

Winning the Award on the horseback of hypocrisy

TEMPLETON AWARD FOR PROGRESS IN RELIGION AWARDED TO PANDURANGSHASHTRI ATHAVALE

On 5th March 1997 John Templeton Foundation announced that the 1997 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion will be given to Pandurang Shashtri Athavale (PSA). The Prize consisting of 7,50,000 Pounds Sterling was presented at a public ceremony held in Westminster Abbey on 6th May 1997 by His Royal Highness Prince Philip in honour of the 25th Anniversary of the Prize.

The Award has been established with noble cause to be awarded to living individual who has shown extraordinary originality in helping advance the world's understanding of God and/or spirituality. The impartiality of the Foundation can be seen from the fact that except for asking the international panel of 9 judges to consider all religions when awarding the prize, the Foundation has no part in the process of selecting the recipient. The applications received for the Prize are placed before the Judges to scrutinise and decide.

Having regard to the subject for which the Prize is to be awarded, namely, Progress in Religion, the Panel of Judges relies on the statements made in the nomination paper and the supporting documents. The Panel itself does not make detailed on-the-spot inspection or investigation of the claims made by the nominator. It is befitting the purpose of the Award that the Foundation or the Panel does not raise any question on the veracity of the statements made in the nomination.

While the Foundation and the Panel of Judges relied on the nominator for veracity of the claims and the Prize was awarded, it is interesting to get a glimpse of the false and

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exaggerated statements made in the nomination paper and supporting documents to see how the Prize Winner and his foster daughter are misguiding the world at large and creating an aura of veneration for themselves and projecting phenomenal success of Swadhyay movement. Since such untrue and exaggerated statements (which are being made for the past several years) are now coming to light and, therefore, questions asked, the Swadhyay activity has started maligning those who come out with truth, resort to violence and spread a reign of terror so that no one would again dare to speak out. This has resulted in the activity slowly become a cult.

This paper restricts itself to the statements made by John Templeton Foundation while announcing the Prize and the Press Reports based thereon. On announcement of the winner of 1997 Templeton Prize, two papers were released by John Templeton Foundation. The first was a Press Note (although not titled as such) and the other was a Press Release (titled as such) both dated 5th March 1997. The Press Note and the Press Release enumerate the achievements of PSA which lead him to win the Prize and which have been taken obviously from the nomination papers.

The nomination for the Prize was made by Professor B.M. Unterberger of A and M University, Houston who had visited India and seen Swadhyay activities of PSA in two conducted tours. She has relied on the statements made by PSA and his adopted daughter Mrs. D.S. Talwalkar (DST). The claims made in nomination papers submitted by Prof. Unterberger are both untrue and exaggerated to such an extent that they are totally unbelievable by any person knowing Indian conditions. The claims have been made knowing that the Judges would accept them on face value since these are being routed through an American Professor. The Judges relied on the statements made by the nominator and the statistics given by her and proceeded to select PSA for the Prize.

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The Panel of Judges obviously did not expect that a religious person would make or feed someone with false claims and information.

The exaggerations made in the nomination papers have been compounded by false statements. The method adopted by PSA and his daughter to conceal exaggerations and falsehood is such that whoever challenges or contradicts any statements made by them are taken to task by spreading a word amongst their followers that these people are out to destroy good work and are envious of them. PSA and his daughter also advocate that such persons should be beaten up and their life made miserable. The result is that the uneducated and ill informed followers of PSA and his daughter accept the statements made by them on their face value and act as instigated by them. The reason for blind faith in PSA and his daughter is that because of Swadhyay activities, the lives of some communities have been elevated and family strife reduced. But PSA and his daughter are taking advantage of the blind faith reposed in them and are using them as tools for taking revenge on those who tell the truth. Taking advantage of the blind faith so established, PSA and DST are resorting to cult practices and misguiding the people.

The cult elements have resulted in certain Swadhyayees being beaten up in India which happenings have been reported in front ranking newspapers and have made cover stories of A Grade magazines. In respect to articles published in Chitrlekha and Aarpaar as also in daily newspapers, the editors received threats pointing out to dire consequential results. In respect to those magazines in India which published the articles, vexatious suits have been filed by Swadhyayees against the publisher and the author at several distant places with a view to cause harassment to them. In respect to an article commenting on Swadhyay activities published in Gujarat Samachar, a Gujarati Weekly published from London, the editor received two dozen threatening calls. In the

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next issue, the editor made reference to these threatening calls and stated that the weekly had not in the past been suppressed by any such threatening calls and will not cow down in future and that they will publish whatever is the truth. This weekly is a predominant weekly in Gujarati Language and is widely read in Gujarati society in UK.

