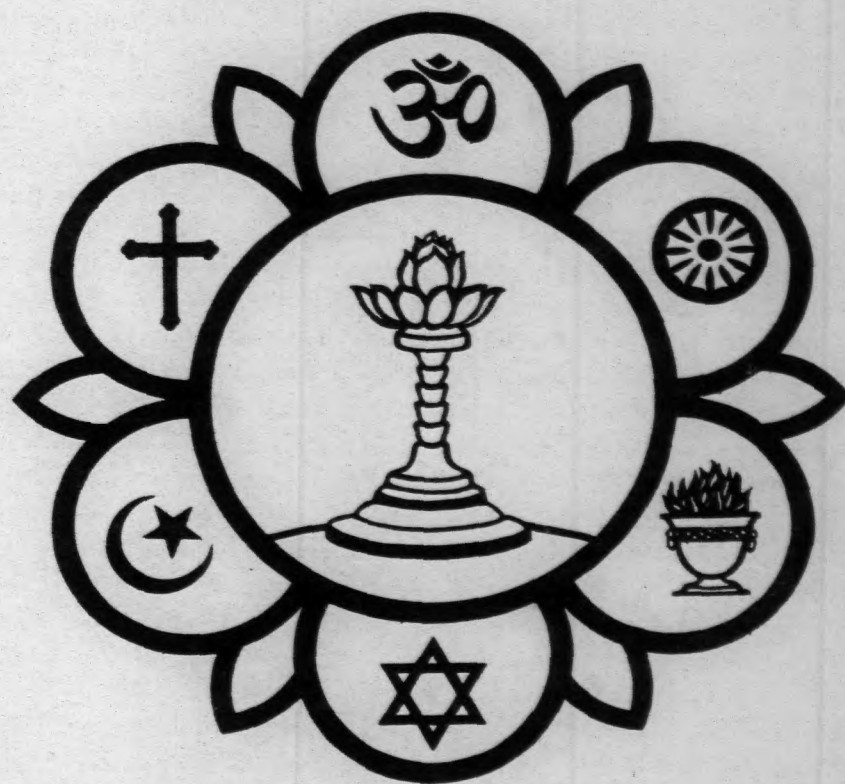


SATHYA SAI



Newsletter

FALL 1983

Vol. 8, No. 1

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

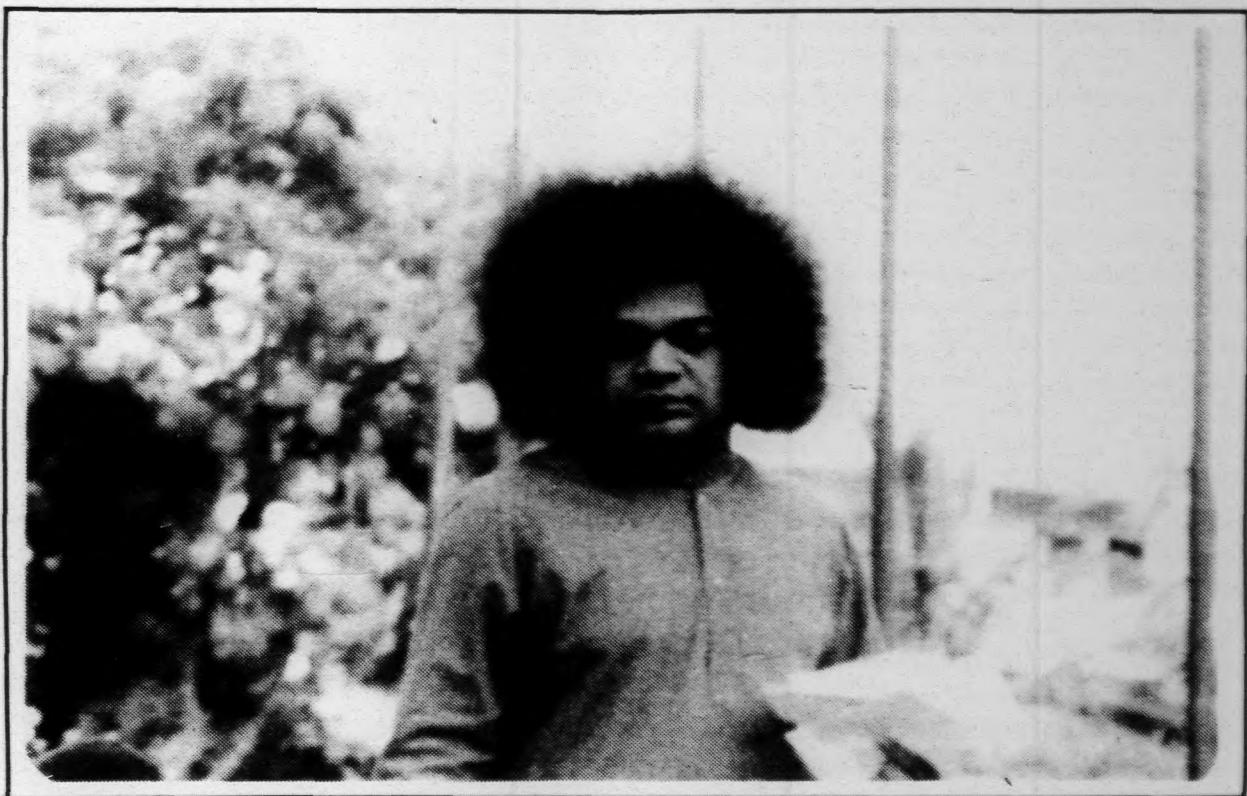


The birthday of Bhagavan will be observed on November 23.

These days the world is deriving satisfaction in mere words, and is witnessing clever ruses designed to cover up one's faults. The birthdays of the great are honored by such hypocrisy and external pomp. There is no examination in the light of the message they gave, nor any effort to practice it and derive the bliss it promises.

The great teachers belong to mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and that Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. To accept one of them as one's own and discard the rest as belonging to others is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Rama, Krishna--they are for all men everywhere. The various limbs and organs together form a body; various states and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by divine grace circulates in every part of the body, helping it to function in unison. The sustenance of love, endowed by divine grace, has to circulate in every state and community to make the world live in peace and joy. If this truth is realized, there will arise no idea of difference.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII



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Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII



IS THIS FULFILLMENT OF A PROPHET'S VISION?

Among the various prophecies in ancient scriptures of the world, and those by sages and seers contained in palm-leaf volumes carefully preserved by Sanskrit scholars, and of which photographs have been seen* giving details of the advent of the Sai Avatar in the 20th century (the Shuka palm-leaf manuscript, thought to be approximately 5,000 years old, even gives the date, month, and day of the birth, as well as the stars at the time, and the name of Sai), none appears to be so amazingly detailed as the prophecy by the prophet Mahomed.**

Quite recently an Iranian writer, browsing at a bookstall in Teheran, was irresistibly drawn to a huge volume. It was the 14th edition of the discourses of Mahomed, in 25 volumes called *The Ocean of Light*. It is said that these discourses were collected together some 700 years after Mahomed's death.

Volume 13 of *The Ocean of Light* is called *Mehedi Moud* in Arabic, which means "The Great Teacher that was promised." This teacher is also referred to as "Master of the World," "Master of Time," "God's President," "A Great Part of God on the ground," and "God speaking and advising." Moreover, Mahomed gave copious signs or marks by which the great teacher could be recognized.

