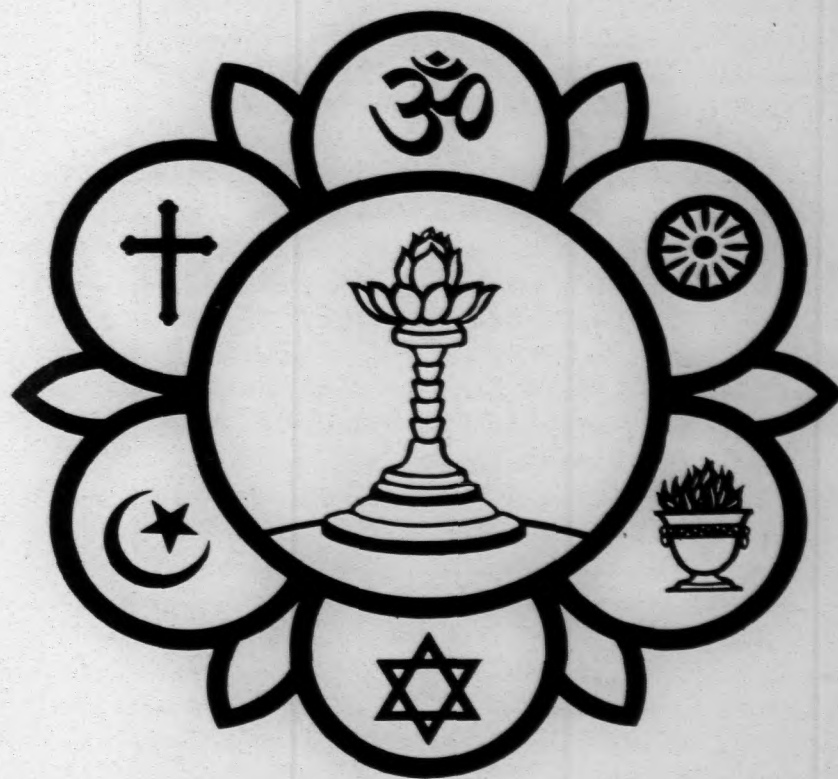


SATHYA SAI



Newsletter

WINTER 1982 - 83

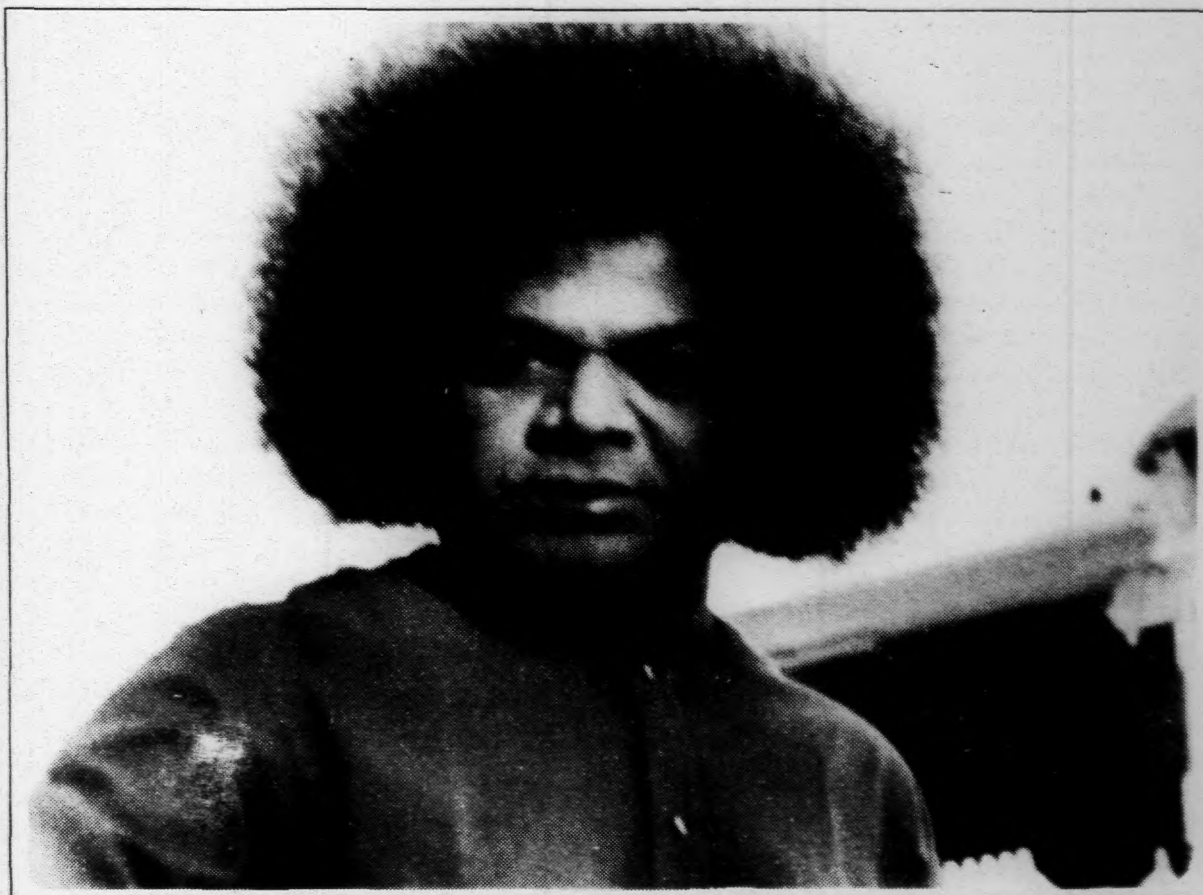
Vol. 7 No. 2

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This publication is dedicated with love and devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.



My reality is unreachable. Unreachable it will be, not only today, but even for a thousand years, though the thousand years are spent in ardent inquiry by all the people of the world acting in unison. But the bliss emanating from that reality is within the reach of all the nations of the earth and you can partake of it. Men have failed to recognize me for I am enveloped in humanness. My reality is this: this is a human form worn by the one divine principle that manifests itself as all the God forms adored by man. This Sathya Sai manifestation is divine reality itself. You are fortunate that you can grasp this truth, not at some future date when this human frame has been discarded, but luckily even while it is with you, before you. You will soon be awarded the joy of witnessing the declaration by all peoples of the divinity of this Sathya Sai manifestation.

I have resolved to enfold in the fostering care of the universal dharma laid down in the Vedas the peoples of the world. This will be done soon. This is my task. It is not my task to spread awe and wonder in the world by my power and to draw men to me thereby. I shall sustain truth and uproot untruth. I shall render you happy and ecstatic in the splendor of that triumph.

Sri Baba

FOR 1983: HOLY DAYS TO REMEMBER

February 11: MAHA-SIVARATRI is observed on the eve of the new moon at this time of year (between February and March). This occasion symbolizes the birth and rededication of spiritual life. The singing of bhajans and reading of scriptures begins in the evening and continues through the early morning; usually from about 6:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.

April 21: SRI RAMANAVAMI is recognition of the birth of the Avatar, Rama.

May 6: EASHWARAMMA DAY, a day to pay homage to the memory of the mother of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

July 24: GURU POURNIMA, the day set aside for the adoration of the guru or spiritual preceptor.

August 31: SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI, recognition of the birth of the Avatar, Krishna.

October 16: DASARA, this ten day festival celebrates victory of the forces of good over evil.

November 4: DIVALI, also known as the festival of lights. Sai centers around the world hold twenty four hour akhanda (continuous) bhajans. This occasion is dedicated to conquering desire and surrendering the ego-self to the Divine.

November 23: BABA'S BIRTHDAY; recognition of the birth of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

MORE ABOUT MAHA-SIVARATRI

In the month of Maagh (February-March), the fourteenth night is known as Maha-Sivaratri. Maha means great, Siva means auspicious and Ratri means night; the Great-Auspicious-Night. Auspicious for what? The night is auspicious for obtaining complete control over one's mind. Siva, the formless Divinity, is adored and revered for the acquisition of Divine Wisdom.