The cult element has also resulted in a threats, ostracisation and propagation of canard which is considered as outside the limits of the subject matter of this paper.

The cult practice has slowly come to the surface in the last three to four years, as a result of which several front ranking workers and office bearers of Swadhyay Parivar have opted out of this organisation.

In order that the reader can easily grasp the extent of exaggerations and untrue statements which have been adopted for the purpose of nomination, stated below in juxtaposition are some of the statements made in the Press Release and Press Note (which are obviously taken from the nomination papers) and the true facts as they are.

In order to have proper appreciation, sequence adopted below is one which would be easy to understand rather than the sequence appearing in Press Note and Press Release.

The most important false statement which led to PSA being awarded the Templeton Prize is that he had achieved complete transformation of 100,000 villages of India.

1. Claim

The result has been a complete transformation -- spiritually and economically -- of approximately 100,000 villages and 20 million people (Ref: Press Release dated March 5, 1997 issued by John Templeton Foundation, Page 3)

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Again and again through out India and other parts of the world, these belief that all persons are divine brothers and sisters in the family of God has lead to the betterment of individuals and communities. (Page No.2 of Press Note dated March 5, 1997)

Among those who have benefited most are the fishing villages of India, where gambling, drinking, and wife and child abuse have been replaced with cooperative efforts that have spiritually elevated the downtrodden, vastly reduced crime, and fed the poor. (Page No.2 of Press Note)

Facts

There are about 500,000 villages in India. Total urban and rural population of the country is a little over one billion. The claim made means that one out of every five villages and one out of every five or six individuals (since cities are thickly populated) is covered by and has experienced 'complete transformation -- spiritually and economically'. If this was so it would have been world news and people from all countries would have flocked to India to see how this can be achieved. It would truly change the face of the world. To say the least, "complete economic transformation" should mean at least adequate food, shelter and clothing for all inmates in these villages and education, medical facilities, drinking water and employment opportunities for a majority of them. This is still a far cry and is not likely to be achieved even by the end of this century. Spiritually, complete transformation for millions would mean realisation of the Self by them, which has not been claimed even as having been achieved by those close to Jesus or Mohammad when they descended on this earth!

There is no official publication of information on the expanse of Swadhyay Activity and the projects undertaken by Swadhyay Parivar and, accordingly, no official figures are available. In this letter therefore estimate figures have been used.

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On the figure of 1,00,000, it may be mentioned that Swadhyay activity started in 1958 in the state of Gujarat and is most powerful in that state. Gujarat has about 19000 villages. While Swadhyayee from neighbouring villages might have gone to the other villages for Swadhyay purpose on specific occasions, after 45 years of work, presently not more than 25% of them (that is to say, 4500 villages) would be having centres where once a week people of the village get together to listen to the video lectures of PSA. The presence in such centres may at best be put at 5% to 10% of the population of the village barring a few exceptionally developed villages. Some of the villagers might be involved regularly in the activities carried on by Swadhyay Parivar in that village while others might be involved not in the actual activities but in festivals, carnivals or annual programmes. This does not show any spirituality much less result in their spiritual transformation. A programme of awareness resulting in knowledge of the indwelling God and willingness to work for one's community in the name of God does not mean transformation much less a complete transformation. In reality, even a fraction of spiritual transformation would bring about brotherly care, mutual help, end of strife, emancipation from vices, freedom from blind faith, social reforms and would develop honesty, generosity, truth and forgiveness in those who strive for it. Such result in a small measure might have been achieved in a few swadhyayee individuals but to describe that as 'complete spiritual transformation' of 1,00,000 villages would be a complete misnomer. At best it could be said that as a result of Swadhyay activities certain human qualities have got developed in some individuals and that is helping them to lead life of a good citizen.

