



# Venugaanam

## Sai Krishna Charitable Trust Newsletter



1<sup>st</sup> November,  
2013

### SAMASTHA LOKA SUKHINO BHAVANTU

We are delighted to bring you the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of Venugaanam this November.

## From Team Venugaanam

With the impending deepavali festival and Swami's birthday, we have few excerpts from Swami's divine discourse which indicates about the internal and external meaning of deepavali.

In Atmajyothi, we continue with the "Two forms of devotion", that we had started last week, as part of the Naradha Bhakti Sutras.

T R Mist continues the new serialized story "the Night" which is bound to keep you hooked on. This issue begins with the episode entitled *The Game of Shadows*.

Swamynathan had shared the story about Thotakacharya and the birth of Thotakashtakam.

Can telling a lie be of some good to any? An interesting perspective shared by Shivani Seshan in her article.

Bhargav shares his thoughts on the polarities that two situations we face in life may offer us at the same time.

Sai Krishna Mandir is now bustling with activity as the four children have made it their home. To know more about the latest at SKM and how you can volunteer, read the SKM update.

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We are happy to have your feedback on how to make

'Venugaanam' a better communication tool. Please mail us at [contactus@saikrushnamandir.org](mailto:contactus@saikrushnamandir.org). Do feel free to share with us your articles, thoughts and ideas.

We pray to Swami to bless all the children and inmates so that they may all come up to His expectations. May Swami turn our lives into a celebration of His message of love, sharing and caring.

With All our Prema,  
**Team Venugaanam**

# Deepavali - An Event to signify the cleansing in ourselves

A Divine Discourses by Bhagawan Shri Sathya Sai Baba during Deepavali day, October 24, 1992

Though, at the time of birth, man has no good or bad qualities, changes occur in his nature due to the food he consumes, and the influence of associates around him. One develops ego and attachment based on the company he keeps. As a person gets educated, he or she develops pride and entertains vainglorious thoughts about one's superiority over others. This conceit pollutes the heart.

When dirty water gets mixed with milk, the milk has to be boiled to make it pure. Likewise man has to undertake various types of *Sadhana* to purge his heart of impurities. Exercises such as meditation, *Yajna* or *thapas* can only provide mental satisfaction. It is only when the heart is melted in the heat of Divine love that one can succeed in getting rid of bad qualities and make the heart shine in its pristine effulgence. Just as the sun's rays can bum a heap of cotton if the rays are concentrated by passing through a lens, the rays of the intellect will destroy one's bad qualities only when they are passed through the lens of Divine love.

## The growth of demonic nature in man

Although man has come from *Madhava* (God), he is enveloped in a *Bhrama* (delusion) which obscures the Brahma (Divinity) within him. So long as one is in the grip of this delusion one cannot understand God. Because of this delusion one gets attached to the body and develops limitless desires. This leads to the growth of the *Asura* (demonic) nature in him.

In the word "*Nara*" meaning man, "na" means "no" and "ra" means "destruction. So, the term "*nara*" describes man as

one without destruction (that is, one who is eternal). When the letter "ka" is added to "nara" it becomes "*Naraka*," hell, which is the opposite of heaven. When one descends to the demonic level, he forgets divinity and follows the path to hell. The Divine is realised by pursuing the spiritual path (the *Aatmic* path).

According to the Puranic story, Narakaasura is said to have been destroyed on this day of Deepavali (Naraka chathurdhasi). Narakaasura was a demon filled with attachment to bodily pleasures. He was full of bad qualities like lust, anger and greed. He was a terror to women and perpetrated many evil deeds, inviting his own destruction at the hands of a woman, Sathyabhama, the consort of Sri Krishna.

It is worthy of note that the Lord gave this opportunity to Sathyabhama only after subjecting her to a cleansing process to rid her of her pride and jealousy as revealed in the Tulabhaaram episode, where Sathyabhama was advised by Narada to make a gift of Krishna to him and win him back by offering an equivalent weight of gold and jewellery. When Sathyabhama offered all the valuables she possessed, it had no effect. Ultimately a Tulasi leaf offered by Rukmini with a prayer to Krishna tilted the balance. Thereby Sathyabhama was cured of her pride and jealousy.

