

Ignoring *maya*

During the *Oneness* Congress in December 2006 on Swami's US tour, Swami gave a lecture on *mudras* in Pasadena. The huge room with a balcony could hold up to 3,000 people. Swami sat on a great stage and only about a hundred people were scattered around the room. He started to speak warmly about spirituality. He then demonstrated the *mudras*, explaining their significance and the *mantras* linked to them. In front of me, some young girls were listening absentmindedly while a boy sat next to them and started flirting with them. Then some more people arrived but didn't stay, as they seemed to seek something more spectacular. In the room, there was a freezing draft and little by little, some 30 people left the room. I was feeling so bad for my *guru* who had to bear this empty room and the freezing ambiance.

At the end of the session, we left the room and went to the lobby, where those few people left still wanted to speak personally with Swami. He was talking to everyone of them, taking his time. I thought about warming him up by bringing him a cup of tea, but he made me understand that the tea could wait. He hugged everyone, even the bouncer. Once outside, the gale was blowing and Swami was wearing just his robe and bare feet in his sandals. I was wondering how he was able to speak with everyone without minding this freezing wind that went right through the bones. Then I remembered his words, when we were in the plane coming to the US, "Maya is very powerful and very cunning, even some *gurus* get tricked by her. Wealth, glory, fame or material pleasures seduce some of them. The best way not to be caught in the net of illusion is to remain humble and to ignore her". I was seeing how Swami was able to ignore *maya*. He would push away personal desires and concentrate on other people's needs, and what was important to them at that very moment.