Apart from the state of Gujarat the other states in which good work is being done by Swadhyayees are the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana although the spread in these states is distinctly much less than in Gujarat. The

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total work in these four states and all other states in India and outside India would not be equal to the work carried on in the state of Gujarat. A fair estimate would be that there are a maximum of one million Swadhyayees against 20 million claimed in the nomination paper and the number of villages which are affected by Swadhyay activity to some extent (in most cases, not very significantly) would be 7500. Against the claim of one hundred thousand villages, in reality, not a single village has got completely transformed either economically or spiritually. The best of these villages about which Swadhyayees could boast of would not be more than a couple of hundred villages. Even in these villages, the economic and spiritual results achieved through Swadhyay activities cannot be considered sizeable. As for economic achievements the same may be summed up as mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs.

There are several projects sponsored by Swadhyay Parivar but only in respect to two of these, the benefit goes to those who participate in it. These two projects are as follows:

1. Yogeshwar Krushi (YK):

This project consists of taking a farm on lease, which farmers of the village cultivate jointly.

On an average, earning of each farm is about Rs.3,000 to 4,000. In a population of an average of 1000 villagers, the amount is hardly enough to buy anything to relieve poverty even of a couple of people or to buy even one bullock for cultivation purpose. It would also mean only a fraction of the annual cost of providing college education to one student of the village. In reality, the rules for utilisation have been so made by the Supremo in Swadhyay that about 50% of the total collection made hitherto are still lying with Madhavi Raksha Sankalpa, the Trust with whom these moneys are deposited. The Trust earns, on these

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accumulated funds, a tidy sum as interest which is credited to the account of the Trust and not distributed to the villagers whose undrawn monies have earned this interest.

With regard to the number, it is likely that about 2,500 villages would be involved in the project of YK and the number might slowly decrease. Efforts to increase the number are, however, being made more recently. Accordingly, in 2003 special stress has been given on revival of interest of the villagers in this project. The figure of total number of farms or the total amount earned by YKs are ordinarily not disclosed, and, even if declared, it is in general terms and whatever is declared by Nirmal Niketan, the head office of Swadhyay Supremo has to be accepted as true. No one dare raise any question. While total number of YKs are sometimes disclosed in round figure to pep up the villagers' enthusiasm, as a matter of rule, the total amount collected is never disclosed -- not even in the nomination paper filed with the Templeton Foundation!

As regards involvement of people, the plot of land (on which the project YK is undertaken in a village) is so small that it does not require more than a couple of persons to till and look after it. It, therefore, does not create any divine brotherhood amongst the vast number of villagers who are not active in this project.

The funds distributed to Swadhyayees out of the earnings of YK are said to be distributed anonymously to the needy as the Lord's Prasad (Gift). This is not true. The needy is required to make an application, which has to be properly recommended and approved at the local level and sent to the Swadhyay headquarters at Mumbai for scrutiny and approval. The amount when

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sanctioned, is delivered to him in the presence of an assembly of villagers. It is not true that amounts from YK are used to build or repair the villages' infrastructure; this has never happened in 60 years of Swadhyay Parivar's existence.

2. Matsyagandha (MG)

Fishing community is considered to be a socially backward community in India and with Swadhyay workers having approached them, they were quite happy at it. Uphoria followed and about 70 fishing boats were built on which fishermen would take their turn for two or three days voluntarily and the catch received during the trip would be sold and monies realised. The money, at the end of the year, are collected from different centres for distribution amongst those who want to get out of fishing business and start their own small business activity.

Since last few years, it is said that about 30% of the fishing boats' utility time might be regularly used either because they cannot fish in deep waters or because of lack of volunteers or the fishing boats have out-lived their life. A few more boats might have been operating through others who are paid daily wages. Accounts of the fishing boats are not known to be audited. The results are never publicly made known and not filed anywhere. Repayment of loan does not seem to be appearing in the accounts of the charitable trusts. None of the fishing boats is registered in the name of any charitable trust and, when, in a few years, most of the boats cease to be seaworthy because of their age, the future of this project, considered to be the most successful of all Projects undertaken by Swadhyay Parivar, can become obscure. This can be realised from the fact that while in the first few years eleven bigger boats were built, the boats built later

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were about or not even of half that size. More recently, with possibly larger number of people participating in Swadhyay activities, no boat has been built. While there are good results arising out of the spread of religion in the fishing community and crime is reduced to some extent, significant work remains to be done before the claims made by Swadhyay Parivar could be realised. The word 'vastly' is, therefore, a total misnomer.

The total amount distributed in the last couple of years has reached the highest figure of Rs.25,00,000 to Rs.30,00,000.