Asked by his disciples whether he, Mahomed, was not "The Master of the World," he said he was not and that no prophet of God who had ever come to this world had come with the power with which he will come. The following details are given:

1. His hair will be profuse.
2. His forehead will be large and concave.
3. His nose will be small, with a slight bump at the bridge.
4. His front teeth will be spaced apart.
5. He will have a mole on his cheek.
6. He will not have a beard but will be clean-shaven.
7. His clothing will be like a flame.
8. He will wear two robes (one an under-robe or dhoti).

* In *Living Divinity* by Shakuntala Balu, Sawbridge Enterprises

**Mohammed, founder of the Islamic religion

9. The color of his face will be sometimes like copper, sometimes yellow like gold, sometimes very dark, and sometimes shining like the moon.
10. His body will be small in size, but his stomach will tend to be large.
11. His legs will be like those of a young girl.
12. All the teachings of all the religions of the world will be in his heart from birth.
13. All the science and knowledge of the world from the beginning of time will be in his head.
14. All things which you will ask from God, he (the master of the world) will give to you.
15. All the treasures of the world are under his feet.
16. He will give gifts that are light in weight.
17. His devotees will collect under a great tree (the huge banyan tree).
18. Many of them will have a spot on their foreheads (the Hindu kum-kum spot).
19. He will go around among the devotees and touch their heads with his hand.
20. Every eye that sees him will be happy, not only humans but disembodied souls.
21. His devotees will crane their necks to see him.
22. He will live 95 years on earth. (Sai Baba says he will retain this body until the 96th year. Indians, very logically, call the actual day of birth the first birthday.)
23. In the last 20 years of his life he will be the "King of the whole world," but at that time only two-thirds of the people of the world will believe in him (from AD 2001). Mussalmans* will only recognize him nine years before his passing from the world (i.e. AD 2012).
24. He will live on a hill. (The ashram, Prasanthi Nilayam is on a hill.)
25. His house will be square.
26. He will make the world light and full of peace.
27. "So as not to be deceived, you should know that the Master of the World will bring things out of His body, through His mouth."

* Muslims

Mahomed also prophesied the decline of true spirituality among his followers, for he told his disciples, "You can never find Him because at that time you will be so bad that you cannot recognize Him. Only a handful of you will find Him.

"Christians and other people of other religions will see Him, but Mussalmans will be so bad that they will not find Him, not until nine years before His passing from the world. You will be spending great sums of money on your mosques, but no one will go there to pray.

"You will make much art for the Koran, but no one will understand it. The real teachings of Moses were hidden in a cave in Antioch, and the Master of the World will give the real teachings."

The Iranian writer who came upon the above volume of *The Ocean of Light* has written a book in which the actual translations from the Arabic are given. The book is naturally written in the Parsee (Persian) language, but the author hopes that an English translation will be made.

Meantime, further inquiries are being made. Also, efforts are under way to discover documented evidence of the vision which Pope John XXIII had just before he died, and which he wrote about, describing a small, barefoot man, with dark skin, in a red robe, who appeared to him.

As the year 2,000 draws nearer, let us not close our eyes, or our hearts. In his discourses, Mahomed is said to have told his disciples, "You could have stretched out your hand and been with Him, but you missed Him."

Peggy Mason, from an article in
Two Worlds magazine, London.
Reprinted by permission.

The Avatar comes to reveal man to himself, to restore him his birth-right of atmic bliss. He does not come to found a new creed, to breed a new faction, to instill a new God. If such happens, it is the consequence of the evil in man. The Avatar comes as man in order to demonstrate that man is divine, in order to be within reach of man.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII

THE NIGHT THAT LOVE WAS BORN

The Night that Love was Born, to good men upon Earth,
a warmth, a glow, a joy from God's own heart
became the Living Word in the precious and tender form
of Jesus, Child and Lord.



The Night that Love was Born, the stars all congregated,
taking leave from the high heaven in splendid effulgence
rushed to see the Emmanuel born.

The Night that Love was Born, all the Angels joined together,
singing songs of praise and love filled the Earth with beams of joy.
The Newborn King they came to adore!

The Night that Love was Born, our Mother Earth cried tears of joy,
for unto her no truer Son could have been born.

The Night that Love was Born, the three wise men came from distant lands
with incense, myrrh and gold, to humbly render tribute to Love,
God's own begotten Son.

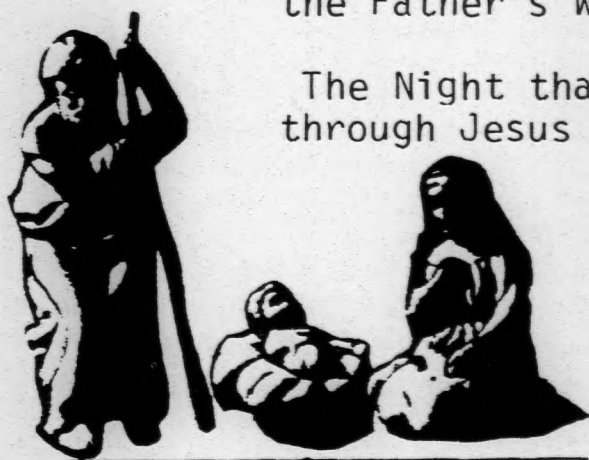
The Night that Love was Born, a humble shepherd boy
and his little noble lamb came to sing for baby Jesus
a sweet and tender lullaby that from their hearts sprang.

The Night that Love was Born, the wind in gentle whispers spoke,
caressing with his breath the trees and flowers, the lion and the deer,
the ocean and the brook, the plains and mountain peaks.
To all proclaimed the good news that Love--that Christ--was born in men.

The Night that Love was Born to all men of goodwill,
the Father's Will in human hearts made its abode.

The Night that Love was Born, the Earth received
through Jesus the Kingdom, its Ruler and its Lord.

Patricia Martinez



A MAGICAL MONTH WITH BABA

Bhagavan Baba was present continuously at Prasanthi Nilayam for five weeks throughout August and into September. For those of us fortunate to be here during that time it was a truly glorious period. His charm, beauty, and good humor and his bountiful love and compassion were all manifested in abundance and they never ceased to amaze and delight. He plays the human part so perfectly and he has chosen such an exquisite role that every day in his presence becomes an adventure to discover the source of that indescribable joy that wells up from deep within us whenever we experience him near.

When day follows day like this, with eyes and hearts getting their twice-daily feast, the darshans all begin to blend into each other. It is a little like strumming a tamboura. First the sound of each string can be heard distinctly, but soon the resonating vibrations set up their echoes in the big gourd. Then there emerges just the one, full-throated sound of the AUM pouring forth from a happy instrument in tune with its player. This is the way it has been during this month, a rich inner rapture building up subtly, softly, and steadily. He plays us with such consummate skill and mastery we hardly even notice his loving touch on the strings.

Noisy minds, being unaware of his gentle presence within, clamor for something substantial and tangible, for some positive sign of his love: an interview, a smile of recognition, a picture autographed, some words exchanged, perhaps a pat on the shoulder, a gift of vibhuti, or permission to touch his feet, all of which become the foreground and the props for his daily play. At the same time the background fills in with the sound of hearts resonating rhythmically in tune with his strummings. How sweetly he keeps us wondering why we are feeling so good when minds, disappointed with themselves, think they have every reason for feeling otherwise.

