel, and non-medical volunteers.

The team met with the Central Coordinator and other coordinators from the Eastern Zone of Sri Lanka in Colombo and discussed the needs of the survivors. There was total destruction of many villages and communities including schools, homes, and places of worship. The survivors were housed in several camps, and the Relief Team attended to them at Sakalakalai Amman and Sagamam Camps. The Sakalakalai Amman Camp had 167 tents housing approximately 670 people, and the Sagamam Camp had 350 tents housing an unknown number of people since more were coming each day during our service period.

An holistic approach was used for the relief, rehabilitation, and upliftment of the individual, the family, and the communities affected by the Tsunami. Using this holistic approach, we attempted to meet the physical, educational, emotional/psychological, socio-economic, and spiritual needs of the survivors.

“Humility is the breath of God”

– Baba

Wherever possible, we tried to do our Seva activities according to how Swami would want. We served with humility and love, maintaining the dignity of the individual, the family, and the community. We studied and restudied Swami's “Divine Message to His Devotees: Your Mission has begun...” and tried to follow its principles.

We served with the attitude that this Seva is “From Love, Through Love, To Love, For Love”. We are merely His instruments, and we tried to be His worthy instruments. Where we failed, it was because of our human weaknesses. Where we were successful, it was because of Swami's Grace. However much we gave, we received much more. Not only did we see a transformation in those we served, but we also saw a transformation within ourselves.

When we arrived, our minds were melancholy and the hearts broken, and when we left, the minds were mending and the hearts healing.

(For more details on this visit, the reader is advised to read the original report by Dr. Ghayal – Ed.)

2) Dr. Aroon Yusuf:

Summary (excerpts)

On December 26, 2004 when the waves raised and engulfed masses of innocent lives, the Sathya Sai Organization activated itself to assess and send teams into the devastated areas. After initial assessments by the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee and presented to Bhagawan, He graciously gave permission to begin work in Sri Lanka.

We worked in the village of Aliyavalai located on the North East Coast of Sri Lanka. This was a remote village which was significantly affected by the tsunami. There were thousands of people who lost their lives in this area, schools and hospitals were destroyed and lives shattered forever. In assessing this community camp, there were 1383 individuals consisting of 396 families and over 500 children within the area.

At the outset we realized that several areas of need existed and consequently our team was divided into a medical, school, grief counseling and gram seva teams. There were a total of 10 members with three translators from the Vavuniya Sathya Sai Baba Centre. Our approach was based on the Sathya Sai Principle of Medicare, Educare and Sociocare. Our love for Bhagawan has multiplied and each member felt Bhagawan's guidance and energy around us. This trip was for our own spiritual transformation, each member realized this before leaving for Sri Lanka and upon returning everyone has been touched by Bhagawan's Love.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;

Succeed anyway

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; ***Be honest and frank anyway***

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; ***Build anyway***

If you find serenity and happiness, others may be jealous; ***Be happy anyway***

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; ***Do good anyway***

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; ***Give the world the best you have anyway***

You see, in the final analysis, it was always between you and God; ***And it was never between you and them, anyway. by Mother Teresa***

“Remove the threads of desire from the cloth of the mind, and the mind disappears resulting in liberation.”

- Baba

FROM WINGS

SEVA

Christmas Celebrations

Carol Singing at Norwood Nursing Home / Carefree Lodge has become a tradition at our centre. At each of the locations we entertained the seniors with our very own talented Carol singers both young and old. We had a good participation of volunteers who made this happen. At the end of the

sessions we distributed Christmas gifts to all the seniors of these facilities.

Tsunami Tragedy

The whole world came together as one big family to help out the Tsunami victims and our centre was no exception; we raised monetary donations, clothes and our prayers to help these victims.

Sai Brothers and Sisters rush to serve Tsunami Victims

Several of our brothers and sisters of our centre went to Sri Lanka to help out in the relief operations. They provided the victims with a variety of help and support.

Wheel Chair Clinic

Once every 3 months our centre provides all of us with the opportunity to serve the physically challenged by cleaning the wheel chairs they use. This last session was held in a location at Weston Road

Narayana Seva

Serving the needy - our centre provides a sumptuous lunch to the needy and homeless every 3rd and 4th Saturday of each month at Council Fire in downtown.