Sivaratri is observed on the fourteenth night of the dark half of every month. It is a well established fact of Yogic discipline that it is easier to control the mind during the dark half of the month when the moon is on the wane. The fourteenth night is particularly suitable for a little more intensive Sadhana to completely sublimate the last and remaining fifteenth fraction of the mind, corresponding

to the last fraction of the moon. It is possible to achieve complete victory over the mind during this night. When the mind is fully under control, one becomes an heir to the experiences of bliss, power and illumination.

"How is it possible for the moon to influence the Mind?" Such a question has been often put to the author by various people. The author does not know the exact mechanism, but he would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the forces emanating from the moon are responsible for shifting gigantic masses of water on the surface of this earth during the tides. Then why should it be difficult to understand the influence of the moon on a human body which is nearly 80% water? The 'lunatics' are so called because their behaviour sometimes can be predicted to some extent by the waxing and waning of the moon. The ancient seers and rishis were fully aware of the influence exercised by the planets on the human body and they used these influences for their spiritual benefit. Thus the practice of intensive Sadhana on the fourteenth night of the waning moon is not just an old wife's tale or superstition, but it has its roots in the personal experiences of the ancient sages.

Excerpted from:
VISION OF THE DIVINE
by E.B. Fanibunda

ASPECTS OF THE MOON FOR 1983

Full Moon	Waning of the Moon During this Time	Dark or New Moon
January 28		February 13
February 27		March 14
March 28		April 13
April 27		May 11
May 26		June 11
June 25		July 10
July 24		August 8
August 23		September 7
September 22		October 6
October 21		November 4
November 20		December 4
December 20		January 3, 1984

MORE ABOUT SPIRITUAL DIARIES
AND CEILING ON DESIRES
A Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I am happy to have received the last issue of the Sathya Sai Newsletter (Fall 1982, Volume 7, No. 1). Although I was skeptical, I started a spiritual diary when first reading about it. Somehow I was motivated to continue as the article was convincing (Bhagavan's 60th Birthday Celebration, page 2). Only a few days have passed and I am already seeing some positive results. To write something in the diary is like making a promise to Swami so I cannot but keep my word. This whole concept of doing a journal is an unexpectedly thrilling endeavor.

A grateful devotee

In the last issue of this publication it was explained that those devotees of Baba, who wish to, could start their own spiritual diary as a kind of sadhana or discipline. A simple way to accomplish this would be to acquire an inexpensive notebook or calendar, perhaps Swami's picture could be put on the cover. One could begin by recording each desire as it arises and is subdued by our own free will.

In this way we become the conscious witness to our own cravings and impulses. As one desire after another is conquered, eventually attachment is overcome. This in turn brings greater freedom and joy to the individual.

This exercise is being widely practiced in India by Sai devotees. The spiritual diaries will be laid at the feet of Baba in a ceremony on his 60th birthday in 1985. The program is known as the "Ceiling on Desires for Spiritual Renaissance" and is causing thoughtful people to take stock of unnecessary cravings.

Impulses and desires have to be sublimated in order to get mastery over the mind. Desires excite the mind and make it rush towards the senses, as a dog runs behind its master. It is not enough if only one sense is conquered. All of them should be mastered completely.
Baba

In addition to the ceiling on desires diaries, there is a nine point program being put into operation by Sai devotees in India. The

following were outlined by Indulal Shah, President of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba World Council. He spoke during the all India conference preceding Baba's birthday at Prasanthi Nilayam last November.

1. Each day practice meditation and japa (repetition of the name of the Lord done with devotion).
2. Sing bhajans (holy songs) with members of the family once a week.
3. Encourage participation in the Education in Human Values program by the children of the family.
4. Participate in community work and other programs of the Sai organization.
5. Attend at least once a month a bhajan session sponsored by the Sai organization.
6. Regular study of Sai literature.
7. Speak softly to everyone.
8. Do not indulge in talking ill of others, particularly in their absence.
9. Set aside some non-perishable goods from each meal and donate it to the needy. Form the habit of not wasting food.

The international committee states that participation in the spiritual diary or any of the above mentioned activities as a discipline is in no way mandatory, but is wholly voluntary.



ABOUT THE SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Because of the increased cost of printing and postage, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given permission to raise the price of the Newsletter. We hope this does not inconvenience any of our subscribers. Beginning now, with this issue, Winter 1982-83, Volume 7, No. 2, the new pricing will be as listed on the inside back cover, page 33.

FROM *BAPU TO BABA -- A JOURNALIST'S ODYSSEY

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," says Shakespeare. I often wonder what beneficent providence brought me in the last chapter of my life to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. To come under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in my early years was natural in the circumstances prevailing in the country. But to move from Gandhi to Marx, then return to Gandhi and later turn to Sri Sathya Sai Baba as an authentic spiritual leader whose avowed mission is to restore the Dharmic way of living in India and elsewhere is a process of evolution which seems to have been contrived by an unseen prayer.

To accept Gandhiji (Mahatma Gandhi) as the unique voice of the nation was the most natural thing in the twenties. Gandhiji imparted to the national movement a vitality and spiritual force which it had not had before. The authority with which he asserted the sanctity of the means to be used in the freedom struggle was something entirely new to the world of politics. I was too young at the time to realize the full significance of Gandhiji's emphasis on non-violence and truth. I was an eight year old lad when the nation was stirred by the moving slogans of the time.

In 1921, when the Mahatma launched the Non-cooperation movement, I took to the plying of the charkha, the boycott of British cloth, the learning of Hindi, and the singing of national songs with all the zeal of a school boy for whom freedom of the country had acquired a new meaning. I well remember handing over all my foreign clothes to a zealous Muslim volunteer, who was actively going round houses in my native town, Chittoor, A.P., collecting British cloth for a grand bonfire. Together with a large crowd of children I watched the big blaze going up from a huge pile of foreign cloth.

Over the next ten years Gandhiji dominated my mind as much as he dominated the National Movement in the country. I was at college when the Simon Commission visited the country and most of the students in the college were enthusiastically supporting the campaign for the boycott of the Commission. Then came Gandhiji's Dandi March and the Civil Disobedience Movements of the thirties. By 1931, however, I had come under the influence of Marxism through contacts with some very dedicated Communists and through study of Communist literature.

*The name given Mahatma Gandhi by some of his devotees.

What primarily turned me away from Gandhism to Marxism was the obvious collapse of the international capitalist system in the wake of the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the great depression that gripped all the advanced capitalistic countries in the thirties. While the mounting unemployment in the capitalist world seemed to provide unmistakable evidence of the incapacity of the capitalist system to solve the economic problems created by a competitive private market economy, the apparent success of the Soviet Union, which had just launched its first five year plan, seemed to suggest that some kind of socialism was the only rational alternative to the evils of capitalism and its offspring, imperialism. In the face of what was happening both in the capitalist countries and in the Soviet Union, it then seemed to me that a purely bourgeois national movement such as the one led by Gandhiji could not liberate India's millions from their age-old poverty and squalor even if the national movement succeeded in achieving political freedom.

Looked at from the Marxist angle, Gandhiji seemed at the time not only an economic and social reactionary but one who appeared to be concerned more with moral means than with vital economic and social goals.

Developments in India during World War II increasingly made me feel that the Gandhian approach to national and international problems was a more enduring answer to the problems of mankind than Marxism as interpreted by Lenin and Stalin. I felt in particular that the communist doctrine of the end justifying the means and their avowed faith in violence as a means of world change were bound to prove self-defeating and could only produce a social and political system in which moral values were subordinated to political and personal ends. Above all, the doctrine of class war and class hatred on which the entire communist movement had been built seemed to me to be calculated to warp the minds of millions of people and breed an atmosphere of hatred, which could not be conducive to the development of a healthy and harmonious social system.