So his mystery becomes our mystery, a wonderful mystery of delight and discovery but also of paradox. For sometimes we seem to feel so awful, so lost, so confused, and then in a flash all that changes and we again feel lovingly nurtured and at peace as he brings background into foreground, lets hearts brighten minds and dispel the darkness there, so that we can again know his presence within. What a grand time to be alive and have this golden chance to flow gently in cadence with his tune, his touch, and his rhythms.

To help us go from the outer form towards the inner, to internalize him and give us that constant awareness of his presence inside, but even more than that to see him as our own true self present everywhere, Baba has initiated a series of Brahma Sutra lectures in the Mandir, given by a pandit and followed immediately by translations into English. These talks on advaita vedanta present the most profound truths and the highest philosophy that have ever graced the human mind. Not only in the Mandir prayer hall, but also at the new university, this priceless ancient wisdom has been incorporated into the curriculum and is the tonic that starts the school day.

For the afternoon talks being held in the Mandir, Swami would frequently come in, seat himself on the footstool in front of the red chair, and listen to the discourse, his face showing a deep absorption in this arcane subject. Baba always has a wonderful way of making the ancient wisdom come alive and be relevant to the present age. With his verbal touch, the loftiest of truths about God, man, and the universe become understandable and palatable to all.

On some days when he came in he would just say a few words of illumination; at other times he would give a short discourse. But on many days he would sit silently and teach by his silence. In the profound presence of his darshan the doubts and knotty passages disputed over the centuries by so many savants and scholars would simply come undone and reveal their deeper meanings. For in the presence of Bhagavan we soon learn that true understanding is always a heart thing, not a mind thing. When he touches us with his love, understanding quickly follows, naturally and effortlessly. Often we forget that divinity itself is sitting before us as our awareness flows inward from the form to the sweetness that has saturated our hearts. In these many unique ways he teaches.

In describing the Brahma Sutra, he likened it to a beautiful garland of flowers of many varieties, hues, and fragrances. When we inquire into the garlands by careful examination, we will see the one string going through every flower. All people everywhere, he said, are like so many flowers, and connecting them together as one, as the unity in all the apparent diversity, is this thread of the Brahma Sutra.

This Brahma Sutra is not something just to be studied but to be lived. We must practice the lessons of unity in daily life by living the love and bliss that is God. We can go on searching for God outside of us forever, but we will not find Him there. With the



glasses sitting on our noses helping us to see, we are looking everywhere for the glasses we think we have lost. We are looking for that which we already possess and already are. There is no place where He is not. There was not time when He was not. There is no one and no thing that He is not. His is the sweetness that permeates the whole universe and gives it all its wonderful, delightful, amazing, and enchanting qualities. Look at the world with worldly eyes, Baba says, and you will see nothing but these tasteless names and forms, the mark of the many. But turn your vision inward, experience everything through the language of the heart, and you will see only the One pervading everywhere and you will gain great joy from that realization. We shouldn't say that this world is illusion; that is not correct. What is illusion, he says, is to believe that all this is the world when really it is all Brahman. The illusion is not inherent in the world but in our narrow perception. Instead of being interested in the creation, be interested in the Creator. Instead of focusing on the effects, focus on the cause. His is the beauty. His the love. His the harmony. His the order. His the delight. His the sweetness. His the everything. Live in Him. Experience Him. Be Him. That is Baba's timeless message.

Swami's expressions have the magical power of cooking us from within, bringing to consciousness the intuitive, the heartfelt, the sweet nectar of our deepest yearnings, the very wellspring of our being, instead of catering to the dry reasoning power, the logical and intellectual part which in most of us is already overdeveloped and cannot lead our souls much further on the Godward path. It is our wonderful good fortune that, in his new series of *Sutra Vahini* in the monthly *Sanathana Sarathi*, we will all be able to imbibe these original outpourings of our divine teacher who has come to lead us home to our source in him.

I have separated myself from myself so that I may love myself, he once said. "Let me merge myself with myself so that I may forever lose myself," echoes our reply. This is the highest teaching and the essence of the pilgrimage we are all on. May he grace us to progress steadily on this sacred journey and to soon reach that consummation of all human existence when self knows self as self, the one without a second, and by that knowledge becomes immersed in bliss eternal.

Al Drucker
Prasanthi Nilayam, India



A HANDFUL OF RICE

Recently my husband asked me to begin saving a handful of rice each day to feed the needy. My response was, "This isn't India. Besides, I buy something each week for the local food pantry (a service operated for the needy), but it must be in a sealed package." Such arrogance is unbecoming, and Baba lovingly corrected my behavior.

A few weeks later, a friend told me about a program in our area. Volunteers prepare food in their homes and serve a free hot lunch three times a week to hungry people at a neighborhood church dining room.

Every day now, a handful of rice goes into a special container. When there is a sufficient amount, it is made into a casserole and served at the free lunch.

Diana Jorgensen
Ojai, California



CHILDRENS' CORNER

HANNUKKAH, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Many years ago there lived a cruel king named Antiochus who ordered that all the Jews were forbidden to read their holy books, to celebrate their holidays or the Sabbath, or--worst of all--to pray to their God. Messengers went throughout the land, telling the Jews of the king's new laws. Soldiers set up pagan altars in the holy Temple, and forced the Jewish people to worship pagan gods and to sacrifice unclean animals there. The Jews were horrified, but they were made to obey.

There was a good priest named Mattathias living in the land. When he and his five sons heard the bad news, they decided that something must be done. They and some other men went into the hills and organized an army, which became known as the Maccabees. Judah, one of the five brothers, was their leader.

For three years, Judah and the Maccabees fought bravely against the soldiers of King Antiochus in order to regain the religious freedom of their people. Finally, the Jews managed to push the enemy out of their land, and became free to worship God in their own way as before.

The Maccabees went immediately to the Temple and removed the pagan altars and the unclean animals. Then they set about to light the menorah, a candelabrum with eight arms or branches which was always supposed to be kept lighted in the Temple, but which had been dark for the past three years. They searched for the special oil used to keep it burning, and found only enough oil for one day.

They didn't know what to do, for it would take eight days to make more of the special oil. They used the little bit they had to light the menorah, while they said prayers of thanks to God for freeing their people.

It was then that a great miracle happened, to make all the Jews rejoice. The oil that could last for only one day lasted eight full days and nights!

In remembrance of this miracle, and of the triumphant return to the Temple, each December the Jews celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah. The Festival of Lights goes on for eight days, one for each day the oil burned.

Even today, a Hanukkah menorah is found in Jewish homes. It is placed near a window during the holiday, so that all who pass by may see the lights and feel joyful. The family gathers around and lights one of the candles or oil lamps on the eight branches each night, until, on the last night, all eight flames glow brightly. Holy songs are chanted and special prayers are said, thanking God for the grace He shows today, as well as for the miracle He performed for the Maccabees so long ago.



