



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Dr. Samuel Sandweiss is known for his book “The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist” that has influenced many Westerns especially doctors, turning them towards Swami. RadioSai is pleased to bring you an interview with Dr. Sandweiss that was recorded recently when he was here in Prashanti Nilayam at the time of Sivaratri. In conversation with Dr. Sandweiss is Prof. G. Venkataraman, former vice-chancellor of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The interview is in two parts and we broadcast now the first part.

Venkataraman: Sairam and welcome, Dr. Sandweiss, to the studios of RadioSai. Well, I must ask you how does it feel to be in our studios. Did you ever dream you’d be in such a studio at any time?

Sandweiss: You know its remarkable, coming to see Swami and experiencing His greatness and yet we’re in a setting that is like year’s backwards in a little confluence and to see all of this grow up is extraordinary. To see it grow-up and blossom and to see modern equipment being devoted to such a holy task was wonderful to see.

Venkataraman: As a matter of fact, 6 months ago if somebody had told me, “Listen you’ll be talking to Prof. Sandweiss for the radio”, I would have thought it as a great joke. Here it is happening and do you know, our service is now being heard all the way from Parthi to Philippines and very soon it will be heard in Europe and Africa.

Sandweiss: My goodness! It’s chilling.

Venkataraman: This thing has happened all of a sudden. That’s the way Swami...

Sandweiss: Let me correct you though, I’m not really a professor, I’m an Assistant Clinical Professor back at University of California San Diego. But really, probably better to refer to me as doctor because I don’t really do a lot of teaching at this point.

Venkataraman: Okay (laughter)...But you know in the army everyone’s a General even though...

Sandweiss: Okay. (laughter) go ahead...

Venkataraman: Maybe I’ll call you Sam. Maybe it won’t be necessary also. You are a product of the West. And you are an academic. You practice medicine, you practice psychiatry and you’re associated with a very respected university. So the question that most people would like to ask is how about telling us how you came to Swami. Because you know this is something that is inconsiderable according to normal people, but it happens. How did it happen in your case?

Sandweiss: Just a quick aside, I wouldn’t consider myself an academic. I’m not heavily intellectual like that nor do I spend much time teaching. I’m inquisitive and I am thoughtful and I’ve thought a lot about Swami, His relationship to Western Behavioral Sciences and Psychiatry. I wouldn’t consider myself academic. How did I come to Swami? Because, probably it’s hard for me to understand from this life so one must posit that there’s been other lifetimes that prepared me. Because here I am stuck in the Western culture...



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Venkataraman: You're the first person I've heard say that.

Sandweiss: ... Well its probably because I can't understand why I would have the good fortune, especially coming from the West, were this kind of thinking isn't well recognized. The kind of thinking we're going to talk about. Even in Western psychiatry, it's quite unusual to think this way, to think vedantic thoughts. And um, but I must have felt from very early on, I could recognize, a great inquiry, why I am alive and why this world and why I'm in such an extraordinary game. It just didn't seem... I didn't take it as if it was a natural thing; I just was amazed at it all the time and wondered why?

Venkataraman: At what period of your life was that?

Sandweiss: I think very early. I could remember walking down the street at about 11 years or 12 years old thinking...

Venkataraman: ... Oh, as early as that. That's very unusual.

Sandweiss: Well I don't know. Children are... they can be very innocent and very pure and they, at their early age do have thoughts like that and then they are educated out of them.

Venkataraman: That's a good one.

Sandweiss: So this idea of what is the purpose of life and all naturally lead me to reading spiritual books and mystical books and I was very interested in saints and sages and this level of knowledge that they had that was beyond general worldly knowledge. I thought, since I was born in a medical family and it was our tradition to go into medicine, I was told by my father, probably on my first day of life, that you will be a doctor. I went into medicine and found an area that was closest that would allow me to think about spiritual matters; and that was psychiatry. And after 9 years in the practice of psychiatry I could see that the questions I was asking were not answered in the field of psychiatry, so I began to ask the question. I remember almost to the day, to people –“Have you ever seen a miracle?” Because I had been with all of these intellectuals and I'd heard enough theory and ideas that that wouldn't convince me. I just wondered is there anybody that knows anything at higher level and can show it by some kind of manifestation of something? That's how I was thinking.

Venkataraman: You mean you thought miracles might be possible. You just didn't take it for granted that miracles are impossible as most university-educated people do.

Sandweiss: Oh. Well because I was... through out my education I'd read books on mysticism. Jewish mysticism, Zen Buddhist, Zen Swordsman that had a sixth sense and these kinds of stories and feeling that ... had one foot in this life and another in another dimension and that they could see and they could experience and they had vast wisdom. This thrilled me that there was this level of understanding that transcended time and it was infinite and brought us into a very high elevated state, that we were much higher than what I considered from a Western kind of view. We were godly in some way. So I was always searching, but if I ever told my professors that in medical school or in my residency in psychiatry, that I was wondering like this, and one time I did let it slip that I was interested, put it this way that I was interested in hypnosis and other levels of consciousness and they looked at me very seriously and I thought they were going to send me down for a checkup. (Laughter) So I stopped asking those questions. But once I got out I did experiment, I did wonder what is a spiritual kind of therapy and what are other therapies besides the classical ones we are looking at. I finally ... critiqued myself and began to ask the

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

simple question, “Have seen a miracle?” Something beyond what we understand is reality. Within, two or three weeks I heard about Sai Baba and within about 2 months I was in India.