Apart from this Puranic version, there is a cosmic explanation for the observance of Deepavali. Naraka was a planet moving in orbit with the moon around the earth. Once it appeared to be heading towards the earth. People prayed to Lord Krishna to avert the impending catastrophe. The Lord had to take action to destroy this planet and save the world from disaster. From that day, Deepavali was being observed as a joyous day of deliverance from evil.

# Updates from Sai Krishna Mandir

The children are back in Sai Krishna Mandir and it feels like the fragrance is back in the air and the place is agog with excitement. The children had a nice vacation for the *Navarathri* festival and they are getting back to their school schedule. The children have all fared well in their examinations. The festival of *Vijayadashami* was celebrated with some festivity even as the children enjoyed the special sweets and snacks prepared at Sai Krishna Mandir. There was an important trust meeting held on



Phase 1 &amp; 2

Sai Krishna Mandir

27<sup>th</sup> October and it helped to focus on specific tasks to fulfill to meet the one year and three year plans of the trust in line with the long term vision of helping the underprivileged.

It has been decided to take about 18 children by November 2014, in tune with Swami's command to increase the strength of children gradually. We are looking to absorb children in the age group of 5-8 so that they also study at the Sharavathi school getting English medium education. These children will be given free food, accommodation, education and above all a loving home until they become self-reliant. As earlier, the boys in Sai Krishna Mandir will be absorbed from the categories of:

- children having no parents
- children having only one parent
- children from very poor financial backgrounds

One important requirement towards this will be to get a suitable warden for the children. The ideal profile of this person will include the following:

- ✓ Service minded person
- ✓ Age preferably less than 40 years
- ✓ Any experience in a similar field will be preferred
- ✓ Knowledge of computers/accounts handling will be an added plus
- ✓ Keen interest to grow and develop one's own personality and at the same time work towards the development of children.

We expect that this will be a challenging role with ample scope for self-development and self-fulfillment. That said, a suitable person will also be paid well according to one's experience, qualification and other factors which will be gauged in the selection interview. Food and accommodation will also be provided. Interested people may please e-mail their CV to us at [contactus@saikrushnamandir.org](mailto:contactus@saikrushnamandir.org).

We thank all the donors and volunteers who have been generously contributing towards daily expenses to run the children's home, construction, setting up an RO drinking water system, solar lighting and maintenance of the building. We are also grateful to the volunteers who have devoted time to buying groceries and vegetables, spending time with the children and helping them learn and catch up with their curriculum.

As you are all aware, Sai Krushna Charitable Trust completed 3 years on September 23, 2013. We are happy to let you know that as part of Swami's birthday celebration, the Trust will be releasing its first Annual Report on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2013.

We look forward to all your active involvement and participation in this God given opportunity. We also welcome you to come and visit the site and participate in the activities of Sai Krushna Mandir. We pray that Swami's grace will crown our genuine intentions and He will continue to guide and bless the children and residents to live in a happy home and grow to His ideals.

# Atmajyothi

by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

*Lakshminarayan Aithal has served for over 3 decades in Swami's institution and is the former Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions at Muddenahalli. Inspired by Swami's direct message to study the Upanishads, he first learnt Sanskrit and then studied the direct works of Adi Shankaracharya and Swami. Sincere perseverance led him to the reality of Aham Brahmasmi and He realized and experienced Swami's words: "I am God and so are you". He shares the import of the Upanishadic teachings with us in this series of articles.*

## TWO FORMS OF DEVOTION (continuation from last month)

### 3. And that is also having an Immortal Form.

There is a difference between worldly famous love and devotion: In the world, love is a mental condition which originates by the connection of objects in the vicinity of sense-organs. There arises a mental condition according to the form of an object. When the sensual objects are known, the following conditions are formed: Uncertainty (विकल्प) of the object, doubting it (संशय), certainty about it (निश्चय) and egoistically attaching to it. Similarly –

कामः सङ्कल्पो विचिकित्सा श्रद्धाऽश्रद्धा

धृतिरधृतिर्हीर्भोरित्येतत्सर्वं मन एव ॥बृ. 1-5-3॥

Desire (काम), will (संकल्प), doubt (संशय), faith (श्रद्धा), lack of faith (अश्रद्धा), placing mind steadily in a particular object (धृति), not having steady mind (अधृति), shame (ही), intellect (धी), fear (भी), etc. – all these are conditions themselves. If such conditions are formed through the external causes, they are objects (विषयाणि). These objects change themselves momentarily; and the mind, too, doesn't remain as it is. Therefore no condition which remains long; similarly, the love-condition. Hence, people are continuously afraid of following things: When there is a worldly love, the object that causes the love might

be destroyed; or, that may gradually take different form which would not be favorable to the one as it is; or that object may be stolen by someone; or his mind itself may be changed towards that object. In this manner, this love has certainly real or imagined fear.