I like children; I take great care of them; I pay them great attention. I insist on discipline, on reverent obedience to parents, on regulated food and play, on rigorous allocation of time for study, bhajan, meditation, etc. I also recommend some items of service, like nursing the sick. I condemn frivolous talk, luxurious living.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII

ACTIVITIES OF SAI CENTERS ACROSS THE NATION

FLORIDA - Members of the Miami Sai center have watched their food service project grow these past months. In the beginning they gave groceries to a few hundred indigent and elderly people on a monthly basis. Now as many as 3,000 needy receive food from the Society of Humaneness or So Hum as they call themselves. The food is donated by markets, bakeries, manufacturers of canned goods, and farmers. Wherever there are people and businesses willing to donate, the Sai volunteers are willing to collect the food, which sometimes means going into the fields and orchards to pick fresh produce, package it, and store it in a warehouse donated for that purpose.

The recipients are screened through their churches, nursing homes, and the like and given a chit indicating they are eligible for the program. On the first Sunday of each month, these needy people come from all over Dade County to collect a three-week supply of basic grocery items.

The work of the Society of Humaneness was recognized last May on NBC television news. The *Sathya Sai Newsletter* wishes to add its congratulations to the Sai brothers and sisters of Miami, but the Florida devotees don't stop there...

Volunteers have been donating their time to the South Florida Mental Hospital by doing general maintenance and giving personal attention to the patients. Their duties might consist of doing someone's hair or nails, perhaps writing a letter, or just holding the hand of a lonely person. Miami's other long-term project has been collecting clothing for migrant workers and their families, to assure that they have something warm to wear during the winter months.

ACROSS THE NATION - It is reported that nearly all of the 75 Sai centers and study groups throughout the United States are collecting food and clothing for the needy in their communities.

CALIFORNIA - Some devotees in the Long Beach-San Pedro area became aware of an elderly gentleman, living alone and in dire need of help. The cleaning and maintenance of his home had become too

much for the 90-year-old, and the place had become unsightly and even a health hazard to the neighborhood.

In the heat of the summer, on August 28, with the gentleman's permission, an army of Sai volunteers spent the day scrubbing, painting, polishing, sorting out personal belongings, and even giving the dog a bath. The workers were all given their assignments in advance so that no time was wasted.

While visiting with a volunteer, Bill (not his real name) said that other people from the community had offered to help him, but he had refused, thinking that they would steal his possessions. The Sai volunteer asked, "What makes you think we won't take things from you?" Bill replied, "Because I'm a good judge of character and can see these are honest people."

.....

The Sathya Sai Baba centers of Ojai, Santa Barbara, and Ventura, along with the Atascadero and Lompoc study groups, organized a large-scale public meeting in August of this year. It was held at the Victoria Street Theater in Santa Barbara, and was well attended by devotees as well as the public. The speakers--Mrs. Elsie Cowan, Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, Mr. Robert Bozzani, Mrs. Phyllis Krystal, and Dr. Michael Goldstein, gave interesting talks of their experiences with Baba. Muriel Engle, President of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Santa Barbara, introduced the speakers. The program concluded with a brief introduction by Richard Bock of his film, *The Universal Teacher*, one reel of which was then shown to the group.

WELCOME TO NEW SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUPS OF:

RENO, NEVADA.	Susan Warner P.O. Box 3602 Reno, Nevada 89505 (702) 825-1832
ATASCADERO, CALIFORNIA.	Gerald Graybill 7355 Sombrilla Atascadero, California 93422 (805) 466-2650
WEST COVINA, CALIFORNIA	Paras N. Sharma 1520 Arbury Drive Diamond Bar, California 91765 (714) 861-3463

INTERNATIONAL SAI NEWS

WORLD BAL VIKAS RALLY, INDIA, December 25, 1983-January 1, 1984.

A week-long program will be held at Prasanthi Nilayam, to celebrate the Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas International Year 1983. Bal Vikas students from outside India in the 9-12 age group will be participating.

OVERSEAS BAL VIKAS TEACHERS' CONFERENCE, INDIA, December 27-31, 1983. This conference will be held at Prasanthi Nilayam, in conjunction with the World Bal Vikas Rally.

Both of the programs will have participants from Sai centers all over the world.



A VISIT TO SAN SALVADOR

All I knew about El Salvador was what I had been reading in the newspapers: that the Left and the Right were busy with killings of every type and that the only benefit of being a civilian was that you were easier to kill because you did not have a gun. So when John Behner, leader of the Salvadorean Sri Sathya Sai organization, asked me to come there, I said it was out of my territory and that Swami would have to say. Swami was very brief. He said, "Go!"

July in El Salvador is the rainy season, so everything was verdant and lush. It was picture-book tropics. The city of San Salvador is a half-hour drive up into the mountains from the sea-level airport. Its streets head up and down hill in every direction, and have absolutely no relationship to the typical grid layout of our American towns and cities. The car passed many large and beautiful homes.

The Behner family--John, wife Rosa, daughter Wendy, and son Erick--live in a house surrounded by an orchard of tropical fruit trees and flowering bushes and trees. This was the site of the Salvadorean Sai Retreat.

There were public functions held downtown: an evening talk about Bhagavan Baba and an afternoon symposium on Education in Human Values. The rest of the time was spent at the Behner home, with non-stop talking about Sai and his teachings from breakfast to bedtime. The devotees were from some four Sai centers and included a visiting group from Guatemala. There was a total economic and social-status mixture, ranging from those in spartan circumstances to the wealthy elite. Yet the camaraderie was perfect.

This closeness to each other was the first difference I noted. It was in contrast to what we observe in America and India. Why this strong feeling of unity and of mutual affection and esteem? It is just as Bhagavan Baba encourages, but why so strong in San Salvador? It was not just that; the intensity of devotion to Sai was, for a total group, most unusual in my limited experience. I suppose a contributing factor could be the danger from the civil war, making individuals more alert and their feelings more acute.

Also, one could not help but notice that the questions from the devotees were asked with more emotion than is the case with us. Emotional commitment to Bhagavan Baba was strongly evident among the Salvadorean devotees. Of course, they are Latins, and Latins express emotion more freely than do we northerners. But, in any event, it was interesting to notice and it certainly charged all conversations with more intensity than I have been accustomed to.

Another difference I noticed was the age factor. There were more young people than is typically the case in our centers. Many teenagers attended, and also quite a few college-age people. That youthful participation probably owes something to the Spanish culture, in which family ties are still strong.

An interesting decision taken by the devotees is that they will start an elementary school as a first step in the building of a Sai system of education which will finally extend up to a college.

The Salvadorean devotees are also strong in service projects. Their seva work is well recognized by the community and is respected by the government and by citizens in general. They work as an independent Sai group under his name, rather than combining with other service organizations.

The Sai family there gave a fine welcome to this northern devotee. They are eager for talk of Sathya Sai Baba, and thirsty indeed for discussion of his teachings. Countries may be far from India, but they are not distant from Sai. In El Salvador, it is clear that his presence is strongly felt.

One incident which certainly was entertaining and which was most intriguing to the devotees occurred during a conversation at about five in the afternoon. Somebody had asked about the crucifix which Swami created some years ago in the Mysore Bandipur forest at Maha Shivarathri. At the point of the story where ourselves, the photographer, and his wife were looking at the crucifix and the photographer's pictures of it in our house in Mexico and out of a clear sky came lightning, thunder, and a great wind--a recapitulation of what had actually occurred at the moment of Christ's death--we were greatly startled in that room in San Salvador by a roar of thunder, flashes of lightning, and a big wind which blew through the open windows of the Behner home with a flurry of curtains, banging doors, and papers blown helter skelter. Was it the power of the crucifix again, or just a tropical storm? Since love of mystery is common to all, we chose the crucifix as the cause of the incident!