Venkataraman: It happened very fast. And which year was that?

Sandweiss: That was May of 1972.

Venkataraman: You remember very well.

Sandweiss: Yes.

Venkataraman: And May of 1972 means that’s a rather difficult month to be in India.

Sandweiss: Well its many the reasons it’s difficult for Western psychiatrists. You know coming over I’d heard ...but his devotees were saying He was bringing you.

Venkataraman: Did you believe it?

Sandweiss: Of course not. At that time I thought it was psychotic thinking, because the only place I heard thinking like that was by paranoid people who thought there were other dimensions of unreality. But um, I was coming into a strange country and to a... course I had done some travelling and that was exciting for me also. But it was a bit of a shock.

Venkataraman: And when you saw Swami you saw a miracle after some waiting.

Sandweiss: Not after some waiting. I came to Bombay and He was going to be giving darshan at a large stadium. A devotee invited me to outskirts of town, where I could have a little tea and rest before I took a taxi to the field. And after I rested I got up to go and as I left this little apartment, Swami passed me and went inside the apartment. It was a 9th story apartment...

Venkataraman: Oh! He came to that building...

Sandweiss: ...He came exactly to that building, it was way in the outskirts of Bombay and I was, you know I was skeptical. I was not a devotee and I was a very inquisitive psychiatrist and I’m leaving this little building way in the suburbs of Bombay. Bombay’s a very large place. So to pass Him that way, in such a timely way, without a look or anything. He just passed me and went into this building. I turned and ran after Him as if I was a crazy man and I wasn’t even a devotee. But I knew, He shocked my belief system so, that I could think, my God was He bringing me to Him? How could such a chance occurrence happen like this? This is the only time this has happened like this in my life.

Venkataraman: By the way, do you know what Swami says about coincidence? He says coincidence is a miracle where I hide Myself. (Laughter) Okay, carry on.



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Sandweiss: Well this was a coincidence in which he didn't hide Himself. He was right there and I was very much taken with it. I saw Him for the first time and I was not impressed. He seemed like a man, relatively small in stature and everybody was very very respectful and reverent to Him. That was my first contact. The building I...to the stadium. And while I was...I came late and so I was outside the stadium, which was packed and Swami was way, in the middle of the stadium and He just slowly walked in my direction and walked all the way up to about 15-20 feet from me and then just stood in this kind of a state. And I thought my goodness that was an unusual occurrence also. So He was warming me up. From there, there were many...I wanted to see a miracle and I... I could see that He materialized an object for me. I saw it close. I came during the time of his first summer school. This was the first time they had summer school and it was in Brindavan and it was in the back of this old house and now they have it in Trayee Brindavan. And it was made up of a sort of thatched roof and there were monkeys hopping over on the roof and all of that. I think the first teaching that Swami gave me in the course of this, in the course of this summer school. I was sitting watching and I was with a person who was sort of, he'd been there about 8 years and he was telling me some of things that were happening. And so we were sitting, and it was hot, he put his legs up on the chair in front of us and just rested back like this. All of sudden he felt somebody's feet on his chair and I could see his chair rocking back and forth like that. And we turned around and it was Swami sitting in the chair in back, showing him how it felt to the person in front of him. That was the first lesson I had from Swami. It was really quite warming that He was teaching us—Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. And uh, I was infatuated with Him. We had lunch and He served everybody. And He served without any pretense as if He was just a humble, it was immediate and that He was alive and He was truly humble, truly a servant. And I couldn't get over that. How He fed everybody. And one day I started listening to what He really had to say. This really is like at the core of what He's taught me and what I'm applying in my practice. He was talking to His college students about the importance of values and of being simple and kind and humble. "Be humble, be harmless, be upright, forbearing, have no pretense and be free from the bondage of desire." You know that saying was really what was the core of what He was teaching these young boys.

Venkataraman: It touched you.

Sandweiss: It didn't touch me. It was upsetting to me. Here I was a young psychiatrist thinking that the way to live is to fully experience all of your drives and interests and desires. To have them all fulfilled and gratified. And so hearing somebody talk like this made me feel like it was the 17th century, that it was very restrictive and constrictive. And I was very upset by it.

Venkataraman: It sounded like unnatural self-denial or something.