Blood Donation

Every year our Centre participates in Giving “Liquid Love”, March 20th – March 27th is the Blood Donation week. There are several locations in both East and West end of Toronto to donate.

Seva Activities planned for this Year:

Narayana Seva
Norwood Nursing Home / Carefree Lodge Visits

Wheel Chair Clinic
Blood Donation
Tree Planting
Park Clean Up

Help Wanted

Volunteers required for all projects.

If you are interested in participating in any of the above Seva Activities, please contact the Wing Co-ordinators for more details.

One should not undertake to analyse the good and bad in others. If we use our eyes for finding faults in others and spend all our time in this process, our heart will also become impure and we will develop bad thoughts. The heart is like a camera lens, the object on which we concentrate our attention gets imprinted on the mind. Hence, we should make an attempt to perceive the good in whatever we see.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

EDUCATION

Activities scheduled for the next three months bring lot of excitement for our SSE children, parents and gurus. Children have already begun their practices for the *Eeswaramma Day* Competition. They will be having the in-class competition on Sunday, May 01st and the final competition on Sunday, May 08th. All parents and members of the centre are kindly requested to join to witness the final competition and the celebration.

Our children along with the youths of the centre will be celebrating the *Parents' Day* in early June. SSE classes for the year will end with the *Graduation Ceremony* on Sunday, June 26th.

Traditionally, SSE classes are not conducted during summer holidays in July and August. However, there will be many exciting activities taking place

throughout the summer, including weekly Sunday bhajan singing, centre picnic and the regional retreat. We encourage all parents, children and youth to attend these events and enjoy the summer.

SPIRITUAL

Study Circle:

Knowledge that does not give harmony and wholeness to the process of living is not worth acquiring. The aim of study circle is not information but transformation; not instruction but construction. With this as the pursuit the spiritual wing has supported and conducted several study circles in the first quarter of 2005. The main concentration in all the study circles have been "UNITY PURITY DIVINITY" which is the theme for the year 2005.

In the study circles that have been conducted we have tried to break down Unity, purity and divinity –spiritually what it means, what does it mean in day to day life and share some experience and tips to help practice unity, purity and divinity. Through study circles we discovered some of the challenges we face in practicing them as well as the support system that we have in our Sai Center through various wings and activities that the center provides.

We are attempting to involve everyone in the center at all levels to conduct study circle and in this effort we will see teen youths conducting some study circles. Theoretical knowledge is a burden unless it is practiced. It needs to be lightened into wisdom and assimilated into daily life. The goal of the study circle is to ensure that every activity is rendered valid and worthwhile by its contribution to the discovery of Truth both of self and Nature.

Bhajans:

We invoke Swami's blessings every week through our bhajans. There is greater focus on the quality of the Bhajan and in expanding the participation through harnessing the talent at every level. We have started Bhajan practices every week to develop the talent involving Balavikas children, teen youth, youth and adults.

All of your feedback and participation makes the study circles and Bhajan create a special vibration that keeps us on track in our journey of transformation. So we request all of our sai brothers and sai sisters to participate and provide us with feedback.

"A desire-stained heart is unfit for Sadhana like an oil-stained paper is unfit for writing." – Baba

YOUTH CORNER

National Symposium on Character Education

On Wednesday, March 23rd 2005, the Sathya Sai School hosted the first ever National Symposium on Character Education to educators, academics within the field of education, youth, and the public at large that have an interest in learning about this form of teaching. The Symposium featured in it's panel of speakers, some of the best contributing academics to the development of Character Education in Canada and the United Kingdom. They were: Carole Alderman, Director of the *British Institute of Sathya Sai Education*; Sandra Dean, Executive Director of *Together We Light the Way*, Durham

District School Board; Gordon Naylor, Executive Director of the *Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute*, London, Ontario; and Professor Yassin Sankar, Business Administration Dalhousie University, Halifax NS.

The panellists each spoke about their experiences in the field of education and elaborated on the needs of students and how much those needs have changed with respect to a changed society and changed perspective within the mainstream public. They all affirmed that an increasing number of people are placing values and character building as a top priority within the educational setting. They each spoke about the specific projects they have developed in light of the severe decline of a human values perspective in education. According to Professor Yassin Sankar, the deficiency of a values-perspective in the classroom, the lack of priority placed on ethical reasoning as the fundamental basis for decision making, along with no importance placed on selfless motivations for success are the issues that are at the core of a society that perpetuates cycles of violence, egoism and hate.