But at present we have taken devotion for our deliberation; even in the worldly love which is in the form of a condition (वृत्तिरूपप्रेम), when momentarily happiness appears due to the cause of an object; there exhibits a part of the Eternal Love in it due to the subjection of moral merit, when the mind stabilizes for a moment, then the Real Bliss of the Self which exists in every one of us is reflected for a while. People, in their conduct, imagine that this itself is the happiness of the object (विषयसुख); the moral merit (पुण्य) which is the cause for that is a little; and therefore that happiness also remains for a short while.

But those who exercise to station their mind in God, Himself, through faith, etc. – the Bliss of the Self appears more and more. Then the pure mind takes the shape of the Self, then the Self Himself shines forth there. Then the condition of the mind and the Self, too, have the same form; therefore that condition or its support – the Bliss of the Self, itself,

becomes in the name of भक्ति. In this manner, even the condition of the form of Self's Bliss disappears the Bliss of the Self is Eternal; therefore light of love's condition that appears in the mind continues to remain. Thus, here, the Devotion which is of the form of Supreme Love and the Supreme Self (परमात्मा) who is the object of devotion—have become one only; and, therefore, there is no cause for fear of its destruction. The mind of a great devotee has become the Form of the Self which is of the Form of the Supreme Bliss; therefore from that Form that exists in the Immortal Form, itself; and, it is described here as अमृतस्वरूपा, having the Form of Immortality.

The Self of a devotee really doesn't have birth, He is all pervading one, He doesn't have old age and death, He has the nature of Immortality, He is fearless and He is of the Form of Brahman Himself; for, the devotee knows that there is no difference between himself and the Brahman. The श्रुति declares this Principle :

स वा एष महानज आत्माऽजरोऽमृतोऽभयो ब्रह्म अभयं वै  
ब्रह्माभयं हि वै ब्रह्म भवति य एवं वेद ॥बृ. 4-4-25.

## TWO FORMS OF LOVE

13. One should understand the following things from the so far conducted deliberation : Meditation ( ध्यान), reflection (चिन्तन), worship (उपासना), thinking (भावना), singing the praises of God (भजन), perception (वेदना), etc. –these words have meaning in the form of conditions; and, the Love as the fruit of these conditions—is called भक्ति (Devotion) in the scripture. The devotion in the form of mental condition has the form of action (क्रियारूप); therefore, that can be done, undone or done in a different manner. That is dependent upon the desire of the worshipper(उपासक), therefore, in order to stabilize it, one should be effortful to stay his mind in God who is fit for contemplation (ध्येय). But, when this worshipper

crosses the form of exercise (साधनारूप), his devotion expresses its fruit, the Eternal Love; then, the difference of three forms – God, devotion and devotee disappears; and, the Indivisible Form of

God alone remains to exist. An example is given: प्रह्लाद was a great devotee of विष्णु. When his father हिरण्यकशिपु was torturing him, his love in God didn't perish because his mental condition was one with God who was its object. हिरण्यकशिपु, in the excitement of anger, pushed प्रह्लाद in to the sea and heaped mountains over him; in spite of that, immovable love of that boy was steady; during the time of daily religious ceremony, he used to absorb himself in the meditation of God. Then, he prayed thus :-

ओं नमो विष्णवे तस्मै नमस्तस्मै पुनः पुनः ।  
यत्र सर्वं यतः सर्वं यः सर्वं सर्वसंश्रयः ॥  
सर्वगत्वादनन्तस्य स एवाहमवस्थितः ।  
मत्तः सर्वमहं सर्वं मयि सर्वं सनातने ॥  
अहमेवाक्षयो नित्यः परमात्मात्मसंश्रयः ।  
ब्रह्मसंज्ञोऽहमेवाग्रे तथान्ते च परः पुमान् ॥

वि. पु. 1-19-84, 85, 86.