Of the total fishing community in India, the number of fisherman economically benefited by Swadhyay activity is still small.

With Swadhyay, there is better social and family peace than what was earlier but it is restricted to only some of those who have joined Swadhyay. The name of fishing community even in the States of Maharashtra and Gujarat (where it has pervaded the most) is still being considered as associated with bellicose attitude, smuggling and social crimes.

Apart from working on the community fishing boat, Swadhyay activities are not known to have resulted in any cooperative fishing movement in the fishing community.

The words 'and fed the poor' are again a misnomer. A small amount is spent every year for relief of poverty (in the form of providing foodgrains and clothes) once or twice a year and that too to a fraction of the needy. This can hardly be described as 'fed the poor' as it might not cover substantial portion of the need of the community. The good thing done is that in order to assist unemployed youngsters of the fishing community, seed capital is

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being provided as loan to a few of the needy applicants. Unfortunately, repayment of loans do not appear specifically in the accounts of the trusts.

Out of the earnings of each fishing boat, some donations are made to certain charitable trusts. These trusts then donate out of these moneys, the whole or part of the receipts as loans for seed capital.

2. Claim

It has no formal hierarchy and not a single paid worker. (Page No.2 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997)

Athavale neither seeks nor accepts financial help from governments or philanthropic agencies for any of his swadhyaya experiments. (Page 3 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997)

Swadhyaya's political thrust is neither communist nor capitalist. Apart from Athavale serving as the spiritual leader, it has no office holders. (Page 3 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997)

Facts

There is hierarchy in Swadhyay Parivar.

Some time in 1991, a constitution was formulated and hierarchy created. The constitution is secretly maintained by PSA and his daughter. This hierarchy has been functioning for the last 13 years. In the descending order, the hierarchy is as follows:

- i) Supremo
- ii) Karya Samhati

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- iii) Sanghat
- iv) Jyayas,
- v) Avar, and
- vi) Kshetradhar

There is also hierarchy in about 100 charitable trusts which have been created by Swadhyay Parivar. In descending order, the hierarchy is as follows:

- a) **Body of Revered Persons:** This is a highest body which has the right to control activities of all the trusts including their manner of working, the work to be carried out, expenses to be made, donations to be received and, above all, the appointment and vacation of trustees.
- b) **Tatwajnan Vidyapeeth(TV):** TV is the controlling trust whose office bearers control the day to day activities of all other trusts. Trust Deeds of all the trusts contain a specific provision that the trust and its trustees will be under the control of TV and bound by the instructions given by TV.
- c) **Trustees**

Since properties of a trust have to be held in the name of individual trustees (and not in the name of the trust), it is necessary to appoint trustees in all the Trusts. The Trustees, however, are nominal trustees and have no real powers. The Trustees have to act according to the instructions given by the Body of Revered Persons or TV.

All the trustees are supposed to give advance undated resignation so that their office could be terminated at the will of Body of Revered Persons or TV as and when they deem it necessary.

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- d) **Committee Members:** The members of Committee are appointed by Trustees as required by Body of Revered Persons for looking after day to day administrative matters.

It is not true that there is not a single paid worker. All institutions run by Swadhyay Parivar have staff on their payroll which would run into hundreds of people. Tatvajnan Vidyapeeth and Jnana Vistarak Sangh which are running schools and Sadvichar Darshan which publishes books and magazines have a large number of paid staff.

With regard to certain field workers who are at the top, a few coordinating senior people are paid staff. The payment to these coordinators is made either by a satellite trust or by individual Swadhyayees as determined by the Supremo.

3. Claim

Since its founding, Swadhyay -- which teaches equal respect for all religions, races and creeds -- has spread across the sub-continent and is now active in nations around the world, including United States, Canada, Germany, Portugal, Kenya, South Africa, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Fiji, West Indies and Surinam.

(Page No.2 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997)

Facts

As far as India is concerned, it has not touched more than one million people which constitutes 0.1% of the Indian population. It is active to an extent in the Indian community in United States and in one or two cities in Canada. There is not a single family in Germany affected by Swadhyay except that there may be one or two persons,

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who being Swadhyayees in India, might have moved to Germany on work permit for temporary period. In Sweden, there are a handful of Swadhyayees but there is no official centre where people meet regularly. In Portugal, about 50 individuals of Indian Origin and in Kenya about 100 people of Indian Origin are Swadhyayees. In South Africa there are hardly any people affected by Swadhyay. As for Fiji, Surinam and West Indies while there are no Swadhyay centres, a few visits have been made by Swadhyayees to these countries in an attempt to spread Swadhyay there. However, there are no concrete results culminating into either Swadhyay centres or people accepting Swadhyay as way of life. In Bahrain and UAE, Indians who have gone on work permit from India as household workers, semi skilled workers or as businessmen have turned to Swadhyay.