So, all in all, the visit to San Salvador was most interesting, and I departed with a very, very high appreciation of the quality of the Salvadorean devotees.

J.S. Hislop, President
Sathya Sai Baba Council of America
Baja California, Mexico



The peace of the world depends on peace and amity between nations; the peace of the nations depends on the peace between the concomitant units: the villages, the families, and finally, the individuals of each family. So, every individual has a responsibility to love others, have faith in them, and revere them as sparks of the divine. Every man has to cultivate the virtues of tolerance, forbearance, and brotherliness.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII

ISA

The followers of each religion call upon the one God, who is omnipresent and listens to their prayers, be they from whichever clime or clothed in whatever language. But it is the same God who confers health, prosperity, peace, and happiness upon all mankind. No religion has a separate God, showering grace only upon those who profess to abide by that faith. It is the destiny of man to journey from 'human-ness' to divinity, as he has already journeyed from 'animal-ness.' In this pilgrimage, he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to smooth his path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realized souls, divine personalities, and incarnations of God appear among men, and illumine the path. They move among the afflicted, the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called karana-janmas, for they assume the janma or birth for a karana, a cause or purpose. Such guides, exemplars, and leaders appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach as if their voice is the voice of God, counselling from the heart.

Jesus was a karana-janma, a Master born with a purpose: the mission of restoring love, charity, and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self; he never paid heed to sorrow or pain, joy or gain; he had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, the cry for peace and brotherhood. He went about the land preaching the lesson of love, and poured out his life as a libation in sacrifice to humanity.

Like most seekers, he searched for the divine in the objective world of nature, but he soon realized that nature is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought God within himself. Here, his stay in the Himalayan monasteries, in Kashmir and other centers of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, brought him greater success. From the attitude of being a messenger of God, he declared that he was the son of God, after returning from the East. For the old attitude meant duality, a master-servant relationship. One could not then move beyond the orders of the Master, or the Prabhu. One had to carry out the duties laid down in the scriptures of the faith. This he found too irksome, for he felt he was the

prathibimba, or image, while God was the original or bimba. The bond of relationship increased: with body-consciousness predominant, you feel you are a servant or messenger; with heart-consciousness in the ascendant, you feel nearness and dearness, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage. Later, as the Atma-consciousness (awareness of one's divine innermost reality) became stabilized, Jesus could declare, "I and my Father are one," just as one states, "I was in the Light, then the Light was in me, and now I am aware that I AM the Light."

Jesus was the name he was known by. He was honored by the populace as Christ, for they found in his thoughts, deeds, and words no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred; he was full of love and charity. humility and sympathy. The name Jesus itself is not the original one. He was named Isa, which, with the sounds reversed, is Sai. Isa or Sai both mean Isvara, God, the Eternal Absolute, the Sath-Chit-Ananda. In the Tibetan manuscript at the monastery where Isa spent some years, the name is written as Issa, which means the Lord of all living beings.

The birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind, for such karanajanmas belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single community or country. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion. He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for education is the very light of life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads, and, imagining them to be diamonds, were attaching great value to them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where grace was being bargained for and commercialized. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practices, and so drew upon himself the anger of the heads of temples and monasteries. With 30 silver pieces, they tempted one of the disciples of Jesus to betray him into their hands.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as king and so could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the governor order his crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the cross, Jesus heard the voice of the Father saying, "All life is one, my dear son. Be alike to everyone." He pleaded that those who were crucifying him might be pardoned, for they knew not what they did. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.



Carols and candles, readings from the Bible, and acting out the incidents that surrounded his birth are not enough to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the last supper was his flesh, and the wine, his blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as he himself and that no distinction should be made as to friend or foe, we and they. Every body is his body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is his, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is divine and should be revered as such.

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally you achieve the wisdom that you and He are one. That is the spiritual journey, and Jesus has shown the way in clear terms.

Christmas Day, Prasanthi Nilayam, 1978
Sathya Sai Baba Speaks, Volume X

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

On September 24, 1983, more than 200 Sai devotees gathered to celebrate the 90th birthday of Mrs. Elsie Cowan. The group assembled at the beautiful new National Headquarters building of the Sathya Sai Book Center of America located in Tustin, California. Mrs. Cowan is the founder and chairwoman of the Sathya Sai Baba Society and the Sathya Sai Book Center of America. Her steadfast and single-minded devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been a source of inspiration to Sai devotees all over the world for many years. Happy Birthday, Elsie!



The body will shine if the character is fine; service of man and worship of God will preserve its charm. The Lord will be watching with a thousand eyes the least activity of man to discover any slight trace of selfless love sweetening it.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume IX

Sathya Sai Book Center of America
P.O. Box 278
Tustin, California 92681-0278
(714) 669-0522

In the previous *Newsletter* (Summer, 1983, page 14) there was an article about the three non-profit Sai foundations in the United States. For further information about the wide range of service activities and programs of the Sathya Sai Baba Society, please write to the Society directly, in care of the Sathya Sai Book Center of America (address above).

Please be aware that there is a change in the name of the Book Center. For some unknown reason, at some unknown date in the past, the name of the Book Center was changed from the one that was designated by Swami in the Charter he gave to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cowan in 1969. Only when we were moving into the new building did we reread the Charter and become aware that the name as given by Swami is Sathya Sai Book Center of America and not Sri Sathya Sai Baba Book Center of America.

We are proud to announce that the new Book Center, National Headquarters building is complete and open. Continue to send letters and requests to the post office box. All are welcome to come and inspect the new facility at 305 West First Street in Tustin.

Walt Neubauer
President, Sathya Sai Baba Society
Manager, Sathya Sai Book Center

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE

We Devotees by Indulal Shah. Mr. Shah, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba World Council, shares his views, feelings, and practical experience of sadhana with fellow pilgrims on life's path. It is a very educational book for spiritual aspirants.
Price: \$ 2.95

A Recapitulation of Sathya Sai Baba's Divine Teachings by Grace McMartin. Mrs. McMartin has compiled selected articles from the *Sathya Sai Speaks* series and the *Summer Showers* series to bring to the readers the essence of Baba's teachings. Further, she has replaced the Indian and Sanskrit terms with suitable English words and phrases.
Price: \$ 4.50

Ram Katha Rasa Vahini by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is published in two parts, and narrates the story of Rama.

Part I Price: \$ 1.85
Part II Price: \$ 1.85

Sai Baba, The Embodiment of Love by Peggy Mason and Ron Laing. They write about their book: "We have been asked to gather together under one cover the various articles written by us which have been published in England and elsewhere in connection with our experience of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, including our pilgrimage to India in 1980 which proved the most inspiring and overwhelming event of our lives, and which lives in our consciousness during every waking moment."