Sandweiss: Like that and someone just preaching some very simplistic thing. I came all the way from... and I hear somebody saying just be good, try to be good don't give into fads, don't let your hair grow long and big beards and tight pants. Just be a good human being, simple and humble. So I thought what kind of simplistic idea is this, I thought I would like to hear something very complicated, very sophisticated and um, I was very upset and I wanted to leave. So I was at some distance from Swami. It was many walls of a house separated and he was surrounded by people who obviously loved what he was saying and wanted to be close to Him. And I was thinking that I would have to leave and before I knew it He was in front of me with these sparkling eyes and this smile that was a... I'd never seen. It just captivated me.

Venkataraman: You know I've heard someone say, "No man can smile like Swami." And how true it is.

Sandweiss: Oh you can't...grab describe it because it is not a human being. It is so full of love that you are absorbed in it, that all of a sudden you loose yourself in it.

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Venkataraman: So you lost yourself in it.

Sandweiss: Lost myself in it. He gave me two pieces of candy and said, “Sweets, eat!” and I felt all of my troubles just melt like that. I could understand then that there’s a level of spirituality that is dominated all of our feeling system. What we consider our feelings, sadness and pains and upsetness and frustrations can be washed. It was washed just like that. Just from Swami’s smile. So I knew that...

Venkataraman: ... You felt that moment?

Sandweiss: That continues to just astound me, as a psychiatrist I said, what happened to those feelings of angst that I almost took pride in? You know. Oh my God, I’m such a suffering human being, so terrible. But within a second it was completely...and I was a childish giggle. Like a pup. And I’ve been after Swami, barking at His heels and wanting Him to pet me ever since.

Venkataraman: Now let me come to you as a professional. Actually I would like to talk to more about this maybe some other time. You come here often anyway. This is really relating to the human mind and you see this is a question I can’t ask everybody and very few people like yourself available who know what the Western concept is and who have also been exposed to Swami’s teachings about the human mind. So my question to you is—do you see any contradiction between the two or do you see partial over-lap? How do perceive it?

Sandweiss: Well, you know both ideas about mind. The vedantic idea of the inner instrument, which is generally considered, about the mind and Western idea about the mind are very similar in many ways. There are desires, there are feelings, there are thoughts, there is a capacity for reason, there is some analytic capacity, problem-solving capacity.

Venkataraman: No that is operational aspect. Please tell us whether the Western philosophy has any special role for the mind as opposed to what Eastern philosophy has? You know, Eastern philosophy is that mind is an instrument given to you by God for...Do you have that kind of approach in Western philosophy?

Sandweiss: Well you see the difference, it seems to me, is that in the West, we’re considered the mind and the body. So you are considered the mind and the body. The idea that you’re not the mind and the body is like a...an unusual almost psychotic idea. But in the East the idea that you are not the mind and you are not the body, and that there are higher levels of mind, which are defined clear by Swami and in Vedanta, higher levels of buddhi for instance, this idea of conscience. In fact I was very interested when Swami drew attention to the diagram of what conscience is. Conscience is made up of, I think one of the Upanishad’s said this, Swami drew reference to, faith, yoga or balance or sense control, truth, rithyam or the balance, the unity of thought, word and deed and the describing after the great declaration ‘Tat thwam Asi’, I and That are One, I am That. This aspect, our conscience is made up of these elements and that faith is an important part of it and that sense control and balance and truth, well this is completely absent. And that when the buddhi, when the conscience is highly defined and purified, then it is capable of visualizing the light from the Atma. That it can see the Atma. Well we don’t know anything in the West about what Atma is. Or that we are actually divine and the mind... there’s aspects of mind, but one of the most important is that it can be a stumbling block on the way to realizing your true reality.



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Venkataraman: But let me ask you a couple of questions in this context. For example, the word conscience is not Western people. People talk about 'I follow my conscience' and like that, and then people talk about the human spirit especially in relation to adventure and achieving the impossible. So maybe buddhi and Atma are known to the West but in different terms may be not in that depth and after all you remember Shakespeare says "Above all to thine own self be true." So he implicitly, unknowingly perhaps, recognized that there's a self, some place sitting inside. Wouldn't you agree?

Sandweiss: Well, yes. And the mystics and artists intuitively grasp that. But the cold hard science of psychiatry...

Venkataraman: I know what you're talking about...

Sandweiss: ...doesn't actually define that. And they don't define the idea of spirit, that there's a spirit inside you. I've never seen...

Venkataraman: Yes, I remember I think it was Watson, perhaps who said that 'mind is a meat machine.' Probably a pretty brisk way of putting it.

Sandweiss: Probably. In the West it's very much associated with the body. So the body and the mind are considered interwoven, but the idea that our true identity is a divine identity. Course my first contact with Swami was it became very very clear that He had at least had an extension way beyond what we understood by Western definitions of mind...

Venkataraman: Can I put it like this that the hard core scientist and intellectual in the West does not go beyond the brink. The mystics understand the mind, that it is something which has got divine overtones perhaps and Swami identifies mind as the derivative of Atma, which is the Universal Spirit. So He amplifies and takes it to its argument. Is that the way to put it?