ओम्. Salutation to विष्णु! In whom everything resides, by whom everything has manifested, who has become everything and who is the shelter for everything, salutation to Him. He is Infinite and all-Pervading; therefore, I am He, Himself. From me alone everything has become; and, everything is only in me who is Eternal. I, myself, am the Imperishable One, the Perpetual One and the Supreme Self who is the shelter for all individual souls. I, myself, am Brahma named One who is the beginning of all and I, myself, am the Supreme Person who remains at last.' Thus, प्रह्लाद absorbed in himself.

# Birth of Thotakashtakam

*By Swamynathan S*

Swamynathan is a Bangalore based Software Engineer, who is enthusiastic about the diverse dimensions and knowledge that life offers him. He loves reading and travelling and likes penning down his thoughts when he has nothing else to bother.

It would not be entirely new to many, if not to all to say that Adi Shankara was one of the most prominent GURUs that 'Sanathana Dharma' had ever given to its children. Being the embodiment of Jnana Yoga and Advaita Vedhantha, with-in a very short span of 32 years, he had stretched himself infinitely to bring light to several souls who were lost in the darkness of ignorance. While several minds can argue about the efforts an individual soul had to take to progress in the spiritual path, it is only the MASTER who can grant the ultimate liberation. It is their causeless love and mercy which protects and guide disciples and help them reach towards the ultimate experience. Through Thotakacharya, Adi Shankara taught the universe about how a disciple should be devoted towards his GURU, which is most important and infact, the only aspect that a spiritual aspirant must cultivate.

Once, when Shankara was travelling with his 3 primary disciples - Sureshwaracharya, Hasthamalaka and Padmapadha, a young lad was deeply enchanted by the Master's spiritual presence and divine love. Without any second thought, he started following Shankara and his disciples. Paying heed to someone newly following them, the Master lovingly enquired about the lad. The boy introduced himself to the Master as Giri and he conveyed his intention to serve and follow the master throughout his life. He requested the Master to agree on his request. Master smiled and lovingly agreed to the lad's request. From that point Giri sincerely dedicated himself in serving his master, by washing his clothes, bringing flowers for worship etc. He served as an example of how a virtuous disciple should be. He understood his Master's requirement without even being explicitly conveyed and fulfilled that immediately from the bottom of his heart. His lack of intellect and absence of knowledge in vedas,

were strongly replaced by his unfathomable trust and devotion towards his GURU.

On a fine dawn, the Master seated himself on a dias and was pleasantly looking towards his disciples. His disciples were informed by the Master, the previous day, that he will be teaching them Mandukya Upanishad. The class was silent for more than a while, before one of the disciples decided to break it. Sureshwaracharya stood up with reverence and asked if the Master is waiting for someone, as the class had not been started yet. The Master smiled and said - why can't they wait until Giri comes and then start the class? This sentence of the master stunned the whole disciple crowd for a moment. These advanced teachings of the master would require a strong understanding in Sanskrit. Giri, who does not understand the basic syllables of Sanskrit, cannot get anything out of the class. Sureshwaracharya and Padmapadha exchanged looks in awe. Unaware of the divine drama that the Master had started playing, Giri was washing his Master's clothes beside a river which was few kms away from the class.

After getting settled with the initial shock, the disciples replied their Master, pointing to a small corner wall - saying that Giri is as ignorant as the wall beside them and they both make no difference. Acharya smiled for a moment. He knew that the time had come now to reward his loving disciple Giri who unconditionally loved his GURU and was an embodiment of GURU SEVA. The next minute, Acharya called Giri's name loudly - "Giri!!!". Through the call, Master transferred all the learnings that he had given and will be giving to his other disciples mentally to Giri within few seconds. Giri, immediately attained the enlightenment or the ultimate experience and he very well understood that the root cause of all these benefits were none but his GURU. The moment he understood that, the

gratitude and devotion in him made him run towards the class to prostrate on his GURU's feet immediately. He sobbed and cried due to the immense amount of love that he had experienced from his GURU. While he was running towards the class - the knowledge he had received was exercised to sing the praise of his venerable Master as an eight versed sloka - which explained the glory of Lord Adi Shankara, on whose feet he had taken refuge.