Price: \$ 6.80

TALKING BOOKS

The Sathya Sai Book Center of America offers a unique opportunity to "read" a book while driving a car or working in home or office. These are cassette tapes that were originally issued for use by the blind, and which have become popular with foreign nationals who understand, but have difficulty reading, English. Three of the most widely read books about Sri Sathya Sai Baba and his teachings that have been recorded by Mr. Ray Strock are:

- BC-1 *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba* by Dr. John Hislop, President of the Council of America and a longtime devotee of Bhagavan. The book is a series of questions asked by Dr. Hislop and detailed answers given by Sri Baba.
4 tapes (90 mins. each) Price: \$12.00
- BC-2 *Sai Baba, The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist* by Samuel H. Sandweiss, M.D. The doctor tells of his fascinating experiences with Baba and offers many Sai quotations.
6 tapes (90 mins. each) Price: \$18.00
- BC-4 *Sai Baba, Avatar* by Howard Murphet, who tells of many interesting events in his day-to-day observances of Sri Sathya Sai.
6 tapes (90 mins. each) Price: \$18.00
- BC-6 *Selected Messages by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, from the Sathya Sai Speaks* series and recorded by Frances Reeves.
One-hour tape Price: \$ 3.75

Note: A special discount is given to the blind on purchase of all cassettes.

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

NEW VIDEOTAPES

- VC-9 *Sathya Sai Baba, In the Light of Prophecy* presents ancient Aztec, Mayan, and Hopi Indian prophecies along with those of Nostradamas, Buddha, and Mohammed as they relate to the advent of the Sai Avatar. It includes a brief early ashram scene used in *Aura of Divinity*. The 90 minutes include a complete one-hour program and an edited 30-minute version designed for use in the centers.
- 90-mins., VHS or Beta Price: \$59.00
Also available in NTSC and PAL systems Price: \$59.00
- VC-10 *Sathya Sai Baba Darshan 1982 - Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam* taped by Cosby Powell with 3/4-inch professional equipment. Great quality.
- two-hours, VHS or Beta Price: \$69.00
Also available in the PAL system Price: \$69.00

A NEW FILM

- Sathya Sai Baba, In the Light of Prophecy.* See description under New Videotapes.
- Super 8 sound in an edited 30-mins. version for centers
Price: \$165.00
- Also available in 16mm optical sound, 30-mins.
Price: \$300.00

NEW CASSETTES

- SC-017 *Christmas Eve 1981 with Sathya Sai Baba - Songs Around the World* 75-mins. Price: \$ 6.00
- SC-018 *Sai Poornachandra Bhajans - Dasara 1982* 75-mins. Price: \$ 6.00
- SC-019 *Sai Narayana Bhajans* sung by Janet Bock and Deepak Bhat, with devotees from the Los Angeles center. 60-mins. Price: \$ 5.00

BOOKS

Sai Baba, Invitation to Glory by Howard Murphet. Deluxe British edition in striking red, white, and gold cover.

Price: \$ 7.50

A Recapitulation of Sathya Sai Baba's Divine Teachings by Grace McMartin. Mrs. McMartin has compiled selected articles from the *Sathya Sai Speaks* series and the *Summer Showers* series to bring the readers the essence of Baba's teachings. Further, she has replaced the Indian and Sanskrit terms with suitable English words and phrases.

Price: \$ 4.50

Sai Baba and Sai Yoga by Indra Devi. The internationally-known yoga instructor describes aspects of her teachings and some of her enlightening experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Price: \$ 2.50

MISCELLANEOUS

Sandalwood Japamalas - 108 beads

Price: \$ 5.00

Incense - Shivaranjani and Nagchampa, 40 grams per box

Price: \$ 1.75



THE SAI GRACE

I came to the United States in August, 1980, for advanced education. Being a devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I wanted to have his blessing before my departure from India. I went to Puttaparti in July, 1980, during Gurupoornima celebrations. I was to stay at Prasanthi Nilayam for four days and, on the fifth day, attend an interview at Hyderabad for a travel grant for my trip to the States. I, along with some friends, reached Prasanthi Nilayam just in time for morning darshan (the sight of a great spiritual being). I hurried for darshan, thinking I could take my passport for his blessings later, as I was planning to be there for the next three days.

As I joined my friends in the crowd, many people were waiting for Baba. Presently Swami came out and went around blessing some, materializing vibhuti (holy ash) for others. He paid no attention to me. For the afternoon darshan I was ready with my passport for his blessing. This time he came near me, paused, turned to someone else, and said in Telegu, "Now I don't have time, bangaru" (a term of endearment). My mother tongue is Telegu and what he said hit me with the force of a hurricane. I had not taken my passport for the morning darshan, thinking I had all the time in the world. By saying that sentence, Swami showed me how I could not assume he would bless me at a time of my convenience. The sentence, apparently spoken to someone else, was a good lesson for my ego. The second and third day saw me frantically trying for his acknowledgement and the divine touch to my passport, but in vain.

Even on the morning of the fourth day I could not get Baba's attention. Some people from the crowd were called in for interviews, and, as the darshan was coming to an end, the selected people started walking towards the front veranda. Something urged me to follow them, and the volunteers guarding the place did not stop me.

I sat in a corner of the veranda, eagerly waiting for Swami to appear. He came out and gave instructions to some people standing in front of the veranda. By now I was longing to touch his feet and have his blessings. During the next 40 minutes he came out, spoke with people, and went into the building several times. Apparently Baba did not recognize my unauthorized presence. At last, as I was giving up hope, he came out and smiled at me from a distance. I folded my hands, which had my passport and a book. He looked at me for a while, then changed his gaze and began talking to someone else. A strong urge from within told me to look at page 34 of the book in

my hands. I opened the book, and it unfolded at page 34! The page had a poem by Keats which began: "The angelic face at the window is all you can see for now..." I immediately felt a surge of gratitude and reverence for Swami. He answered my longing for an interview and blessings through a poem by John Keats. I mentally prayed to Baba for guidance. On that evening of Gurupoornima, I was to leave for Hyderabad for a travel grant interview. This meant I would miss his discourse. I decided to forego the travel grant, about \$500, and stay on and attend Sai's discourse. Having made that decision, I headed towards the auditorium, where the talk was to be given.

I went towards the first entrance, nearest the dais, meant exclusively for guests from outside India. I knew I should not use that entrance, being an Indian; but something was urging me to do so. The volunteer at the gate greeted me with a smile, saying, "Come in, sir. We are waiting for you," guiding me to a place with a hand around my shoulder. I could not believe the welcome given by a volunteer I did not know. Mentally I thanked Swami. During the course of the proceedings, Swami came into the crowd and blessed my passport with his divine touch.

I came to the U.S.A. as planned, and was granted a research assistantship by the university. This included financial help that was never promised before leaving India. Six months later I received vibuthi from an Indian family living in Washington D.C. The holy ash was personally given to them by Swami during the Gurupoornima celebrations, during which time I had longed for his blessings. After a year, when it was time for renewal of my assistantship contract, I had a dream in which Swami told the vice president of the university to sign that agreement. The contract was renewed.

So far Swami has never said a word to me, nor did he materialize vibhuti, nor did he do any other miracle. But I recognize his love, grace, and guidance, which are ever-present. I, for one, am contented with the grace of inner Sai, which is responsible for my completing a master's degree in industrial engineering and my current pursuit of a doctorate in business administration.