Sandweiss: Well that, yes. There are many psychologists and psychiatrists who are interested in trying to make this integration between spirituality and psychiatry. So there is a lot of people thinking this way.

Venkataraman: When you say they want to integrate spirituality and psychiatry, what is that definition of spirituality?

Sandweiss: Well there's something beyond mind as we understand it, that there's a higher level of being, an intuitiveness, perhaps, a divine nature of man, that the great knowledge from the Greats, like Buddha and Jesus, should be integrated into the general information from psychiatry. Because when I went through psychiatry I wondered, I would ask people why isn't Jesus and Buddha and the Great Saints, why don't we make any effort of understanding this relationship. There's just not that interest for some reason. But there are people now in many fields and many different facets of psychiatry/psychology that are interested in that and are trying to integrate that.

Venkataraman: Is it academic interest or is it an interest towards developing new methods of treating mental diseases?

Sandweiss: Well, I think the second. There are people who are interested in yoga. What does Hatha Yoga have to do with it? What does Patanjali's 8 steps have to do? What does good works have to do with it? They are trying to integrate spiritual technique for achieving higher levels of consciousness with Western techniques for helping people with mental anguish.



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Venkataraman: This brings me to a direct question. Do you use any of Swami's teachings in treating any of your patients? And if so how?

Sandweiss: It's a wonderful question. Once when you meet Swami you enter into this very deep inquiry- what is this relationship in my life and how am I expressing it? Because you don't just let that wash off your back. Once you see something like...experience something like Swami. So of course I've done a lot of thinking of how it's integrated. I would start with something that seems so simple, but is vastly important obviously and that is being nice and respecting the other person. For me the spiritual technique of seeing Swami in the other, respecting Swami in other person, actually listening to them and to look at how that person is living his/her life and are they practicing good values in doing their duty. You know, just taking a look at the basics, because there are many different levels to Swami's teachings. It's very very complicated, very esoteric but Swami is over and over again, for years and years, at that level-- Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, Ahimsa, Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, Ahimsa. Are we just basically good people? So I mean, over and over amplifies on it and never gets tired telling us. And we are listening and we go off and do the opposite in the next minute. So when are we going to listen and learn? You know, for instance, simple thing like, I had a patient come in who was very primitive, spoke a primitive cuss words, her movements were dictated, she lived a very disorganized life, she had a number of men in her house and...

Venkataraman: Is she an educated lady?

Sandweiss: She was fairly educated. She was a nurse, but she had just dropped down into the level of a demon, it looked like. She had a lot of psychological problem and physical problem and she seemed to lose all faith and all hope and she was cussing just like a sailor. Just terrible, and the first thing I said was look it you can't talk that way here. We have to talk respectfully and she said, "Doc, you're a psychiatrist, you're not my father." And I said "father, mother, whatever, its not good for you. To speak that way is actually very bad for you. Good speech is extremely important. Good speech controls the mind, relates ourselves to higher conscience, a way of having deep respect for life. You have to speak nicely in here." She says, "Excuse me. I've never been talked to like that." I said, "You're welcome to leave. You don't have to be here. But if you're going to be here you have to talk nicely." So we just had that one agreement, you have to talk nice. And so she would just talk nicer, that's it she wouldn't swear. If she swore, I'd just say, "I told you about that. You shouldn't be talking like that. You shouldn't be talking like that." And she said, "I think it was because of one of the medicines I was talking like that. Because as soon as I stopped the medicine, I'm talking a little nicer." She couldn't bring herself to say thank you doctor for at least telling me to speak nicely, a little respectful. See simple thing like that is profound. We're thinking of all kinds of higher techniques and there are higher techniques, meditative techniques. But I once read where Swami was saying, "You know somebody came up to me and said after 50 years of meditation I haven't felt anything different." I says, what a waste that is for that person, what is he talking about? First of all you can't just go up to and be a high meditator. You first have to know how to have good values, you have to have sense control and you have to know how to sit quietly and you have to know how to watch your breadth.

Venkataraman: A sense of patanjalis...

Sandweiss: Yes, so don't go to the eighth step like this...

Venkataraman: Now coming back to the lady whom you tried to get to talk nicely. Did she improve afterwards?

Sandweiss: Its still early. The improvement is that she's not talking like that. When she comes to the office there's a certain level of respect. Another thing for instance, here's another lady that came to see me and was working as a nurse, in a nurse position, had a traumatic event, developed all kinds of aches and