Sandra Dean spoke about her work as a principal in the Durham District School Board and the various ways she brought together all members of the community to take part in the education and care of children within that community - and refused to have that responsibility borne exclusively by over-worked teachers and parents. Dean truly brought the "it takes a village to raise a child" concept back. Gordon Naylor spoke of his travels

across the globe and the research and observations he has brought back with him about various other Character Education initiatives world-wide, most specifically in South America and the US. Lastly, Carole Alderman guided everyone step by step through the Education in Human Values (EHV) program established in the UK and the various sister programs that have stemmed out of it with enormous success.

The teachers of the Sathya Sai School gave an excellent presentation to educators about how they incorporate a “Values Perspective” into their teaching using the Ontario Curriculum as a base. They clearly showed how ANY educator could do the same thing. Their presentation really gave me, a student teacher, concrete methods of application. They presented long range plans, lesson plans and extensions that were all value-based and took into full consideration the Ontario Curriculum expectations (which all teachers in Ontario, both public and most private sectors, use). The most important point the Sathya Sai School teachers enforced was that ANY teacher could have a classroom based on a “Values Perspective”; all that was needed was the teacher to view the teaching and learning through that particular lens. Once this perspective was there, an educator could develop, create, and transform anything they taught to be Value-based.

I felt honoured to be a part of such an important symposium addressing the pressing needs of students in education today. There are many programs, initiatives and developments being ‘experimented’ with in

terms of value-based education. Character Education is definitely a big ‘buzz’ word used in the dialogue of academics within the field. It seems to me, like a fundamental step in the progress of Character Education becoming an integral part of formalized learning nationwide. As a teacher candidate myself, it excites me to know that EHV is one of the leading initiatives in the mission of re-instilling Character Education world-wide. I find these value-based tools to be quite powerful as they have the potential to advance the transformation of the next generation.

“Education means opening wide the doors of the mind. It means cleansing the inner tools of the consciousness, the mind, the ego, the senses and the reason. True education must purge one of all traces of selfishness. This is the higher learning for this institution to teach.”

– Sathya Sai Baba.

(World Peace and Humanity in the New Millennium (1st Ed.), 1999. pp27.)

– **by Aarti Poon**

CHILDREN'S CORNER

SWAMI'S OMNIPRESENCE, OMNIPOTENCE AND OMNISCIENCE

On Friday October 29th, 2004, I was doing my daily routine of helping the handicap children in our school.

During our lunch hour recess, my friend Sherry and I were asked to accompany Cheryl (a handicap student) in the elevator to the 2nd floor of our school. The three (3) of us got into the elevator and pushed the button to the 2nd floor, then suddenly the elevator stopped and we were waiting for the door to open.

Minutes went by and it didn't move, so we started to scream, knock on the walls, jumping up and down shouting for help. No one was around because it was the lunch recess and all the children and teachers were on lunch. We were scared and shocked because this had never happen to us before. My friend Sherry started to cry and Cheryl had a very sad and worried look, so I told them to calm down and let us pray together.

We got down on our knees and started to pray, I started to visualize Swami and asked him to come and help us. Of course, I felt his omnipresence immediately through the tingling in my body and instantly, we heard a sweet feminine voice from outside the elevator saying, “***Are you okay...don't be afraid, I'll go and get the Principal***”. I knew in my heart right away that it was our loving Swami who heard my prayer and came to comfort us.

Suddenly, I had no fear anymore, I felt as though we were all playing outside in the school ground. ***I got up and was guided by the energy force within me*** to pick up the elevator emergency phone and dial 911, identify myself and gave the name and address of our school so they can send the help we needed as soon as possible.

Minutes later the Principal was knocking on the elevator and told me to pick up the phone etc. but I told her everything was already taken care of.

In the meantime, I told Sherry & Cheryl to remain seated so they would not get too hot and tired. I started to entertain my two friends, the Principal and teachers outside and inside the elevator

by making jokes, telling funny stories, singing and making up rhythms.