It is not physical achievements like the building of dams or roads or factories that really matter in the ultimate reckoning, though they are undoubtedly important for a people as poor as ourselves. What is really more vital is the character of the people who build them and the spirit in which they build them. The great men who built our temples have left no foundation stones in marble to let posterity know who their architects or their inspirers were. They

built temples so that their people may look to something far higher than themselves to guide their lives on the right path. But if in the process of building our dams and our power houses, we have filled our people with no nobler idea than of making a little more money, with the clever and unscrupulous making all the money while the real workers manage to earn a bare living, we may succeed in building a few imposing edifices but we will hardly have improved the character of the nation.

The supreme need of the country day to day is to recover the spirit for ordering its life in every department, in the government or outside. Who can say what torment the Mahatma's soul is going through witnessing the universal collapse of morals and self discipline that has so rapidly overtaken the country in so short a time? A spiritual catharsis on a national scale must be the prelude to a reordering of the national life. Sabko Sanmathi de Bhagavan! (Oh, Lord! Give good sense to all the people!)

The events of the past few years have compelled me to feel that nothing less than a powerful moral impulse emanating from an authentic spiritual leader, who is respected by the masses and the elite alike, can serve to change the course of the country from the foul and disastrous rut into which it has fallen. I am convinced from what I have seen, experienced and read of Sri Sathya Sai Baba that such a powerful impulse can only come from him. He is venerated by millions as an incarnation of the divine. His avowed commitment to the restoration of India's ancient dharmic ideals in the life of every person in the country will be obvious to anyone who listens to him or watches his activities. An entirely new generation of children and students in all parts of the country is being imbued with devotion to dharmic ideals and is being trained to render dedicated service to the country in the spirit of consecration to the Divine. Although Gandhiji trained many devoted workers in his Ashrams at Sabarmati and Sewagram, he did not attempt anything on the scale which Sri Sathya Sai Baba is doing today.

The attempt to unify a people as diverse as ourselves with a multiplicity of languages, religions, customs and division of caste and community, which Sri Sathya Sai Baba is making, is something vastly more significant and far reaching than what Gandhiji or others had attempted in the past. It is primarily because of Sri Baba's spiritual approach to the problems of human development and unity that I believe his efforts will be more successful and enduring than attempts

made in the past on a political or socioeconomic basis.

I am increasingly convinced that Sri Sathya Sai Baba's advent into India at the present crisis in the nation's history is of cosmic significance, because if this ancient land after recovering its freedom fails to establish itself as a great and united country rooted in its ancient spiritual and cultural heritage and give to the world the kind of moral leadership it needs, India will be betraying its historic destiny.

The endless stream of judges, administrators, scientists and political leaders from all parts of India who have been coming to Sri Baba is an index of the growing feeling among people of different walks of life in India that this country requires a powerful and widely accepted spiritual leadership to rescue it from the morass into which it has sunk. It has been clear to me moreover from the large numbers of devotees from many countries coming to Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam (Puttaparthi) to have darsan of Baba and to seek his advice on personal and national problems that the message of Sai Baba is relevant not only to India, but to all the countries of the world. The other day one young man from distant Guatemala told me that his country has been passing through violence and disorder for the past twenty years and he had come all the way to Brindavan to find out how Baba could help his country. An African leader from Sierra Leone told me that millions of Africans were looking to Sri Baba for inspiration and guidance to solve the problems of the newly freed African nations.

The global significance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's mission was demonstrated unmistakably at the recent World Conference of Sathya Sai Organizations at Prasanthi Nilayam. On the last day when Sri Baba distributed prasadams (consecrated food) individually to the 2,500 delegates from overseas countries and when they all got up to hail Sri Baba during the 'arathi', one sensed the gathering of a miniature United Nations in the holy shrine of Prasanthi Nilayam. It was a significant ceremony which showed that the true unity of mankind can only be achieved by the recognition of a spiritual kinship binding all humanity. Clearly, the world needs the redemptive power of a great spiritual leader to rescue it from its moral confusion and chaos.

V.K. Narasimham
Editor, SANATHANA SARATHI

DESCRIPTION OF AN AVATAR

This appraisal of the Avatar Rama written by Bhagavan is, in our opinion, also a valid description of Sri Sathya Sai. Editor.

Rama was supremely gentle. However harsh others might speak, he used to reply soft and sweet. Though others might do him harm, he never remembered it against them. He only sought to be good and be of service to them. Whenever he found time he used to discuss with aged monks, revered Brahmins and learned scholars, codes of good conduct and rules of morality. He analyzed the mysteries of Vedantic thought in simple words and like an ordinary enquirer, he posed problems before pundits for elucidation. The sages and scholars who had mastered the science of Vedanta and philosophical enquiry were elated at the elaborations given by Rama of the knotty points he himself raised; they praised in a thousand different ways his intelligence and scholarship.

Rama spoke to his subjects even before they spoke to him; so ardent was his love towards them. He lovingly inquired about their welfare and was full of sympathy for them. So, the subjects too loved him as their staunchest friend and dearest kinsman, and they revered him for his affectionate interest in them. Rama followed strictly the various rules of living, dictated by tradition, whatever the inconvenience or discomfort. To whomsoever he spoke, he had a charming smile on his face, a merry twinkle in the eye and lasting sweetness in his words. No one noticed the slightest trace of anger, dislike, despair or hate in his face.

He was the embodiment of compassion and sympathy. He was full of eagerness to rescue those who surrendered their wishes to his will. Undesirable habits to which royalty is an easy prey never dared to approach him. He was not a victim of the evil habits of garrulity and dalliance. In spite of this, if anyone displayed before him his cleverness in argument, he would never fail to foil him by cleverer counter-argument and put him in his place. He never knew illness of body or anxiety in the mind. He recognized the needs of the people and, even before they presented them, he considered the response that could be made and remedied the grievance. Rama paid attention to even the smallest detail of administration and took adequate precautions to see that problems and complexities do not raise their heads once they had been solved and set right. Another quality which was evident in Rama was: He never revealed in advance what he had

resolved in his mind. Until it took final shape, no one could make out his will or wish. And his anger or resentment, or his satisfaction would never be futile. He would not delay or allow himself to be diverted or deceived. With such supreme characteristics, Rama shone in glory.

Rama stole the hearts of all who came into his presence; they became mad in their single-pointed devotion to him; they felt that contemplation of his face and repetition of his name were all the austerity that they had to practice thereafter. He discoursed on Dharma (righteousness) and spiritual disciplines during both day and night to those who gathered around him.

Baba
RAM KATHA RASAVAHINI
Volumes I and II



ACTIVITIES OF SATHYA SAI BABA CENTERS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

HONOLULU, HAWAII - In response to the idea of giving a fifteen minute presentation of Sai's teachings at the end of the regular bhajan meeting, some members were apprehensive. They felt it would break the peacefulness after singing the holy songs. Others were fearful of being called upon to speak before a group. However, the membership decided to pursue the project and now it has become a welcome addition to the meeting each week.

Some of the results of the talks have been an increase in self confidence in communicating Baba's teachings to others. There is the creation of a personal sense of purpose, a direction, a personal commitment to their own sense of spirituality. Each one finds out more about Swami as they learn and grow closer to one another and strengthen their resolve not only to learn, but live the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The hurricane, Iwa, hit the Hawaiian Islands on Baba's birthday, November 23 and was very spectacular and destructive. The home where the Sathya Sai Baba Center is located lost a few shingles from the roof but had no serious damage. The wind and rain were furious but still devotees came to celebrate by singing holy songs. It was noted with a profound sense of joy that the violent winds stopped after bhajans were sung and there was perfect calm.

David Lenhoff

SAN DIEGO REGION OF CALIFORNIA, which includes the Sai centers of Chula Vista, Escondido, La Jolla and Point Loma, encourage members to take part in starting their spiritual diaries. This is being done voluntarily on an individual basis. In time it might be interesting to hear from them and publish a progress report regarding this activity.

It is interesting to note that these four centers share many activities and work together in harmony. It is inspiring to see centers acting as a support system to one another while doing Sai's work.