Ekambareswar Rao Agastya
Lubbock, Texas

It is not the head that has to be filled through education. It is the heart that has to be cleansed, expanded, and illumined. Education is for life, not for a living.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VIII

HAPPINESS...WITH SATISFACTION

"When you pray to Swami for happiness, ask for happiness with satisfaction."

This message was included in Sri Indulal Shah's address to the Los Angeles public meeting on July 10, 1983. The Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba World Council said that true and lasting happiness must be free of desire. But how does one gain that happiness which is free of desire for more?

That evening, following the meeting, I pondered the thought of receiving happiness with satisfaction...and sorrows. I was initially pleased with the idea of desireless joy. However, I felt that I could do just fine without the sorrows.

Only later, upon further reflection, did I realize the completeness and promise of the whole statement. For, to realize true happiness, it is often necessary to learn some difficult lessons. Truthfulness, correct conduct, peace, and love are lessons we often learn through our own sorrows. Seldom do we gain life's great lessons through easy victories and the acquisitions we usually associate with happiness.

Sri Indulal Shah also said during his lecture, "Happiness and sorrow are two sides of the same coin." They only exist together, for they are inseparable. To know that even our sorrows are a gift from Swami, for our own good, is indeed a blessing. For it is through our sorrows that we can gain that true happiness with satisfaction.

Jonathan L. Roof
Tucson, Arizona

Do not be bound by selfish attachments. Engage yourself in the discharge of your duties. Do not be made happy by success or made sad by failure. Be ready to renounce all that is harmful. Then, through discrimination you can beat the drum of victory!

Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, page 23



CEILING ON DESIRES PROGRAM DEALING WITH THE HOLIDAYS

This issue of the *Newsletter* will be delivered around the time of the yearly festive season, when Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year are celebrated, particularly in the Western world.

A tradition has developed for families to gather together for these holidays. For many people it is a very happy time, but for others it has become a time of sadness and depression. Those who are unable to be with their families feel lonely, especially when they see others happily reunited in their family groups. Then envy and jealousy may present themselves to further complicate matters. Others are sad and depressed for the opposite reason: because they do not enjoy getting together with other members of the family for some reason, and dread the forced compatibility and good cheer.

Hanukkah and Christmas are also times for exchanging gifts, which can arouse all kinds of desires. These in turn lead to negative emotions when they are not fully satisfied, and anger, resentment, and disappointment take over.

Many people experience anxiety and uncertainty when choosing gifts for others, while other people feel acute disappointment when they receive gifts which they do not like. The latter are then likely to resent having to pretend to gratitude which they do not feel, for fear of hurting the feelings of the donors.

In view of Baba's Ceiling on Desires program, it is easy to see that year's end is a time when a great deal of waste in the areas of money, food, time, and energy takes place. Too much money is usually spent on useless or unnecessary gifts, too much food is served and consumed, which frequently causes sickness, and many people suffer from exhaustion from using too much time and energy in extravagant preparations. So the question which faces devotees is how to follow Baba's instructions and avoid waste in those four areas during the holiday season.

I purposely omitted Baba's birthday from the list of festivals until now. Why couldn't we start this year by giving him for his birthday what he most wants from us, which is to reduce or put a ceiling on our desires, by cutting out waste during the holiday

season? Of course, we need to be careful not to force our ideas on members of our families who are not devotees, so this would require us to be extremely aware of our motives. When exchanging gifts, are we giving someone a certain gift which we can ill afford in order to impress the recipient, or perhaps instead of love or affection, or to assuage our own guilt? Did we select a gift to please the person to whom we intend to give it, or for our own ego satisfaction? Is there something other than a tangible object which a person might prefer, and which would show more thought on our part? For instance, would he or she enjoy a telephone call at intervals throughout the coming year, being taken for a drive from time to time, being given a massage to relax tired muscles, having a meal cooked now and then, or any of a number of other gifts with the difference of thoughtfulness and concern?

Then there is the other side, that of receiving gifts ourselves. Could we be honest and tell the members of our family what we really need, and thus reduce waste and at the same time help to alleviate their indecisions, as well as our own possible disappointment?

In some instances it is well-nigh impossible to choose a gift for someone who appears already to have everything he or she needs. In such a situation the person might welcome the idea of having a gift donated to a needy child, an invalid, or one of the approved philanthropic institutions on his or her behalf. If specific gifts must be given to those people who expect them, and who would be very upset if they were overlooked, gifts can be chosen with care and then given as if to the Baba within the person, as a form of worship.

Then there is the other area of frequent distress: the sadness of being alone and separated from those we love, or the anxiety of being forced to be with people with whom we have very little in common, or whom we find especially difficult for some reason. Baba so often stresses the fact that we are all members of one family, since we all share the same Mother-Father God as our spiritual parents. If we take what he says seriously, we have the choice of feeling lonely and sad because we are not able to be with our personal family, or looking around and finding others who are even more lonely, and offering them a helping hand, companionship, or some other gesture expressive of caring. It is a wonderful time to do as Baba urges us to do: give to those who are in need instead of giving to those who already have more than they can use. It is not at all difficult to find people who are completely alone...the ones who swell the number

of suicides at this time of year. A kind word or a loving gesture might prevent them from taking such a drastic step.

On the other hand, we may be expected to visit our families or to invite them to visit us, yet, because of unpleasant experiences in previous years, we dread the enforced closeness which such visits impose.

Baba says that the quickest way to learn tolerance, forbearance, and patience is by being with those who are difficult for us in some way. But he advises us to look beyond or beneath the irritating personality traits and try to see the Baba image hidden deep within their hearts. If we keep that constantly in mind, it will be easier to avoid undue friction. As he so often tells us, even when we find we cannot be loving, we can still choose to be civil.

Lastly, whether we are able to feel love or not, we can all be channels for Baba's love, which he describes as expansion love, giving and forgiving, in contrast to human love, which is so often contracting, and better described as getting and forgetting.

We can decide to start now to prepare for the holidays, by asking Baba to help us to open our hearts wide in order to be better able to receive his love, which we can then direct to each of the people we will be seeing during the festive season. One very helpful way to become a channel for his love is to use the breath as he instructs us to do for the So Hum meditation. As we breathe in we can imagine that we are actually breathing in his love, and as we breathe out we can visualize sending it to each individual person whom we will be meeting.

If we will but persevere, it will soon become a habit to beam his love to everyone we meet, recognizing that they are all members of his vast family. In this way, Baba will be born in our hearts anew. With his birthday and Christmas so near, the time is most appropriate for such a rebirth to occur. May this renewal take place in each of us, with Baba's help.

Phyllis Krystal
Pacific Palisadea, California

Desire is a bonfire that burns with greater fury when encouraged. One desire leads to ten and man exhausts himself in trying to fulfill the demands of personal desire.

Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, page 118



HIS RETURN

Talk about Christmas
with pierced hands and feet on a cross
a realized soul put to such abuse
Think about His life
from lonely sadhu trudging through the Middle East
to the Himalayan mountain peak
in silent solitude
into His own Atmic awareness
A mission enacting the Will of His Father
the same one we have come to know as Sathya Sai Baba
He lived His Life as an example, there is no doubt of that
I guess we too should strive to conquer
the separateness that drives us apart
Yes, on this day let us have that same detachment
so the ego is crossed out and
we can look with love, giving true meaning to His life
and the Father He spoke of.