Two hours later, we got out and I asked the Principal who told you that we were in the elevator; she said, 'no one did', she was just coming in from an emergency call outside in the playground. I asked her about the voice that came to say that she was 'going to get the Principal', again the Principal said, 'no one told her anything', she just was lead directly to the elevator.

I then made my conclusion that it was definitely our dearest and most loving Swami! Thank you Swami for your love and protection.

Sai Ram

Trisha Armogan

Age 13 yrs old

Sathya Sai School

To have a place at our beloved Sathya Sai School of Toronto is definitely the most blessed opportunity that ever befell me! Not only do we have great education and academic standards, but we learn how to develop a good character from practicing the five Human Values: Love, Peace, Right-Conduct, Truth and Non-Violence.

On top of this, we have the most loving, understanding staff and teachers. They are no other than: Mr. Pillay, Ms. Munshi, Mrs. Prem, Miss Poddar, Mrs. Jain, Miss Sahni, Mr. Greenwood and Miss Das.

There is one goal which we all strive to be: *M.O.D.E.L3 students.*

There is more to this word than the fact that it can form a smile on your face. It is the cleverly abbreviated form of: *Motivated, Organised, Determined, Exemplary, Loving-*

Love for learning, Love for humanity and nature and Love for God.

I especially thank the people of Canada for their extreme sacrifices and generosity who selflessly donate money to the Sathya Sai School.

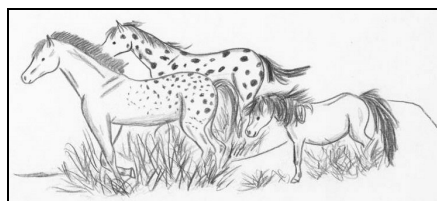
As students we are very grateful for their compassion and kindness. The smallest eraser to the largest piece of furniture and even the building itself came from the hard earned money of generous beings. They are the life force of our school.

The founder of our school is none other than Sathya Sai Baba. Out of His Grace, He has founded our school so that we the students can learn and practice the Human Values. Our school is the only one of its kind in all of North America. I hope that I can stay here at this school for the rest of my education.

I am very grateful to have a place here. This is because of the friendly environment, kind teachers, great friends and especially because of the values we learn.

- Krishan Mistry (Grade 5, Sathya Sai School, Toronto)

TWINKLE



Sai Ram and neighs to you all!

It is Twinkle, the little Shetland pony! Do you remember me? I just recently had a life changing adventure and received some words of wisdom. (yikes, I am becoming wise before I'm old!). Anyways, I'll tell you my adventure.

During the months I was staying at Miss O'Tool's farm, I had lots of fun with my fellow pony buddies in the large pasture we shared. Then one day, a new pony joined our herd (mmm,

maybe we can be friends). Upon arrival, the wise, old but strong pony leader showed the young newcomer his place in the herd: in the middle. (with me!) The new pony pinned his ears in response. (how rude! He sure is bold! No pony ever dares to argue with the leader, he is much respected!) The leader persisted, and when the newcomer did not submit, a fight began. (yikes!) To be safe, I scurried to the centre of the field. As the two ponies squealed and kicked, I felt uneasy (no such thing had ever happened before). The fight finally stopped; however, the ponies higher in the pecking order constantly squabbled with the newcomer, and those lower in the pecking order sided with the newcomer and quarrelled with the leader. I was stuck in the middle (oh, oh). Whenever I came across the newcomer, I tried to be friendly, but I was always met with pinned ears and a cold stare. (won't you smile, please?) When the situation was not improving, I offered a small prayer to God (Dear God, please make my herd stop fighting. Thank you. Yours forever, Twinkle).

One night, I noticed that the fence was broken in one area. (ooh! I can escape! Finally, I will have peace! And there will not be anymore fights over food, so I can eat all the grass I want! Yum!) I wandered alone in the woods, rejoicing over my newly acquired freedom. But living alone was not so easy. I lacked the security of the herd, food was difficult to find on my own, and I felt lonely.

One day, I came across a circle of tepees. And guess what I saw? A herd of spotted horses! I galloped to them and neighed. They gladly and peacefully welcomed me into their herd. (aah! Thank you, God!)