Work is worship
Baba

DENVER, COLORADO - Some members of this center have initiated an ambitious project. Besides regular bhajan meetings they gather together each week to study the traditional scriptures of the world and learn Sanskrit. They have, so far, had guest speakers to lecture on Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Unitarian Christian

philosophy. This eager group plans to cover other religions as part of their education.

They have welcomed a new family into their midst who has worked with the service committee in Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. All are benefiting by sharing the experiences of this family and by bringing more discipline to their existing service programs. This past year five members have received Bhagavan's darshan in India.

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY - This center offers the small membership of six people weekly satsang; precious opportunities to experience Baba's presence and oneness of heart. The unanimous feeling is expressed by one member, "Because the Kentucky center is so small there is such a closeness among its members, a real family sharing genuine love, the quality of which has been very warm and bright. What a beautiful effect it has had on our lives."

The center meets in a mobile home set amid blooming flower gardens, trees and meadows. There is room for devotees to pause for rest and relaxation, as several have done this past summer, a special blessing.

The members serve as a kind of information center for several interested people in Kentucky. For that reason they have a complete collection of reading materials, discourse tapes and pictures from the Tustin Book Center and Prasanthi Nilayam. Also they subscribe to the always welcome Newsletter and Sanathana Sarathi. They find the very excellent OM Publication, Children's Newsletter and other Education in Human Values literature extremely interesting and helpful to the adults. Although there are no children in the center as yet, one member has attended the August, 1981, EHV training session at Prasanthi Nilayam.

The good people of Frankfort are proof that a center need not be large to carry on a busy schedule of activities and engage in Sai's teachings.



Please let us hear from the Sai brothers and sisters in the mid-west and eastern United States. Even though you are knee-deep in snow, let your SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER know about your centers' plans, activities, progress and even problems.

MARK YOUR 1983 CALENDAR FOR THESE SAI RETREATS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>KIND OF RETREAT TITLE OR THEME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS</u>
May 13-15	Hosted by the Sai Centers of Ojai, Lompoc, Ventura & Santa Barbara	Camp Colby 20 miles from Pasadena, California	Mr. Kent Pearce 666 Cedar Place Ventura, CA 93001 (805) 643-1514
May 27-30	6th Midwest Regional Conference Hosted by the Sai Center of North St. Louis	St. Louis, Missouri	Mr. Allan Woods 28 Robert Avenue St. Louis, MO 63135 (314) 524-0345
First Week- end in July	2nd Annual Rocky Mountain Regional Retreat	Rocky Mountains of New Mexico	Mr. Randy Houdobre 935 Alameda Rd NW Albuquerque, NM 87114 (505) 898-3186
July 16-23	Sathya Sai Children's Camp (Children Only)	Camp ValCrest In the Angeles National Forest near Pas- adena, Calif.	Mrs. Diana Jorgensen 9342 Ojai Road Ojai, CA 93023 (805) 646-5233

Please contact the persons indicated for details regarding cost, clothing, equipment, directions and transportation.

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Book Center of America
P.O. Box 278
Tustin, California 92680
(714) 669-0522

- SAINTS OF INDIA, published by Bal Vikas Educational Fund, India. These fascinating stories are presented in three volumes, parts I, II and III. The accounts of the saints of India acquaint the reader with their life stories and what they have accomplished.
Each part is \$1.60; total \$4.80
- SAI, THE WORD MADE FLESH by Occah Seapaul. A book written with devotion to Sai. The author shares personal experiences and many meaningful quotations from Baba. Price \$3.25

FILMS, VIDEO AND CASSETTE TAPES AVAILABLE

Sai Foundation
7911 Willoughby Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90046
(213) 656-9373

There have been many requests for the long playing record of SAI BABA CHANTS THE BHAJANS and SAI'S 1968 DISCOURSE as spoken by Mr. Kasturi. That record is no longer in print but the same material is available on cassette tape in stereo.

- C-006 Price \$3.50

An attractive new color photograph of Baba, done by Edyna, in the form of a mandala is available.

- Mandala Photo, 8" x 10" Price \$3.50

- Please note that photographic enlargements of any pictures selected from the Sai Foundation catalog can be had upon special request. Sizes 20" x 40" are \$75.00 Sizes 40" x 60" are \$125.00

- The free catalog will be sent to those asking for a copy.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

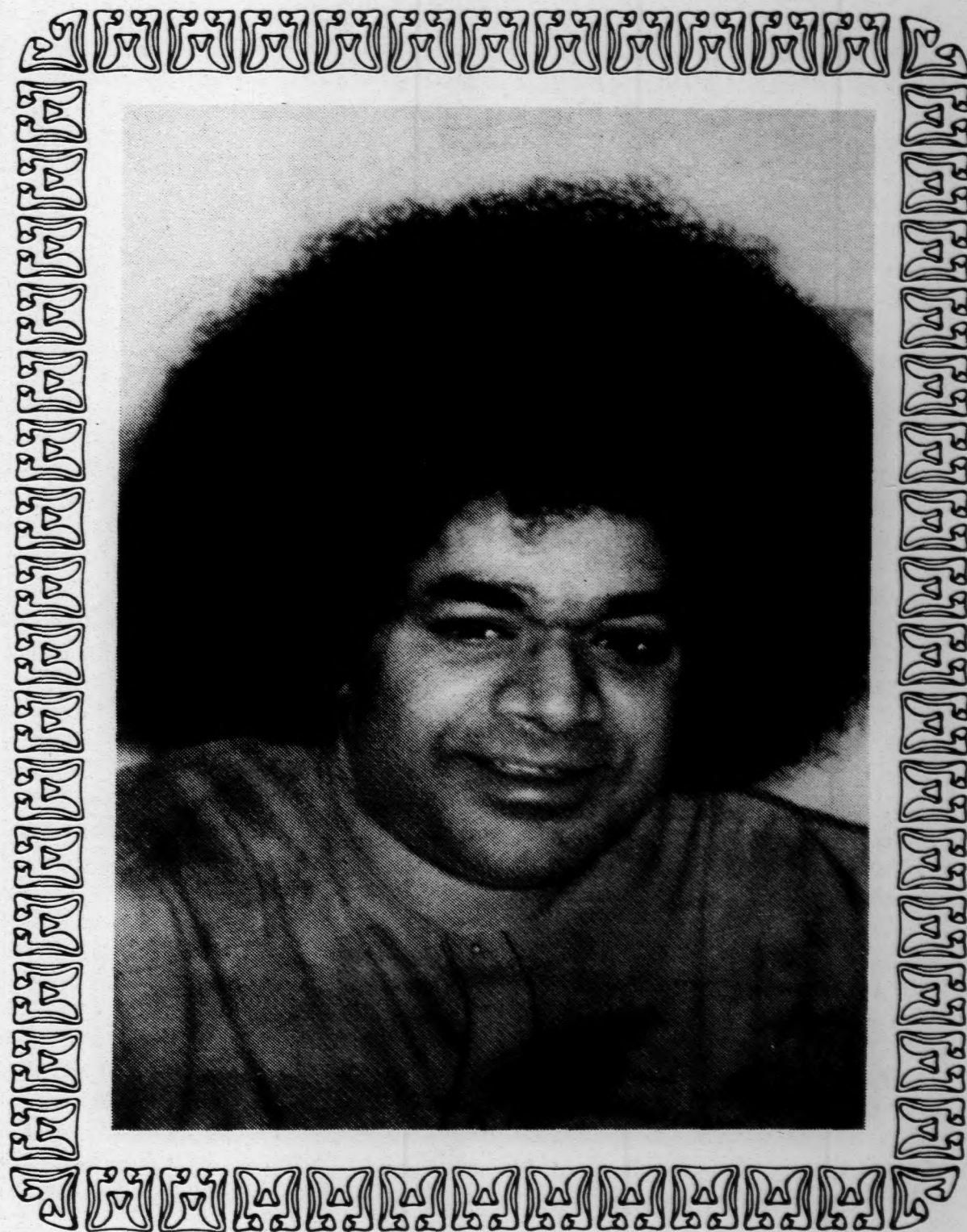
Given by Sri Baba at the gathering of East African Rotarians and Lions club members July 6 and 9, 1968. Continued from SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER, Summer 1982, Volume 6, No. 4.