4. Claim

Swadhyayees seek no public or private funding. Even unsolicited donations are declined. When Athavale received the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi Prize in 1988, he doubled the amount of the prize and returned it to its donors to be used as they saw fit. (Page No.3 Press Note dated March 5, 1997)

Facts

Private funding is accepted by Swadhyayees everywhere in India and abroad.

In UK, not only private funds are accepted but in order to get income tax exemption, commitment for donating funds to Swadhyay activity for two more years is also taken in writing in United Kingdom from Swadhyayees.

As for Mahatma Gandhi Prize, the Prize was for spreading Hindi language and not for any philosophical, religious or cultural work done by Swadhyay Parivar or PSA. The

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Prize consisted of Rupees five thousand. PSA did not accept this amount because his Hindi was not that flawless, and contributed a like amount to be donated to the society which had awarded the Prize. While stating that PSA doubled the amount of the Prize and returned it to the donors, meticulously the amount of the Prize is never mentioned. On the other hand, 750,000 pound sterling of Templeton Prize was not only accepted by him but (as mentioned later) not utilised for the purpose for which PSA said he would use it. There is no great achievement involved in not accepting Rs.5000 but retaining 750,000 pound sterling (over Rupees five crores) and not using it as stated by PSA while accepting the Prize.

This Prize is an unknown prize which is not even being given regularly. The only prestige attached to it is that it carries the name of one of the noblest sons of India who has been acclaimed a rare personality the world over.

5. Claim

In 1954, Athavale was invited to present a series of lectures at the Second World Religious conference in Tokyo. There, his interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* received an enthusiastic reception from fellow delegates who offered him various positions in philosophy and religion in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Athavale refused, choosing instead to return to India with the aim of establishing a community living by the ideals of the *Bhagavad Gita*. (Page No.4 Press Note dated March 5, 1997)

Facts

Second World Religious Congress held in 1954 was a small congress organised by an unknown society, namely, International Philosophical Society which had been

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established only a couple of years back and which had held first religious congress only a few months before the Second Religious Conference. At this conference, only twenty delegates from abroad were present from six countries including small countries like Denmark, Holland and Philippines. There was a woman called Miss Francis Cassard who was a delegate from USA. There were no delegates from other parts of Europe.

The claim that at the conference he was offered various positions in philosophy and religion appears to be a totally false claim. The person who is supposed to have made the offer to him, namely, Mr. Arthur Holly Compton was not even present at the conference! It is claimed that he was twice elected the chairman of the Round Table Conference held during the Conference! However, true facts are that he was not even present at the time of the Round Table Conference and had left Japan before the date of the Round Table Conference. The truth can be seen from the detailed report prepared and published by the International Philosophical Society which is available on website: www.swadhyayee.org.

6. Claim

By believing that God also dwells within others, those who pursue self-study can develop a loving relationship with all persons, resulting in redemption of crime, the removal of social barriers, and the alleviation of poverty, hunger, and homelessness. (Page No.1 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997).

Facts

It is true that Swadhyay has generated loving relationship between different people. To a small extent it has also resulted in redemption of crime and removal of social barriers. However, in both these fields the achievement of Swadhyay Parivar is negligible.

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As for alleviation of poverty and hunger, it is miniscule since fundamentally Swadhyayees believe only in spreading a particular way of thinking and do not believe in working for alleviating poverty or hunger. The principal manner of alleviation of poverty and hunger that Swadhyayees is involved in is through distribution of the earnings out of Yogeshwar Krushi and Matsyagandha. The number of people and extent of the benefit is relatively small as mentioned under Claim 1 above.