As I was roaming around the clearing, I encountered two native human stallions. I paused behind a tree (they can't see me!), curious to hear what they were saying.

One of them was saying, “The Creator came into my dream and told me that a pony would come to us. This pony is very special. The Creator has granted him with a sacred mission: he is to set an example for the world. The Creator instructed me to teach the pony.” (oooooh! I’m special! I’m special! I’m special! Ooops!)

I could not contain my curiosity. I sneaked behind the one who had spoken and nuzzled his head (hello).

The native human stallion turned around.

“Hello, Twinkle, I’m Brave Eagle,” he said (wow! He can speak the pony tongue!).

Brave Eagle rose and placed a gentle hand on my back. He motioned for me to follow, and we walked through the silent woods.

“Listen to me, Twinkle, I have a very important story to tell you,”

Brave Eagle began.

Story! Yey! I burst into a canter, then stopped myself, realizing that human stallion’s legs are too short, so they walk really slowly.

“Wolves were referred to as the guardian of our spirits. Wolves are free spirits even though their packs are very organized. A lone wolf is rarely found in the wild. Wolves are social creatures like you and I. Just as you watch over your sister as does a wolf watch his brother. Just as you listen to your father, as does a wolf to his mother. Just as our family eats together, so too does the wolf. Our people and most animals and wolves are the same,” he said, “Long ago, wolves were as numerous as the stars. Many of them once watched over us. Now there are but a scattered few. They were strong hunters and survived with what the earth would give them. Although they would travel, they would never be far from home. Each of them knew their place in the pack and always

did their share. Without working together, not only would they die, but the entire pack would as well. We are like the wolf, we need community, we need to work together, and we need to do our share. Not only will you benefit but everyone else will also.”

I pondered in silence, thinking about what had just been told to me.

“Oh, Brave Eagle,” I began sincerely, “I will try very, very hard not to gobble up all the grass, in order to leave some for my fellow ponies. Oh! And I’ll try my best to be happy in my place in the herd and work hard and help my herd, without always running away.”

Serving one’s own people is mundane;

Serving the known people is humane;

Serving the unknown people is divine. **- Baba**

Brave Eagle nodded and smiled, satisfied that I understood his teaching. We walked back to the clearing and I cantered back to my herd at Miss O’Tool’s farm, eager to put the teachings into practice. As I journeyed for many days, I remembered what Baba said a long time ago. He said, “One must know the secret of a happy life and of happy cooperation with other members of the community. There are duties to oneself, one’s family, and one’s society which must be carried out intelligently and joyfully. Then only can life be harmonious and fruitful.”(yikes! This adventure really sharpened my memory!) Once I reached my herd, I hardly recognized it. (Where are my pony buddies? The really mischievous ones I would play with for hours?) Due to the conflict, Miss O’Tool had separated the ponies. Now only two spotted horses remained from my original herd.(they must be so lonely!)

When they saw me, my spiritual journey began as we all neighed in unison.

Upon their encouragement, I took on the role of leader (Yikes! I just flew to the top! Ha, ha! Just kidding), and we all worked together to restore and recreate a peaceful, joyful, and safe herd. (I was now a king! Yikes! King Twinkle! Naw, I’m just a pony!)

And my journey continued as the three of us (we three kings of Orient are) (just kidding!) neighed, played, and worked together.

Sai Ram and neighs to you all!

P.S. Come join my future pony adventures and become wiser and better!

- Francesca and Emmanuela

“God is like the Sun, your heart is like a convex lens, desires are like paper. Turn the magnifying lens of your heart towards the Sun of God and focus the Sun’s rays onto the paper of your desires, which will then be burnt to ashes.”

"Love All Serve All"

Lesson for a Rani

There is a small story with regard to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In the midst of giving a discourse, he found a disciple by name Rani Rasmani sitting and pretending to listen to the discourse. He went straight to her and gave this Rani two slaps. Others who were witnessing this event were surprised and were thinking that Ramakrishna did not have a sound mind. Rasmani also was surprised at

around you. Feel that you are an instrument in His hands; let Him shape you and use as He knows best.

(from Guidelines to active workers of Sri Satya Sai Seva Organizations, p. 27)

**Let us keep the flame of sharing
burning bright!**