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

pains and felt that her life was useless from then on. And all she would do was come in and complain and complain and complain. And then after she saw I wasn't going to fight with her then we needed a little time to show I respected and liked her. This is very very important Swami's teaching on that, to be respectful and to listen. Then just said, because she had tried so many other techniques and she was filled with so much medicine, I just said have you ever had religious feelings, spiritual feeling in your life? She said that she'd been brought up certain way. I said do you have a little altar in your home? Just to give a little awareness, just a little awareness. Just a simple thing like that. Because this world is filled with darkness and just to bring awareness to this! So she said no I don't have this. "Do you have an altar in your house?" First time she talked to me and asked me a question because she was just complaining and self-absorbed. "Do you have an altar in your house?" I said, "Yes. I even have an altar in here." She said, "Where's it?" I said, "You see this statue? And this is a statue, this represents- name is Vishnu, protector, and when I look at that I think of God's protective powers and I'm asking Him to protect us and keep us safe." This was the first time she would allow me to say something sweet. But I said some sweet words to her and then she started to ask me well how should I make my altar and where should I make my altar what should I put on my altar, and all of this she started. She was a very very sick lady, but this is how spirituality... I once read from a psychologist, I can't recall the name right now, that people that are in pain and suffering have spiritual experience. And the strange thing is that many deeply neurotic people are people that are troubled from disturbed relationships that keep haunting them, they have spiritual experience that are authentic. They have more authentic experiences, even psychiatrists would be apt to think that certain experiences that people are having, because they are told, downtrodden and hurting the love of God is so sweet and so vast that He does come to people.

Venkataraman: So you spoke to her kindly and nicely and that really sort of triggered her off. Did it?

Sandweiss: Well I could feel for the first time a loving experience that was generated through the talking about Vishnu. You could feel that she was receiving it. So sometimes people will tell you...

Venkataraman: That's the teaching of Swami-Love All.

Sandweiss: Love all and serve them. And it can come in the most subtle way, the most subtle way...

Venkataraman: Is that... prompts me to ask you a question. Supposing you are not using this method, which is really the best method, you are doing it the professional standard way of a Western psychiatrist. How would you have dealt with her? I just want to see the extraordinary difference between the absolutely simple and beautiful way of dealing with people and the convoluted professional way.

Sandweiss: Well, I don't know. We have to give...

Venkataraman: Not you, let's say she went to some other shrink. How would he have treated her.

Sandweiss: We have to say that all of these people are human beings. They are bizarre, good people and they're all... its amazing how so many of are searching so that what they are doing is that they're trying to be real. You know pretense away in their heart-to-heart and many therapists are, then they do try and talk with the person. They do actually try to get real with the person. And I won't call this...

Venkataraman: They do this intuitively, whereas you did it based on Swami's direct teaching and experience of how.

Sandweiss: The idea that it is a way of living. So it's not a method. One is just trying to talk to a person, trying to get to a level where it's real. You once were telling me how in teaching a college course you could see how people when they start talking to each other, in front of others perhaps, that they become a little unreal, that they become a little robot. So the idea is how to be real and to let the pretense away and

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

to let the child... You know because all of us, you may have high falluting ideas, and concepts and theories, but really when you get down to it we are children and the basic love that we share is potent, very potent. That way with people, to be innocent and to share that. To talk about how a therapist may deal with a post-traumatic stress. Because this lady had post-traumatic stress, they may talk about well, what was the experience that you had at the time of the injury and try to desensitize their feeling about this feeling and that feeling. They may try to encourage the person to be a little more full in their activities and learn how to reduce stress and some of these stress-reduction techniques are similar to Swami's teaching, having to do with regulating the breadth, and regulating the thought and thinking. Many of these have been incorporated into...

Venkataraman: But Swami's teachings put it in a proper framework and perspective.

Sandweiss: Swami's teaching makes you realize that you are the...see everything in front of you is a reflection of you. And that what you're trying to do is, if there's something that you dislike, you're trying to empty yourself of that so you become open and honest and if there's something you like, you try to be empty of that, and you try to be the other person. And in that way realize that I and the other person are one, and you try to see what the pain is and you try to empty it out and you try to experience it with the other person and empty it out of yourself. This kind of an abstract way of talking about it, but when you're with Swami, He's teaching you a certain way of dealing with sense control, of dealing with desire, of dealing with thoughts so that when you're with the other person you're trying practice being empty and reverent. And if something gets in the way, to realize that its Swami in the form of the other person that's bringing it out of you and that you're trying to empty it out. And if you're practicing that you're telling the other person, you're teaching the other person also, that what they've seen, they have to learn not to excite themselves too much, not to deaden themselves too much, they have to learn to have reverence...

Venkataraman: So you would say that Swami has helped you professionally also.

Sandweiss: Oh, there...Swami has helped... not only helped, He is every aspect of my life.

Venkataraman: But you know at a mundane level.

Sandweiss: It's a completely... whatever I've learnt in psychiatry its from the practicing's of Swami's teachings and trying to put them into practice. He gives us everything.

That was an interview with Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, who was recently in our studios. He was in conversation with Prof. G. Venkataraman.

Venkataraman: ...Society as a whole and this is a problem that has become rather important, especially after the so-called September 11th incident. Generally speaking I find it a bit strange, you know the West is technologically so advanced, intellectually so advanced, scientifically so advanced, people are very brilliant and all that. They have so much accomplishment behind them, but yet some of the things that they do seem to be contradictory and in fact you wonder how can an intelligent person do that? Let me give just a one simple example, today there's a lot of emphasis on building the economy through consumption, consumerism shall I say. And consumerism is being built up and built up and built up with no ceiling, but this is dangerous to planet earth and the club in the early sixties and seventies, I don't remember the date. And it is obvious, yet why do people shut their eyes to the obvious. And these are intelligent people and this goes on everywhere whether its in scientific research or political planning, military policy making, whatever, all these people are brilliant but they wear blinkers. Why is that?