Giri's sudden knowledge and his immense potency in framing the sloka in sanskrit, trembled the whole class by surprise. His immediate shift to wisdom was a true miracle created by his GURU and it took others sometime to get the grip of reality. As soon as Giri reached the class, he immediately threw himself to the feet of his GURU. Shankara - who has no match in showering his causeless love and mercy, lifted Giri to his legs and embraced him with love. He gave him the title "Thotakacharya" and named his sloka as "Thotakashtakam". He was later anointed as the head-seer of Jothir Mutt by the Master himself and blessed that his lineage will be called as "Giri Parampara" henceforth.

## Is lying something bad all the time?

by Shivani Seshan

Shivani is an enthusiastic kid who is very interested in learning new stuffs in her life. Being a 7<sup>th</sup> grader in one of the reputed schools at US, she spends quality time in learning and appreciating arts such as classical dance, Carnatic music and have a great passion for science.

### Why Lying is okay at times?

Have you ever been told by your parent or guardian that you should never lie? However, it's not always bad to lie because it can help save lives, preserve freedom, and help protect lives.

80 years ago, the Holocaust began, terrorizing every faithful Jew in Germany. If Jews were found by Nazis, they were put in concentration camps. There they would suffer from starvation, from deadly gasses, and death. In order help these people, other German citizens hid Jews from the Nazis in their attics. When the Nazis came to search their houses, the citizens risked their lives and lied about the Jews. This way the Jews were saved from dying.

Lying can help preserve freedom. When slavery was still allowed, slaves tried to escape the tyranny of their owners. Something that helped them do so was the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a series of 'safe' houses where slaves could spend the night or when in danger. There was a lot of risk and lying involved because if the owners of the houses were caught, they could go to jail. Lying was involved because the owners had to lie that the slaves were not living in their houses.

Another incident was about a tortoise which was continuously being stoned by some children playing in the street, with an intention to kill it. Its strong shell left the tortoise unharmed. The perplexed children happened to see an elderly looking saint, who was passing by the place of incident. The children explained the situation and asked how the tortoise is unharmed. The saint laughed and said



that the tortoise would die if it's stoned, after turning it upside down. The children proceeded as per that and killed the tortoise. Truth ended up being something harmful at this point of time. A simple lie would have spared the tortoise with life and saved the children from sins.

A lie which could save few lives is always better than the truth which may harm millions.

## The Night V

by T.R. Mist

T.R Mist is a resident of Puttaparthi and would be contributing a serialized story "The Night". The third part of the story is continued here.

### The Game of Shadows II

**The story so far:** The protagonist is leaving to meet his friends at the Sunshine Cafe when suddenly he is called out for from a dark alley. The man is an old acquaintance whom the protagonist had named Corto. Corto cryptically mentions about his involvement in the failure of the light globs of the city, which stuns the protagonist.

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 "You with me?" I was too stunned to reply.

"You look like those frozen stumps of trees in the jungle", he added. "Don't look so confounded I have not even begun telling you what I have come to tell you."

"You mean to say there is more. More of your dare-devilry and machoism, of which I need to be enlightened about?" I asked. Corto laughed. It was the first time I had ever heard him do it. But as the man's nature, it was brief.

"Don't you think I am here to boast about things that we have been doing, I came with a completely different purpose. I hardly venture out so openly, but today I have done it as the situation demanded it," Corto said.

"Okay," There was palpable incredulousness in my voice, which Corto latched on to immediately. "I am not here to tell you fairy tales," he said talking straight, "and you can trust me when I tell you that you are under surveillance by the municipality agents and not just you but even you friends K and Bro," he said finally. My feet quaked. "Corto you are not making that up right?" I asked.

"I don't joke when matters are as grave as these. That is the precise reason I ventured out myself to tell you about it, because I knew you will not believe it if anybody else got you the same message," he replied calmly. "But...but, I don't seem to remember doing anything out of the place, which will engender surveillance," I said. You have not? Really? That is interesting. So you have never been overzealous in your praise of the municipality? You have

never called 'the suns' light globs? You are not staying on the fringes under the pretext of a fictitious medical condition and you don't really keep pulling down the municipality in your chatter with K and Bro? Are all these things made up?" Corto asked.