Question: Is it true that we have had many births previous to this ?

Baba: Of course it is true. The sage Mrikanda once asked Narada, "I have been practicing austerities since sixty years but I could not win the boon of God realization. That boy, Dhruva, a mere six year old child, spent just five months in austerity and God appeared before him and granted his desires. This is very unjust." But Narada replied, "A slab of stone breaks into two when a child gives a hammer-stroke. The same slab did not break for twenty hammer-strokes from a hefty hand administered just previous to the twenty first. Why? The slab broke as a result of the cumulative effect of all the blows, twenty then and one now. So, too, Dhruva had years of austerity in previous births and just five months of it in this birth. " "But", you may ask, "If we had lives previous to this why do we not remember the events ?" Well, do you remember the events of this life at least ? All the events ? Krishna asked Arjuna, "Ten years ago on the full moon day of the month Majha where exactly were you ?" Arjuna could not recall the place. For it had no significance for him. He could, however, recall the date when he married the sister of Krishna for that was a happy event he could not forget. There are no significant events in the past life and so you do not remember any. But God is concerned with all, so He remembers all.

Question: What happens after death to the individual, Swamiji ?

Baba: The final thought of the individual decides what form the jivi assumes when it is born again. Just as the fragrance of a garden of lilies is carried by the breeze, the atmosphere of gunas or tendencies and characteristics which predominates in this life is carried forward into the next. Birth in the next form has to take place very soon, but the interval may be more or less. When you switch on the lights, light comes immediately. When you switch on the fan it takes time for the fan to whirl fast enough to cool the air. If it is a stove, it takes longer still for the stove to be ready for cooking. Of course there are many who are not born again since they merge in the ocean of grace.



Question: But population does increase.

Baba: That is because animals and other beings earn the human birth and come in for the great chance.

Question: Perhaps that is the reason why men are behaving like animals.

Baba: Why should you argue that animals, beasts and birds are bad? Each animal is treading its dharma. It does not overstep or undermine. They have greater cooperation and mutual love than even men. Each has to be judged from the point of view of the equipment and the opportunity. Man can live better if only he learns from animals. He is degrading himself even lower. When the Lord incarnates He has as one of His tasks the protection of sadhus, of beings with quiet innocent natures. Among the animals are countless sadhus, remember.

Question: What are the main principles of the Hindu faith, Swamiji?

Baba: One of the main principles is this: that each one is responsible for his own uplift or downfall, that he must reap what he sows, that he must himself win the grace of God to save himself from the suffering caused by ignorance. Then the Hindu believes in the possibility and the authenticity of divine incarnations or Avatars, God assuming human form in order to uphold truth and suppress falsehood. The Hindu also believes that God can be realized, visualized here and now through mental purification. When the mind is cleansed out of existence, one is all illumination, the splendor of God that is his inner reality.

Question: How can that be done, Swamiji?

Baba: The mind is like the handkerchief, warp and woof of yarn. The yarn is desire. Remove desires, conquer the tendency to satisfy them and the mind is nullified. Desire leads to attachment, attachment soils the mind with hatred, envy, greed, lust, malice, etc. Every religion strives to teach the methods of minimizing desires and avoiding the pollution of the mind. Chiththa-suddhi (purification of the mind) is the aim through the annihilation of sublimation of desire.

Question: How can hatred and suspicion be removed from the mind, Swamiji? They are so deep rooted in man.

Baba: Hatred and suspicion are signs of weakness. Become strong and

then there will be no need to hate or suspect. Only the timid are prone to hate. Hatred is a sign of egoism, of greed, of desiring something you do not deserve. Develop vairagya, detachment. That will make you brave, free, full of courage. It will add strength to you.

Question: Can non-violence win over all opposition, Swamiji ?

Baba: Of course it can. Only you must have unshakeable faith. You should not start compromising and discovering excuses for transgressing it.

Question: But, Swamiji, people seem to have forgotten the apostle of non-violence so soon, even in his own country !

Baba: Why do you worry over another's memory? If you feel that a certain line of behavior is good, remember it yourself. That is the best you can do to promote the cause of love. Why should you assume responsibility for straightening the world ? Straighten yourself. If each one is good and does good, the world becomes good.

Question: But Swamiji, on account of that non-violence India was divided and the two parts are hating each other.

Baba: The principle is not at fault. The people had no faith in it. It was just an external decoration. Moreover, geographical nearness has nothing to do with the nearness of the heart. We must be 'dear' to each other however 'far' we are geographically. Be near and dear, be far and dear. That is the duty of man. All must be loved and adored as temples where God is installed.

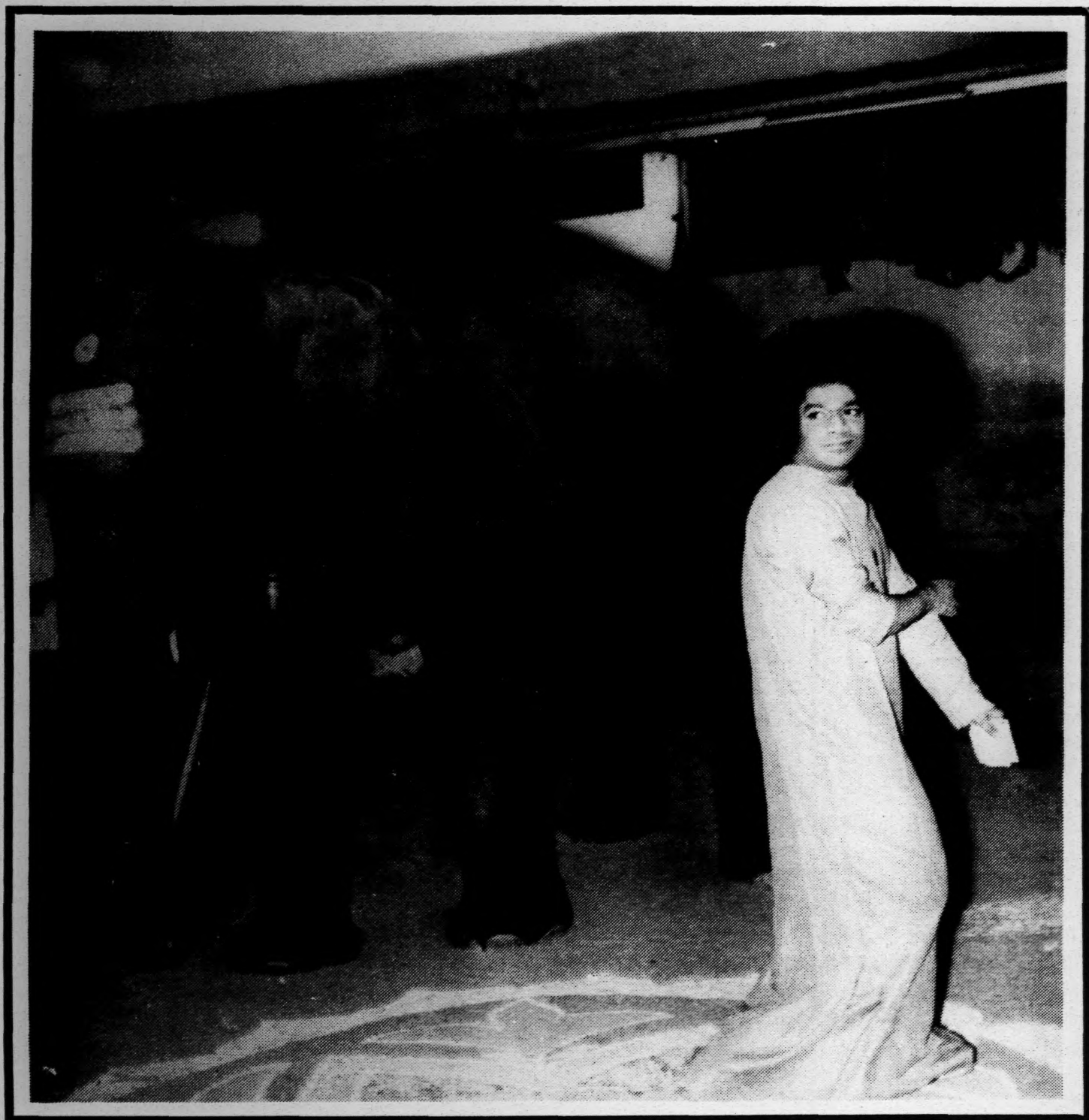
Question: When will individualism disappear, Swamiji ?