Sandweiss: Well, Swami 's teaching is simple, I think, about this. That man is divine himself, he's pure love. But we don't know that and the key is the mind. If we turn our mind to divinity it's the way of

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

opening us to the freedom. And if we turn our mind to the world it locks us. The mind is very very powerful. And so, if we turn our mind to the world we are in a dungeon, we're locked into inescapable jail. It is filled with desire and greed and all the enemies, lust, anger, pride, greed, hatred, attachment. All of these roam there as the gods of this world, the worldly life. As soon as you feel that it is desire and attachment to outside objects that brings gratification, as soon you believe that and you start chasing that, there's no end to it.

Venkataraman: So desire is the blind spot.

Sandweiss: The understanding, that the thought that outside objects bring gratification... you know there's just a simple psychological experiment that shows that gratification isn't from outside objects. All you've got to do is hypnotize somebody who wanted a nice new car and they are sitting in a shabby old chair and you tell them that they are in a nice new car and they're very happy. So where's the happiness? Its not from the object, its all from the inside. So the question is how to find the happiness inside, not how to accumulate a lot of goods. But that simple understanding is lacking in the Kali Yuga, that the... it would believe that the object outside is what brings us gratification. So you see the people on Wall Street, and you see the people in the stock market, and you see the people who are heads of agencies and there's no end to it.

Swami's simple little statement that *the fulfillment of desire breeds further desire*. Unfulfilled desire leads to further birth. That is you cannot tear yourself away, you cannot suppress everything and repress everything and just be a robot. But the trick is that the way out is by offering everything to Divinity. Now that is a very deep and vast subject. How do you do this? How do you release yourself to Divinity? This is a very very... but the first part of it is the fulfillment of desire to leads to further desire. Once you turn yourself into the world, the mind is very strong, and it binds itself and you are then into a, excuse the expression, hell, if you keep following selfish accumulation of objects under the false belief that gratification of desire brings happiness. This is a false idea. And it is very hard for people to give that up. One of the, as a psychiatrist, one of the things that is fascinating to me is that as you challenge this, that you challenge your attachment to external things, first it looks like its simple. You know Swami challenges you by first helping you get over inconvenience and discomfort. Well come see me at Prashanti, see if you can take the car ride, you know, just see if you can take the plane ride, see how strong...and so you need to have some discipline to do this and so its not easy to do. To challenge, the mind just wants to be satisfied all the time. Then you try to take yourself away from some of the easier sensual desires; I'm not going to eat as much, I'm not going to watch as much TV. Now these are simple ones, but who has control? In the West the gorging and gorging and they're watching television like crazy.

So then you say a little bit deeper... you're really false to think that your name or your form, your fame or your fortune, your family or your friends, your power, your position, all of that, your prestige, is nothing. Well, if somebody loses even one of those, to lose your position or to lose your money is just strikes you with terror, absolute terror. Then even deeper than that all of this is transient and everything that is in the external world is passing and its all passing like a cloud. It's all a game. To really see this brings on, what I consider, a very deep primal fear, which I've called mortal-fear. I just see that everything is just transient and passing. And not only that, Swami's told me many times and probably told you, that *anything is nothing and nothing is everything*. Well to experience the nothingness in the external world, that all of what you desire is nothing, to actually feel the nothingness, is profoundly frightening. Only love, only love is a power. You must cultivate love to take you through these stages of giving up and surrendering. Because its only after sacrificing all of this, not by progeny and not by money and not by position, but only by sacrifice. So only by going through all of that and seeing all of that as nothing, you must hold onto Swami's robe to go through that. It's a very very frightening experience.

Venkataraman: More people will come and hold onto His robe.



INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Sandweiss: Well, without this then world will destroy itself, because we're locked now in a level of terror and destruction that I can't see how any of us can get out of by our worldly thoughts, by our human thoughts.

Venkataraman: But sometimes Swami does, of course without projecting Himself, things that we don't even dream about. Take the case of Russia, for example. I remember how it was in the sixties and seventies. We would be fearing all the time a nuclear holocaust. Then all of a sudden things have changed. Then today we see so many Russians, morning and evening. And there are more Russians here then ever before. Ten years ago, I wonder if you ever saw a Russian?

Sandweiss: Well, I never saw one.

Venkataraman: Talking of Russia, you've been to Russia several times. Why don't you tell us something of what you saw?

Sandweiss: Well, most of my experience with Russia had to do, I think, with teaching me something. Teaching me something about Swami's love. Something personal about my own wants and desires. And that would be very long to discuss that aspect of what it taught me internally. But the first time I went to Russia, I wondered...