"I...I..." "Yeah YOU have done all these and so the surveillance. And ask any taxi driver on the street or a shop girl, everybody knows that the fringes are a hub of municipality non-conformists. The most foolish thing a person like us can do is to imagine that we are dealing with a bunch of idiots, who cannot look through what we are up to?" he said.

"What do you think, even your cellphone is tapped and your mail is under watch." "Now don't tell me, they have gone to this level." "Worse. Your house is always under watch so is K's and Bro's and..," he held back. "And what, tell me what, damn it," I almost shouted. "Shhh, not so loud". And they are planning to break into your house tomorrow precisely at 5:15 pm. I came to inform you just that," he said.

I felt a cold dagger slowly plunging itself into my heart. I stood speechless. After a while finding my voice back, I asked, "Anything I can do about it?" "Lots," came the reply.

"Go back home, no, not now, now it is 5:40 pm, start walking at 6:00 pm so that when you reach home, they will think that you have returned from Bro's place. Go in and remove any small reference you find in your home, which might speak against municipality. Your mails have been checked and they found you mentioning 'light globs' on several occasions in your conversations with K and Bro, which could have been totally avoided. From now on please start referring them to as the suns and no overzealousness, you never know the colleague sitting next to you might be an agent" he said.

"You mean to say that buck-toothed lazy bum is an agent". "He is not a lazy bum, he is doing his job, pretty well, keeping you and likes of you under watch," Corto said. "I don't know whom to believe," I said in anguish. "Nobody apart from K, Bro and me", he said simply and then he handed me a book. I instinctively knew what it

was. It was the bible of the conformists. "The Road ahead in the Brilliance of Infinite Earthly Suns." My hands cringed and the book slipped to the ground.

"That is a dangerous thing to do," Corto said. "First not having this book in your home and then letting it fall to the ground." Saying that, he handed over a few more conformist books. "Please put them up on the main shelf you have on the left of your room," he said.

I knitted my brows. "Where did you say the shelf was?" I asked.

"It is to the left, is it not?" he asked.

"Exactly, but how do you know?"

I heard him smirk. "Okay, you don't need to remove anything non-conformist from your house. I have personally cleaned it," he told me finally.

"WHAT??? YOU BROKE INTO MY HOUSE?"

"Softly, softly, not so loud," Corto said.

"I mean, how could you?" I whispered.

"I told you I take care of my friends. Thank me."

"And you knowing about K had visited me recently?"

"You are under surveillance from my people also. Only difference being, the municipality is out to catch you and my people are out to protect you," he said.

"For God's sake, stop all this nonsense. What is going on? I don't want the so called your people snooping on me. I don't require your protection. I know this much Corto, you may like it or not, I know that whatever happens I am protected by God. He will let nobody harm me."

"I agree with you 100 per cent," Corto replied. "But let me do my bit, towards the mission in which we are together," he said.

"Sorry Corto, I want none of this, please leave me alone," I said firmly.

"Ok if you insist, but then you won't mind me meeting you sometimes like this?"

"Are you not putting me in danger by doing this?"

"Please don't doubt my planning," he said with authority. "The beat constable is on leave for a day. And the replacement will not be here till 6:30 pm," he said.

"And I can guess that the reason for the beat constable to be on leave is you," I said

"You are good," came the reply.

"Hmm...But tell me Corto, what is the need to do all this. Why can you not just wait? When the Sun appears, all these things will by themselves disappear. Why unnecessarily put your life at peril, for something so unnecessary," I asked.

There was a long silence.

"You have chosen a path, I have chosen a different path, but we both know that our goal is the same. But in the meanwhile let me have some fun," he said. "You call all this fun. Something that puts your life in danger?" I asked. "Oh come on, don't you think the same God is protecting me also?"

I had to remain quiet.

"So I was saying, I am having fun with the municipality. I don't want them to think that they have been able to brainwash every tom, dick and harry of the city."

"Municipality brainwashing people? Now come on Corto, give me a break. Don't you think the municipality is brainwashing anybody. The people have brainwashed themselves into believing that whatever they are doing is right. Rather, whatever they ever wanted to do, but could not, has now become a new way of life and this can be justified in many ways unheard of before," I said.

"The guidance from 'the suns', you mean," he asked. "Of course as if you don't know", I said.