Baba: It will disappear when the vyakthi (the individual) knows that he is really the sakthi (the universal energy). When the bulb knows that it shines through the same current that illumines all the other bulbs, whatever the color or size.

Question: Why doesn't Hinduism establish proselytizing missions, Swami ?

Baba: Because Hinduism has no boundaries or limits. It is only when you have limits that you try to overstep them and try to bring those beyond into the fold. It has no aliens outside the pale. All are pilgrims trudging along the same road towards the same shrine. Their paces may be different but their goal is the same.

to be continued



CHILDREN'S CORNER

GITA, HER DESTINY IS TO BECOME A HUMAN PERSON

Very likely all of Sri Bhagavan's devotees know about his pet elephant, Gita, either by directly observing incidents or by hearing stories. She is very much attached to him and he is most kind to her. We watch with delight as she comes to him and, with her trunk, places a garland of flowers around his shoulders. Swami speaks to her, pats her trunk and gives bananas to please her taste. On the occasions of festivals and celebrations that mark special days Gita is invariably a proud, stately and magnificently decorated member of the ceremonial procession, calling always to mind the pomp and circumstance of India's romantic past. When the celebrations are at Brindavan, Gita will walk the long miles from Prasanthi Nilayam, taking a number of days for the journey. Once she arrives at Brindavan, Gita usually stays for a time in the compound, a member of Sri Baba's animal family of buffaloes, cows, deer, monkeys, dogs, birds and cobras. She is playful and good humored except when impatient for Sri Baba to appear. One game she enjoys is played with an old tire from an automobile. College students who happen to be in the compound will play the game with her for a while. They roll the tire full force towards her. She trumpets and acts very frisky for an individual of her size and weight. She chases wildly after the tire kicking it and scampering around in a most playful manner.

I learned about Gita's destiny one day at Prasanthi Nilayam. Gita's home is at the Gokulum, Sri Baba's dairy farm which supplies pure milk both to the Ashram and to the adjoining village of Puttaparthi. The Gokulum is several acres in extent. It has modern sanitary sheds for the cattle, houses for the workers and their families, a park and a wonderful statue of Sri Krishna with a cow, both very nicely and neatly painted. The statue of Sri Krishna is especially admired by visitors. It was made to Swami's specifications, taken to his quarters and painted by him before being installed at the Gokulum. The cows at Gokulum are wonderful in themselves. They are the finest cattle available in India and are prize winners in the quantity and quality of the milk produced.

On this particular day I had been fortunate to accompany Sri Bhagavan in the jeep on the short drive to the Gokulum which he visits almost daily. He knows every cow as an individual, greets each one,

strokes it and speaks to it. The cows, of course, know him and come forward to be greeted. Such a visit to Gokulum is always a happy occasion and the beauty of the fine animals is a pleasure to see.

The inspection of the cattle over, we were ready to leave. I got in to the jeep first, as is protocol, so that when Swami gets in the driver can immediately put the car in motion. But now Swami delayed getting in for Gita had become aware of Baba's presence and was hurriedly coming towards him. Swami waited for her, stroked her trunk, spoke to her and gave her bananas. Then he moved to enter the car, but Gita made a noise and he turned towards her again, stroked her and spoke to her. See, Sri Bhagavan said to me, *She is crying. She is saying, "Swami, don't leave now, stay longer with me."*

And sure enough, as I closely looked at her, large tears were indeed rolling from her eyes. The car got underway and I said to Sai Baba, "Swami, people say that Gita was an Indian princess, so devoted to Bhagavan that she took birth as an animal so as to be close in this way to yourself. Is this true?"

Sri Bhagavan replied, *Not so. Gita has never been human, but her next birth will be as a human being.*

Dr. J. Hislop



Why should you argue that animals, beasts and birds are bad? Each animal is treading its dharma (righteousness). It does not overstep or undermine. They have greater cooperation and mutual love than even men.

Baba
excerpted from page 18

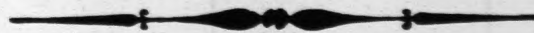
TO SRI SATHYA SAI

I went down to the sea,
where the breeze gently plays
with the waves.
Silvery sands
and black rocks.
Lying still I listened to their sigh
and heard
Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai.

I went out to the fields
where the flowers awake
at daybreak.
Gay butterflies
and free birds.
Sitting still I listened to their cry
and heard
Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai.

I went up to the mountains
where enchanted trees sleep
sound and deep.
Immense silence,
intense peace.
Standing still I looked to the sky
and heard
Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai. . .Sri Sathya Sai.

By Indra Devi, from her book
SAI BABA AND SAI YOGA



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DROP THE HANDKERCHIEF

A recent trip to Prasanthi Nilayam, India, has sparked memories of childhood days when friends and I would play "drop the handkerchief." It seems that upon reaching a certain age there is a tendency to believe that we have dropped our childish ways. Yet while near his lotus feet we begin to learn the ways of being Baba's child.

Before my departure a friend had requested that I bring back for her one of Swami's robes. I immediately expressed my inability to make such a request remembering my previous trips and the very few words I had ever had the courage to utter in his presence. Her second choice was that I bring back one of Swami's handkerchieves. This did not seem quite as overwhelming as a robe and maybe I could muster up the courage to ask Swami if the opportunity seemed right.

While en route the thought of the handkerchief frequently came up until it began assuming the proportions of a desire. I pictured myself in the interview room with Baba saying, "take this to your friend", as he handed me a handkerchief fresh with the scent and marks of vibhuti. I was even carrying with me some plastic bags into which the handkerchief could be placed and carefully carried back across the sea.

With desire often comes doubt and by the time Japan was in sight I began to wonder if Swami really would give me a handkerchief. I suddenly recalled the many days in darshan when he would materialize vibhuti for someone and a fortunate lady nearby would have the presence of mind to hand him a handkerchief she had with her expressly for that purpose. Well, I thought, if I can't get one of his handkerchieves, then having him merely touch one that I have is the next best thing and surely my friend will be just as delighted. With twenty four hours on the island of Japan I had ample time to explore the many shops in a local bazaar. Inevitably I would always find myself in the handkerchief section weighing in my mind if any were worthy of being used by Baba with which to wipe his hand. After much deliberation I finally spent a few yen on the loveliest handkerchief I thought would satisfy my yen.

And so it came to pass that the little hanky in a baggie faithfully followed me to every darshan. There it sat patiently poised on my lap waiting for the right moment to be of service. Yet the right moment never seemed to come our way. Either we sat too far back,

beyond arm's reach, or when close enough I would often forget about the handkerchief, being absorbed in his divine love or revelling at his sight or the sound of Baba's voice as he consoled, chided or chuckled.

The little hanky also followed me into the interview room. At that point I had nearly forgotten that it was with me, overwhelmed as I was by the thought of being so close to Swami. Yet, desires have a way of making themselves obvious even in the most ideal surroundings and the handkerchief was again on my lap awaiting its chance. Baba materialized vibhuti and I thought, "my chance has come", as I stretched my arm with the handkerchief appended to its extremity. Yet another lady was quicker than I and he used hers, as he glanced my way. A second time he made vibhuti and I frantically reached out again as Baba picked up the handkerchief on his chair and asked the group, "*What is this?*" In unison we answered "a handkerchief." Was he smiling at me as I mouthed handkerchief and waited for him to give it to me ?