Venkataraman: Which year was that?

Sandweiss: This was about 1991, I think. Maybe '90.

Venkataraman: That was still in the Communist period?

Sandweiss: No. I think it was...Perestroika, was going on and people were ...it was opening up

Venkataraman: It was still USSR at that time?

Sandweiss: You know, I don't know?

Venkataraman: Okay, anyway it does not matter.

Sandweiss: What happened was I was here at Brindavan and somebody gave me the Russian translation of my first book "The Holy Man and a Psychiatrist", so I brought it to Swami and said "Swami," because I was idealistic, "...can I go to Russia and find a printer for this?" I didn't know anybody in Russia, or anything. You know, I was just an innocent person believing that if He said yes, He'd do it for me. So He thought a minute and said, "Why don't you have it done in Chicago?" And it happened that the translator of this, the Russian translator, was from Chicago. And I didn't...it was unusual that He would know that. So I said, "But Swami, it would be easier if I found a publishing company in the country. You wouldn't have to ship it over." So I'm trying to teach Swami something, to tell Him or improve Him. So He thought a moment and He said, "Okay, go." He was just trying to let me go through my own Karma. You know myself. He wasn't going to...and I was stupid enough to believe that I could improve upon Swami. This is the time, I mean He was teaching me something. "How long? When should I go?" He said, "Why wait." So He was just speeding me along. Well, I then was struck with the reality of it. I didn't know anybody in Russia, I didn't know any publisher. How was I going to go there? But my first two phone calls, trying to make contact just were flopped terribly. It was a terrible nothing. And then the third one I hit upon somebody, who was trying to develop relationship with Russia, had been there many many times. It was one of those unusual "Sai coincidences". So I was in Russia very very quickly.

Well, at that time I wondered when would... how in the world would Swami's devotees develop in this country because there was no Swami devotee and they didn't know what this book meant at all. And I

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

wondered how would it happen, because it would be a miracle to think that all of a sudden this country, which was very poor and so many troubles, would I ever be able to sit in a group and hear “OM, Ganesha Charanam...” would I ever be in situation like that. Could it ever happen? I don’t know how the Master does it, but it wasn’t until later...

Venkataraman: He sure does it though.

Sandweiss: ...but He does it. Everybody...And He never lets on how He does it, or who’s doing it, but we all know that’s its Him.

Venkataraman: The next time you went you saw something totally out of this world?

Sandweiss: Well, then the next time the Russians invited me to be a speaker, my wife and I, to be speakers at their conference. We went there.

Venkataraman: Which year was that?

Sandweiss: This was three years back. And they met us at the airport, and they took care of us and they sang to us and they loved us. Everyday we spoke at a different devotee’s home and the home was clean and it smelled of nice incense and the kids were taken care of and it was so beautiful to see Swami’s influence and to see His teaching about being good and being clean and honest and all that. How it was taking a hold. And in the evening we would speak at a large gathering where they would have people from the community. And then we took part in their large conference in Moscow and there in the early morning sitting on this old tattered, wooden floor, sitting with about three hundred Russians, the “OM” started and just tears came. Because all of a sudden I saw so many brothers and sisters chanting “OM” together and having Swami’s picture.

Venkataraman: Can you tell us how it happened? Because in America there was Hislop, in Australia there was Murphet. Who, how did it happen in Russia? Not that it requires anybody, but out of curiosity I must...

Sandweiss: You know, I just don’t know. I didn’t follow that strain. Don’t know, all of a sudden, but it happened. It happened.

Venkataraman: It happened...

Sandweiss: ...And to be sitting with brothers and sisters, hearing the same bhajans, the same “OM”, the same love, the same respect for the teaching. And all of that was just breathtaking.

Venkataraman: That was in Moscow.

Sandweiss: ...In Moscow. To see, how did it take seed and how did it develop like that is just a miracle.

Venkataraman: You know I’ve seen once a group of devotees, they were wearing a scarf - Siberia. So Swami has gone all the way to Siberia. And they’ve come from Kazakstan...

Sandweiss: Well, was it S-A-I-beria, Saiberia?

Venkataraman: That’s a good one. I think it has become that. And I believe there are big centers in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg.

Sandweiss: Yes, yes that’s where I was...

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

Venkataraman: And Ukraine too.

Sandweiss: Ukraine. Well they were at the conference in Moscow, they were from all over, from the Urals, from Siberia, from all over. Places I'd never even heard of. Then the amount of time they would take, days and days to travel, penniless to get to the place, just to be with Sai devotees. Heartwarming.

Venkataraman: Don't you think that is the real power of love?

Sandweiss: Who can do that? Who can do that and who can put you in the biggest mystery and its always vital and exciting. There's always something happening, to frighten us, to excite us. He's just full of drama? Always full of drama. You don't know what He's going to do next.

Venkataraman: I agree with you. You go to a strange country and suddenly you hear familiar bhajans, you feel you're at home. You don't feel you're in a different place at all. It's so wonderful.