As for homelessness, in the last 60 years, there have been only two occasions when Swadhyayees have assisted in *repairing* of a limited number of houses. The first was before ten years when about one hundred families were provided a small amount for undertaking repairs to their houses. The total amount may not have been more than Rupees fifteen to twenty lakhs. The second was in 2001 (which was after the declaration of Templeton Award) when a massive earthquake rocked Kutch in the state of Gujarat in India. At that time, building materials of the value of about Rs.5000 were provided to about 4000 affected families (although the claim made before UNDP was that Swadhyayees had "built" 4538 houses out of a total target of 6000 houses). This amount was totally provided by persons of Indian origin residing in USA & UK. No amount was spent out of the resources of charitable trusts of Swadhyay Parivar nor from private funds of PSA.

7. Claim

Athavale neither seeks nor accepts financial help from governments or philanthropic agencies for any of his swadhyaya experiments. (Page 3 of Press Release dated March 5, 1997)

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Facts

Swadhyay Parivar has received large plots of land from government for its projects of Vrukshamandir and Shreedarshanam *as also* for establishing institutions. The plots of land are on lease for 15 to 30 years and are renewable from time to time. Very little or lease rent is payable to the government. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that Swadhyay Parivar does not receive any assistance from the government.

All the schools run by Swadhyayees regularly receive government grants which amount to millions of rupees every year.

For many activities of Swadhyay, Swadhyayees use government schools, plots of land and other facilities either free or at a very nominal charge.

8. Claim

He said he would put the money back into the Swadhyay movement, which sponsors housing and agricultural projects throughout India. It has reached an estimated 20 million people in nearly 100,000 villages without any paid staff workers. (Chicago Tribune dated March 6, 1997)

Athavale said in an interview. "He said he would put the money back into the Swadhyaya movement. It sponsors housing and agricultural projects throughout India. It has reached an estimated 20 million people in nearly 100,000 villages without any paid staff workers. (USA TODAY dated March 6, 1997) (Similar statements have been made in The New York Times and California Telegram Tribune, all dated March 6, 1997)

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Facts

PSA is not known to have put a single penny out of 750,000 pound sterling of the prize money into Swadhyay movement. For housing projects, as mentioned above, there have been only two occasions out of which the second one had not occurred at the time of filing nomination papers for Templeton Award and was fully funded by Indian Americans.

As for reaching an estimated 20 million people and nearly 100,000 villages, the facts are as mentioned earlier under Claim 1.

9. Claim

"I don't want anything from any villager, not even a cup of coffee". (USA TODAY dated March 6, 1997) (Similar statements have been made in Chicago Tribune, The New York Times and California Telegram Tribune, all dated March 6, 1997)

Facts

In addition to what is stated under 4 above, the following facts are relevant.

Ordinary villager contributes to Swadhyay activities in different manner.

Firstly, by donating his labour to various projects for which he is not paid anything. He brings in his own packed food while working on the project. The earnings out of those projects go to the respective trusts managing the projects, such as Vruksha Mandir, Shree Darshanam, Yantra Jijnasa, Heera Mandir, Brass Mandir etc. No amount out of the earnings is used for the welfare of persons who have contributed their labour to the projects. Even out of pocket expenses are not required to be paid to these workers.

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Secondly, the poor villagers have contributed millions of rupees by way of donation to the trusts established by PSA.

Thirdly, people, both from cities and villages, have paid crores of rupees to PSA as *guru dakshina* all these years for his daily needs, from which he has lived a cosy life as also amassed crores of rupees of savings and invested them for earning further income. All travelling, lodging, boarding and incidental expenses for Swadhyay work are fully borne by Swadhyay Trusts or Swadhyayees.

It is deplorable that even after receiving large contributions from poor villagers, both in cash and in kind, both for the trusts and for his personal use, the recipient of the Award and the head of the Swadhyay movement makes statements which give an impression as if he or his trusts are not receiving anything from the villagers. On the contrary, the villagers who are really needy people, hardly receive anything out of what they have contributed to Swadhyay funds (except small amounts out of YK or MG as mentioned above or by way of occasional payments).

As for agricultural projects, these are the projects of Vruksha Mandir and Shree Darshanam and where the trusts have paid for the inputs in the period of 20 years through which the projects have been conducted. As against such input, a pretty large amount (many times larger than the input amount) would have been reaped by way of earnings or creation of assets from the output of these projects. The earnings are large since no amount is paid to the workers who work on these projects since they have contributed their labour in the form of devotion to the Lord.

From what is stated above, the reader may please draw his own conclusions as to what lead to PSA being awarded Templeton Award.