Then the lesson came. He talked about the handkerchief made of cloth which is made of thread just as the mind is made of desires which are made of thoughts. It gradually began to sink in that my handkerchief episode was a perfect example of how I had let my thoughts lead to desires which then controlled my mind. A moment of embarrassment followed this insight and I attempted to conceal the hanky within the meters of my sari. Next came the awakening that here I was at Swami's feet, the moment I had anticipated for so long. Could that moment of waiting even be measured in years ? Has it been lifetimes or perhaps even yugas ? How could I possibly squander this one precious moment with the thought, desire and mind for a handkerchief ?

That evening, somewhere on the grounds of Prasanthi Nilayam, the handkerchief was dropped. It was with a sense of relief that a few hours later I noted its absence. I can assure you that no attempt was made on my part to look for it. I am only grateful and honored that our teacher has blessed me with the rare opportunity of hearing and living this lesson: drop the handkerchief (bundle of desires) and seek safety.

Devotee from Santa Barbara

BIRTHDAY DISCOURSE - NOVEMBER 23, 1982

That which has no form, that which has no concrete base or a physical shape - how can you possibly assign a definite name and a definite form to such an entity? That which has not hands, no feet - how can you possibly talk in terms of the grace or the subtlety of movement of such an entity? You talk of that entity having this attribute, that attribute, having this form or that nature. This is nothing more than a matter for laughter. You talk in terms of that entity having the splendor of one *crore of suns. These words are nothing but a figment of your imagination. That Shakti, that innate power which has no form - you tend to give it a form, a base and an existence. Is it possible for anyone to accomplish a task of this nature? Is it possible for anyone to comprehend the true nature of this Shakti, which since time immemorial has been indefinable, indescribable, and beyond comprehension? This country Bharat (India) is the home and the treasure house of the Vedas (ancient spiritual teachings). It is the home where rituals, sacrifices, and performances like the yagnas have a symbolic significance and a deep meaning. This is the homeland, the elderly mother; this is the age-old lady which has given birth to many Avatars down the ages. This is the land where a sense of character, a sense of regulation and a sense of discipline have been given a prime place of importance.

Premaswarupulaara (one whose nature is love). The first and foremost task, the sign of a true sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) is to desire the love of the Lord. If you were to secure His love, you will have secured everything possible. One who has been the recipient of this love need not undertake any other form of sadhana (discipline). So long as the food is being cooked you have a need for the fire. The moment the food has been cooked you have no need for the fire. In the same way for those sadhakas who have secured the love of the Lord, there is no need for them to undertake any other sadhana. But then what is the path for this sadhana? Man gets deluded on two counts and thereby becomes a slave to himself. One is a liking or fondness, the other is a dislike or hatred. In the Vedas this has been called duality.

With due respect, at this point we delete a portion of Bhagavan's discourse. Editor.

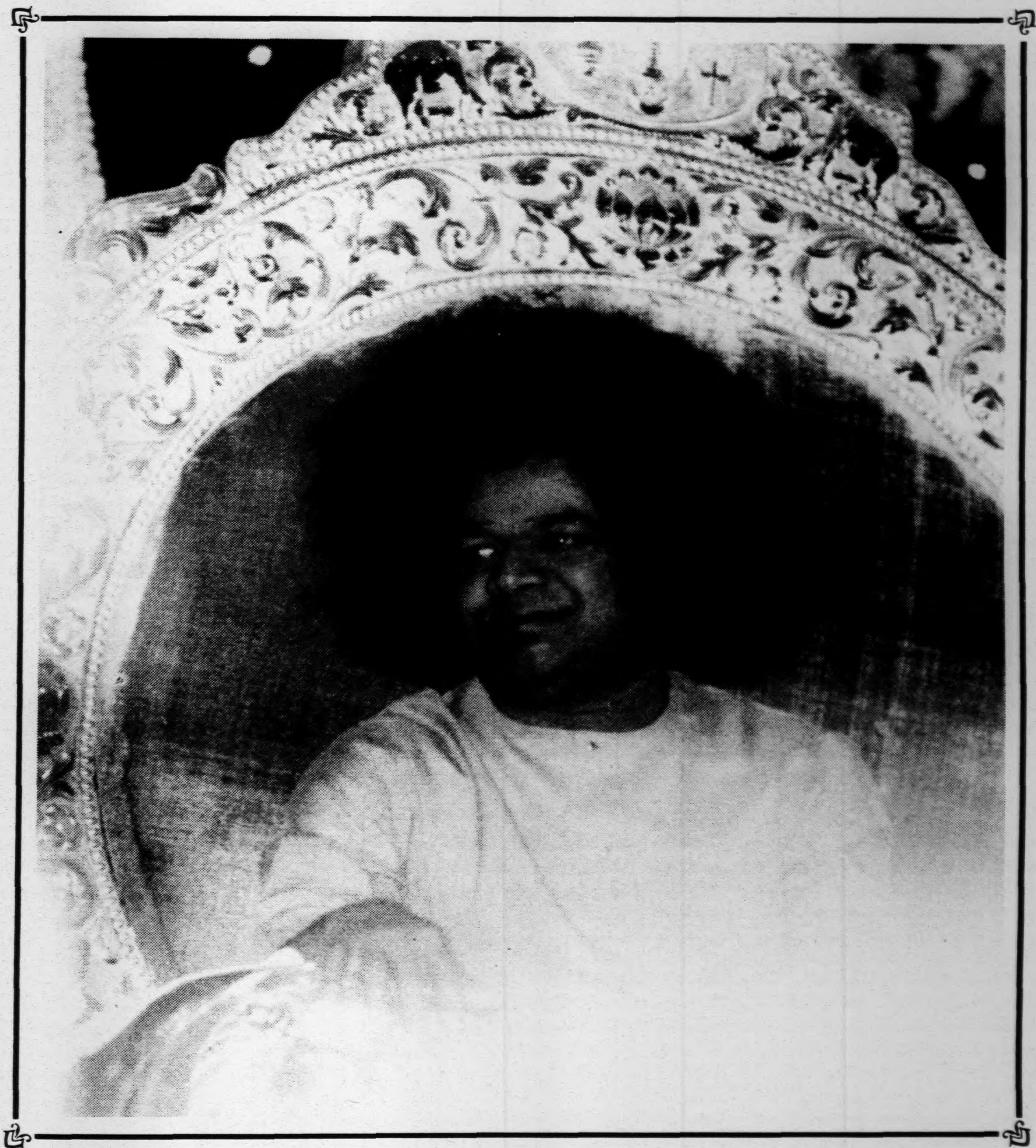
*Crore is ten million.

So we should not become victims of all these fleeting things we experience in life, such as a sense of joy, a sense of distress, a sense of ridicule, being criticized, etc. Instead drive on ceaselessly to reach the Atma stage. All the facilities at our disposal in the physical and mental plane should be directed towards acts of service and thereby reach God. The thought, the word and the deed, if these were to be the same for man, is the highest form of one's life. It is through these three that we should plunge into service to society. Premaswarupulaara, embodiments of love, say that this is Swami's birthday. Many people came to Swami and said, "happy birthday", and then many others at a distance were also saying, "happy birthday, happy birthday", to give joy to their own sense of feelings. I always tell you to go to that person who does not enjoy happiness, go to him and tell him, "happiness be yours." But I am happy every second. We talk of birthday, but birthday is something related to birth. The body has no permanent existence and all that is endowed in this body has to be used so that we do some good activity. Having been born we should try and see that in this world we do something sacred before we die. You must also ask yourself the question. What is the birthday gift that I could possibly offer to Swami? Love your fellow man. Share in their distress and difficulties. Do some good for them. That is the true gift that you can give to Swami on his birthday. This is the only gift Swami wants. Try and give him that love which is service pure and unsullied. This world is like a camp. In this camp you have activities towards the welfare and prosperity of its inhabitants. This world is the field of activity. All the good things that are undertaken are the sacred ones. In order to do this we go to the Lord who is our master and seek from Him these bodies of ours.