Sandweiss: And to sense that it's a world seeding of something that is understood internationally that its understood, that it's a universal language of love that is understood in all the languages and all the customs and its going over, breaking through different boundaries of socio-economic, country, religion. That it has this power, this quality of the love, which is so remarkable. You see it in the smile you just absorb. But to feel that can radiate out and cross all boundary. People that you thought you'd never have anything to do with. Even in the center, the person that you dislike the most, you know you'd never have anything to do with, you marvel at how we could be brought together and even try to learn how to get along with each other. What marvelous love is bringing us into this experiment!

Venkataraman: I heard Bob Bozzani saying once, how wonderful it is to be able to see it all happen right before our eyes.

Sandweiss: Oh. So much of Swami...what Grace its been for us.

Venkataraman: Well I would like to thank you at this point of time for sharing so many of your thoughts with us. This is not the first, the only time you're going to be here, you're going to be here again, because there's so many things I would like to talk to you about, for example, Dr. Hislop. He was an extraordinary person and he had an extraordinary relationship with Swami. You must have known him well. Didn't you?

Sandweiss: Well he lived very close to us and I knew him mostly...I knew him for many years, we served on the council together from the time of its inception in 1975. I've been to many meetings with him. I've loved him and spoke with him frequently. But the closest was at the time of his dying. To see this great devotee to go through his death was something...you know; sometimes you see the greatness of the Divine Master through some of the majesty of the devotees, the good qualities in the devotee. And that was what we saw in Dr. Hislop as he passed on.

Venkataraman: I remember a yogi describing death. He said ordinary people are afraid of death, but yogi, he says oh yes my mission is over, I have to pack up and leave elsewhere. He's not afraid of death. He welcomes it. In fact, he controls his death. So it must have been so with Hislop.

Sandweiss: Well I don't know if he controlled it. But he had this great detachment. I wondered. I would sit with him and I would say, "Shouldn't you be angry?" You know Swami allowed him to go through his passing, watching himself lose his strength over about nine months. And that's hard for us. One time I said, "Jack, what is harder? Going to Japan..." He'd just gone to Japan. He had thirty talks in 10 days or something and he was dying at that time, he didn't know he was dying, "...or to get out of bed today?"

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INTERVIEW- SAMUEL SANDWEISS

And he said, "Well, old chap..." he would call me that "old chap", "...its harder to get out of bed today." So he was going...his mind... he knew that his mind wasn't... then he would say as we talked, "You know my mind's just not as clear. I'm sorry Sam, I can't think quite as well, but this is as much as I can tell and talk now." And I'd say, "Well aren't you angry?" And he would look up and say, "Should I be angry?" with such innocence. I said, "I guess not, Jack." (Laughter)

One of the sweetest things as he was dying, he said, "Sam, I hope that I'm not disappointing you?" And I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "I want to be... I want you to feel..." How did he put this? Not to be disappointed in the way that I'm dying. You know he wanted to be helpful and loving to me. He wanted to show me how a person should die. And he was telling me, it was the sweetest moment, I hope I'm not disappointing you. I said, "Jack, my brother, how could you disappoint me?" I had to hug him. You could never disappoint me. He was a wonderful man. At the end of his life, this is the strongest experience I've ever seen of "OM". A number of us came at about the same time one evening. Jack was now in a coma and he was struggling with his breathing and I wanted to play a tape of bhajans. Because I didn't know, I knew there were prescribed chanting and what not the Vedic pundits would know, but I didn't know those things. I wanted to play a tape. His tape recorder was broken. So I just started to chant "OM". His mantra was "Om Sai Ram". So I just started..."OM, OM" right at the foot of his bed and the others came around the bed and we began to chant "OM" and within 3 or 4 OMs he was like, we could see him recognize it. I mean even in his coma he recognized it... his body just... although he had been struggling...his body just went like this and off he went into the "OM". We could feel him with us in the "OM". It was like releasing himself into his mantra. And we were all just like...pins and needles, you know feeling that we were chanting this "OM" that he was in it with us. It was extraordinary passing away.

Venkataraman: ...Add a little footnote to that, sometime after that, in the morning, I was sitting in the verandah. Morning interviews all were over and Swami came and he was standing there and he was talking to somebody from USA, I don't know who it was. And he asked him, "Where's your friend?" This man said, "Which friend?" "Hislop, Hislop." And he didn't answer he just looked up. Then Swami said, "Where is your friend?" And he said, "Swami, he's gone off." Swami said, "No, he has not gone off, he has come to Me." So I thought that was wonderful way of wrapping it up.

Sandweiss: Yes.

Venkataraman: Well thank you very much and we look forward to the pleasure of having you with us again. And I'm sure what you said today is going to delight millions of devotees when they hear it. Thank you.

Sandweiss: Thank you, it has been a pleasure. Sairam.

That was an interview with Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, who was recently in our studios. He was in conversation with Prof. G. Venkataraman.

This is Radiosai, Global Harmony, next a selection of Sai bhajans.