Michael J. Hollander
Fort Lee, New Jersey

EXCERPTS FROM A DIVINE DISCOURSE ON FOOD

GIVEN ON JULY 25, 1983

Embodiments of Love!

All men are one, is it not? But then, what is the cause of all these conflicts that we see all around us? From time immemorial, people have been wanting to know why these differences exist at all. How do we unravel this mystery?

The cause of all these differences is the food that you take. It is the food you take that determines what you become. You have three qualities: *sathwa* (purity, calm), *rajo* (anger, greed, feverish activity), and *thamo* (sloth, dullness) *gunas* (human characteristics). Some are in the habit of taking completely *sathwic* food, some eat *rajasic* food, and others eat *thamasic* food. There are some who eat a combination of *sathwic* and *rajasic* foods, and there are those who eat a combination of all three. Because they take food in all these varying combinations, we find in them behavior which we associate with one or another of the *gunas*. Because of what they become, differences arise among people. Since all are not taking the same type of food, they are unable to come to a common platform of understanding.

You can take the example of differences between two brothers born to the same mother. What is the reason for this? It is the difference in their food. *Ravana* and *Vibhishana* were born of the same mother, but *Vibhishana*'s sacredness and good thoughts were not given to *Ravana*. The reason was that the food that each was taking was different. So, if there is to be a common bond and harmony between people, their diets have to be similar.

There can never be a bond of understanding between two individuals if one of them is eating only *sathwic* food and the other only *rajasic*. For a while they will be on speaking terms, yet it is only a question of time till they will part. There can be a lasting friendship between two individuals eating *sathwic* food; so also between individuals eating *rajasic* food. But the kind of relationship that exists between water and oil is the kind that will exist between individuals with any two of these qualities.

So, if you want to develop a relationship with God, your thoughts should be of a divine nature. God is purely *sathwic* in nature, so if you want to strike up a friendship with Him, you have to take

purely sathwic food, develop a sathwic nature, and have sathwic thoughts. You must endeavor to imbibe only the sathwic.

It is the food that determines the shape of the mind, and it is the mind that will lead us on to Godhead. There are some who experience closeness to God, but this proximity they enjoy cannot last long. The bond will last only as long as they have the sathwic feeling in them; little by little, as their rajasic feelings take over, they lose it. The moment their sacredness and purity begin to diminish, they have to get away from God. They keep looking for reasons for this separation, yet it is they alone who are responsible.

If you wish to build up a permanent relationship with God, you must strengthen these sathwic tendencies. And only when all men take sathwic food will men of all minds and all kinds be able to establish a bond of brotherhood among themselves.

What do we mean by sathwic food? Milk, fruits, nuts, etc., we understand to be sathwic food. Food which is juicy, food which is oily, food which is tasty and delicious and brings happiness on the physical planes. In this type of food there is something which has a subtle aspect to it, which sustains and really strengthens us.

As far as possible, this food should be associated with oil, but not with fat. We should eat in limited quantities, to the extent that we can relish it. When we sit down for a meal, we feel light and effortless. When we are done, we should rise with the same feeling of lightness and effortlessness, not with the feeling that we are now too heavy to be lifting ourselves. Food taken thus is truly sathwic food.

Further, true sadhakas (aspirants for spiritual progress) should eat only once a day. One who eats three times a day is a rogi (a diseased person); one who eats two times a day is a bhogi (a luxury loving person); one who eats only one meal a day is truly a yogi (a God-centered person). But today we see that, unfortunately, we have no limits whatsoever in the types of food we eat or the frequency with which we eat them. Anything that comes in handy, we keep in our pockets and keep on eating at our leisure.

Whatever we eat should be such that our health will not be harmed, because health is wealth and when you have health you can do your sadhana (spiritual practices). In fact, dharma (righteousness),



The 58th birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be observed on Wednesday, November 23, 1983. Devotees throughout the world will be celebrating this occasion with bhajans and prayers.

artha (prosperity), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation) are all for the sake of keeping up your health.

What is rajasic food? Sweet, sour, salty, hot, and bitter...such items should not be taken in. Nor should we take food which is absolutely dry and devoid of oil.

What is thamasic food? Cooked food which has become cold or begins to smell or is saved for reheating on another day--all these are thamasic. Then there are some other items of food which give one a lot of the thamasic quality: wine and meat. Meat furthers the demonic qualities in you. Perhaps soldiers need food of this type, but not sadhakas.

Depending on the type of food we take, we can place ourselves in any of a broad range of classification, from demons to the immortal ones.

In the food we eat, that which has the gross form of existence takes the form of excreta. The subtle part in the food takes the form of blood, and that which is intermediate between the gross and the subtle takes the form of muscles. And what is the subtlest of all takes the form of mind. In the same manner, the gross form of water that we drink is given out as urine, while the subtle aspect of it gets transformed into prana or life force. If food takes the form of mind, and water the form of life force, you see how important is what we choose to take in. If you do not exercise caution and control in your diet, you cannot exercise control in your sadhana.

Certain vegetarian foods can be equated with wine and meat. Those which are excessively hot or sour fall into the same category, even though vegetarian. We call ourselves Brahmins and eat pickles which bring tears to the eyes. What we call pickles are literally soaked in salt, and an excess of salt is worse than wine. That is why those who have high blood pressure are advised not to eat salt: because salt tends to contaminate our blood.

So we should eliminate items which are excessively salty, sour, or pungent. If a person wants to partake of such foods, it means that they have a certain resolve which does not tend towards God or adhyatmic (spiritual) qualities but towards demonic qualities like hatred, anger, and wanting to seek vengeance. In Telegu, this is given the term "matsara." Matsara is the worst of all qualities;

you should never have even a trace of it in you. Yet an excess of salt, sourness, or pungency will give this quality of matsara or malice, and cause you to separate yourself from others by developing hatred, envy, etc.

In fact, a person who possesses this quality of matsara is the worst of all creatures that you can imagine. This quality can be found sometimes even in people whom we regard as devotees of God. Because their wishes are not being fulfilled, or possibly God took it upon Himself to caution them or pull them up for some wrong that was being done, this enmity can develop in the hearts of even devotees. Such types of individuals are called asuras or demons.

The food we take in is for satisfying our hunger, not for satisfying the tongue. Hunger is a form of dis-ease. To cure ourselves of disease, do we decide to take only medicine that tastes good? So food is like medicine to cure a disease--irrespective of taste. Whatever the taste of medicine, we should be prepared to take it to cure the disease. But, since we want to take this medicine to suit our taste buds, the food we take loses its characteristics.

"This has to be tasty." So we add a pinch of salt or a little bit of chili or some other seasoning. In this manner, we increase the negative aspects of food. So we may consider ourselves as sadhakas doing japa (repetition of the Lord's name) and dhyana (meditation) for years, yet not experiencing any positive results because our body is like a pot with holes: all that we pour into it flows out again.

We are going on pilgrimages galore, dipping in the holy waters, reading sacred books, and doing all kinds of sadhana, but the mind is very impure. All our efforts of sadhana are having no effect because we have not changed the food we are taking in. Change the food, and you will see the effect taking place.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The following translation from Sanskrit is a prayer said before meals to purify the food.

O Lord, Thou art the food,
Thou art the enjoyer of the food,
Thou art the giver of the food,
Therefore I offer all that I consume
At Thy lotus feet.

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