In our day to day world we notice that some middle class people who cannot afford their own vessels go to the wealthy to borrow utensils for the performance of their daughter's marriage. Once the vessels are taken, you make full use of them and after the purpose has been fulfilled, clean them thoroughly and return them to their owner. If you do not do this and instead return the vessels in the form where they have holes, where they have lost all their shape you would only receive the anger of the owner who would send you back unhappy. And so in the same manner these bodies have been received by us from God and we have to use them for a certain purpose. After using the bodies for the sake of seeing all we have to see, after doing all we have to do, we must return these vessels, called bodies, in a pure

and unsullied state to God. Therefore, putting a ceiling on our desires, curbing our unwanted tendencies, try and utilize these bodies in the thought that service to man is service to God and thereby makes the fullest use of these bodies given to you. On this birthday there is only one thing I would like to ask for. This is not to be taken to be my sense of asking for something. I am doing it so as to give you ananda (bliss) in the process.

We have been working out plans for the sixtieth birthday. Before the sixtieth birthday celebration, it is my hope that you must take upon yourself the adoption of at least six thousand villages (this is currently taking place in India through the auspices of the Sai organizations) and take care of the villagers and the villages in the proper way. Now for those who have plenty to offer, for those who have positions of authority there are any number of people who will come to help such people. But for those who are distressed and the helpless no one comes to their rescue. So go to such people and become their relatives, their friends and those to whom they can turn in their hour of need. One who is letting out cries of hunger, you go and preach to him spiritual truth? He cannot get anything out of that. Try to satiate his hunger and that food will take him to God. You are giving God to him in the form of his food. Try to give God to him in the form of clothing. One who is troubled, give him faith in himself and that will be the form of God for him. One who is diseased, give him medicine. That is God for him. There are different forms of hardship for the common man depending on what he needs. Give him that and that becomes God for him. If instead of doing that you start preaching something, then that becomes a case of ridicule and criticism. So all our organizations should endeavor to give the villages some basic help in education, in health care and such other fields of constructive activities. There are many villages suffering from lack of pure water. We cannot say the government alone is going to do all this, it is not possible without the cooperation of the people. Government is not something that is independent, it is dependent on the people. When the government is able to get the cooperation of its people, certainly it will be able to do something worthwhile. So do not depend on the government entirely. Be self-dependent to the extent that you can plunge yourself into service to your fellow man. This is the true act of worship and the true act of surrender to God. You must become such embodiments of love who have secured the grace of the Lord in abundance through acts of service to your fellow beings. All that you have tended to accrue through the means of spiritual disciplines,



you can get in the form of receiving the grace of God. You secure the love of God and there is nothing greater than this. But you should also try to understand the nature of this love. You tend to bring down this divine love to your status and try to experience it from that level. This is a mistake. This love is egoless, serene and pure.

Whatever Sai would tell you, whatever he would do, whatever he would see is for the sake of yourself, and not himself. His selfishness lies in your happiness. Your happiness is my happiness. I have no separate form of happiness. You might say that Swami is doing this, Swami is doing it, but I do not have anything to seek for myself. I have told you this during the last birthday celebration. For my sake I do not spend even a naiya paisa (one cent). Whatever I do is for the sake of society. Now fifty five years have elapsed and I have not even spent one naiya paisa for the sake of stitching a gown for myself. Whatever the devotees give, I wear. This robe that I am wearing has been given by the Kingdom of Sathya Sai, the old students. Radha Krishna has given this and I am wearing it. The thought that I want this or I want that has never come to me in all these years and it is not going to come to me today and will never come in the future. Whatever I do, I do it for the sake of the children of today, for the youth of today, to set them right and for the well being of mankind at large. So understand this is the true nature of Sai and his mode and way of doing things. And having understood it, plunge wholeheartedly and sincerely into the constructive activities for mankind.

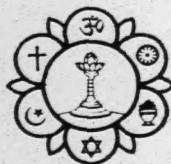
I have also resolved that from the coming month onwards, I shall be visiting every nook and corner of the country (India), the length and breadth of the country, so that those people who have no means of coming here in person and enjoying ananda, can get this ananda and experience bliss therefrom. What you must note particularly is not to organize programs in the towns proper. Instead concentrate on the villages. Whatever expenses you might plan for organizing such functions, divert these funds instead for the sake of doing something for the villagers in a positive way. I am hoping to visit each and every village, but the necessary arrangements will have to be made by you. The reason is I could even come by walking on foot, but the people who would gather might number in lakhs (100,000) and therefore you would have to make proper arrangements. And when you make the necessary arrangements for the comfort of all those who are

likely to come, then they will get a chance and an opportunity to know the age old truths and experience an unlimited bliss.

I have also resolved that very soon I will be launching on a massive program of revitalizing our ancient customs, our ancient treasures, our ancient traditions and all the scriptural truths among all people of all lands. You need have no doubts whatsoever that we shall be successful. Victory is bound to be ours. Do not give yourself to doubts or distress and do not become 'doubting Thomases'. We shall very soon be blowing the conch of victory all around. This is a certainty. This is a certainty. Embodiments of the divine Atma, what the future holds is beyond your sight and beyond your understanding. But I can see. I can see what the future is going to be like. A time will come when the whole world will be at God's feet. A time will come when the whole world will rejoice in true divinity. It is a great effort I am making by confining myself. I am not letting my glory spread all of a sudden because the world cannot possibly put up with it. But certainly a day will come when the people of the world will recognize what Swami is - his Glory, his Majesty, his Grandeur - and they will all come flocking in the lakhs and millions. And now as the going is good, even as you have an opportunity of sitting so close to me, understand this truth. Make the best of the opportunities that are coming your way. Plunge into constructive activities. Listen to Swami's words. Live in His love. Experience His bliss which is very much your own. Don't fritter away this golden opportunity. The world will very soon become a big Prasanthi Nilayam by itself. That jewel which is extremely valuable and priceless, one should make an attempt to get it. This diamond, which is such a priceless entity, is subjected to any amount of hardships in the form of cutting. But the more you cut it, the more brilliant it becomes. So also a creeper is cut so it becomes more beautiful. Even as you do this in a continuing process, the creeper looks more beautiful. It gives us so much joy. In the same way those people, those organizations which are not able to take kindly to this glory which is spreading in the form of Sai, in the form of his organization, have taken to means to devalue, to degrade and to mislead people at large. But be assured that any of these attempts will prove to be nothing and the more that they do, the more will be the glory and the more will be the grandeur and the quicker will be the pace at which these noble things will be spreading. And all that is being done now by them will aid and assist in the long run in getting fame and name. This is the nature of those who are given to feelings of

jealousy. But for this element of jealousy in the others you cannot have the glory on this side. So do not show any hate to such efforts by others. Be firm in your resolve. Be firm in your ideals. Be strengthened in your duty and plunge forward, move forward. Today you have had this opportunity of taking part in this assembly, of partaking of this joy and of partaking of this ananda. Do not waste even a second from now onwards. Utilize it fully and to the best possible extent. You must have your thought, your resolve and your action all the same ideal. So right from this moment onwards chart out a master plan of action. All the states should be represented in such activities. Do not feel that Sai belongs to the state of Andhra. The entire world is the home of Sai. All are Sai's people, all are one. You must make efforts to prove to the world this Kali Yuga, this principle. This is what my hope is on this day. I am fulfilling all your hopes and all your aspirations. You now fulfill this one aspiration of mine. I am hoping and blessing you on this day that you will have a continuous state of happiness, of comfort and that you will be endowed with wealth, with peace, with prosperity and do things and think things which will prove beneficial not merely to yourself, but to those around you. And thus you will be sanctifying and making your lives sacred.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



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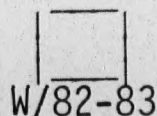
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