"It is funny business," Corto said, "the inner city people in all their ignorance have given 'the suns' the pedestal of

being supernatural, nay, Sun Himself, which is preposterous." he said. "And that is the reason, those 'the suns', went out that day at mid-day, when they should have been shining in all their glory. I pulled the plug on them just to show how stupidly fallible, they were, how simplistically human, how artificial."

"So it was emperor's new clothes all over again," I said. "But you don't believe that you doing that will ever change the inner city people right?" I asked.

"Of course not. Because it serves their agenda well, of being able to do whatever they want, which was not possible earlier under the purifying gaze of the Sun. The light from 'the suns' is anything but purifying. It is suffocating, nauseating and base."

"So the human base instincts are having a field day?" I asked. Corto smirked and continued. "The Sun's purifying rays may have been a hindrance to some, who wanted to enjoy the base life, so once the Sun disappeared, the hindrance was gone. Rays are still there, it does not matter to them whether they are from the Sun or 'the suns'. These people prefer it more if they from the artificial suns. Come on it serves their purpose," he said trying to explain.

We both understood each other perfectly. "It is 6:00 pm and you should be on your way," Corto said handing me a bag of Bro's cafe. "Put the books into this and go home straight, nowhere else," he cautioned. I shook his hand, turned around and walked. A question bothered me. I turned around, he was still there.

"Now what?" he asked. "I did not go to Sunshine café, so if the agent there tells the municipality that I never reached the café after leaving home, then?" "Sharp," Corto replied and added, "relax the municipality agent posted there is one of ours."

To be continued...

# Flip Flop of Life

by Bhargav KVRK

A small street in the pilgrim town of Puttaparthi was getting ready for the marriage ceremony of Anand at Sai Prem Nivas, the house of Shastri's. The street was tastefully decorated with buntings, pandal was erected, the hard cement road sported rangolis of myriad colours and hues looking even more beautiful in a chain of blinking LED rope lights placed on either side of the street leading to the house from the main gopuram road. Sai Prema Nivas was decorated like a bride with flowers and countless small decorative lights. People came dressed up in different types of fashionable clothes as if participating in a school fancy dress competition. There was a lingering aroma of the different delicacies which were being prepared in the make shift kitchen with street dogs loitering around and enjoying the fragrance with their olfactory capabilities. The blaring music from the latest Tollywood and Bollywood numbers created a din which overshadowed the sweet jingling of the chimes hanging at the entrance of the groom's house. Guests sitting in small circles used to burst into peals of laughter reliving some lighter moments of their college days. There was an atmosphere of joy and conviviality.

All of a sudden there were wails heard from a house, a house few paces further inside the street. A small crowd had gathered outside this house with people having pale and despondent faces. There was a commotion, a commotion which suggested a loss, a calamity, sending a chill through my spine. All faces attending the marriage party had a puzzling look trying to ascertain the reason for this sudden pall of gloom. News was broken to us in hushed tones about the tragic death of Sai Krishna, a young man in his mid-twenties in a road accident. Sai who got married recently used to do plumbing work to eke out his livelihood. The music on loud speakers was stopped, the lively discussions faded away and even the wind stopping blowing in response to the gloominess,

silencing the jingle of the chimes. The festive atmosphere started giving way to a somber emotion and there was heaviness palpable in the air.

It made me ponder deeply about the uncertainties of life which is nothing but a tapestry woven out of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, ebb and flow. One moment what is so close to you wither away without inkling? The family of Sai Krishna was inconsolable. They were not able to believe that a member of their family is no more. Life is merciless when it decides to teach lessons the hard way that everything we see and experience is transient and fleeting. Man gets tossed again and again in the vicissitudes of life but doesn't catch this lesson which life teaches us.

But life goes on!

After trying to console the bereaving family, the invitees started the rituals of the marriage.

It was a weird feeling to witness two divergent aspects of life at the same time, one of joyousness and other of deep sorrow. This is the flip flop and the irony of life. I remembered the verse from Bhagwad Gita where Lord Krishna says:

*Sukha Dukha Same Krutva Labha Labhou Jaya jayaou,  
Tatho Yuddhaya yujasva Naivam Papa Avapyasi*

meaning having an equal-mindedness in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage in the battle of life and you will not incur sin.