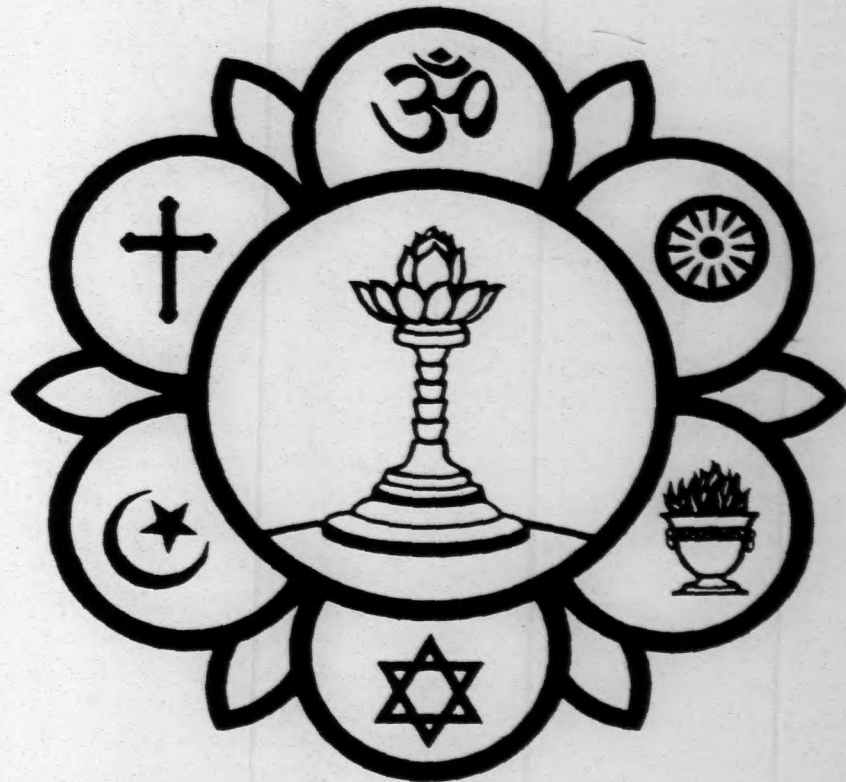


Sathya Sai Newsletter
1800 E. Garvey Avenue
West Covina, CA 91791

SATHYA SAI



Newsletter

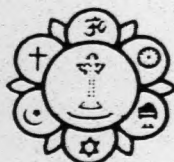
Fall 1984

Vol. 9, No. 1

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

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Everyone must imbibe higher values and consider himself as Atma (the Divinity within all beings) and follow the Atmadharma (Divine activities). That is the mission for which I have come. All men are Mine; so, the whole world has to be saved from the consequences of ignorance or limited knowledge. I will get all My people near Me, for they are Mine and I am theirs. Then, I will start teaching and training them, until they become entirely ego-free.

For many years it has all been sweetness, kindness, soft persuasion; hereafter, it will be different. I will drag them, place them on the table and operate. That is to say, I have no anger or hate; I have only love. It is love that prompts Me to save them, to open their eyes, before they get deeper into the morass.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume III

GOD IN THE FORM OF FOOD

It was New Year's Day morning. After most people had finished celebrating, nine of us from the Brooklyn center began a different kind of celebration, a joyful expression of love towards 15, mostly elderly, hungry people. They were Meals-on-Wheels recipients who, without our help, would face a long weekend without adequate food.

At 10:00 a.m. the group gathered to prepare vegetarian lasagne, salad, and steamed vegetables. To these homemade dishes were added apples, oranges, cookies, milk, bread, and butter. The work went smoothly and easily. Some sang *bhajans* (devotional songs) as they chopped, sliced, or stirred. All enjoyed the spiritual atmosphere, the peace and harmony that settled over the room.

When the cooking was done, the hot dishes had to be packed in individual tins. These were provided by the Prospect Avenue Senior Citizens' Center, the agency that delivers meals to shut-ins Monday through Friday.

Several people formed an assembly line, some placing a vegetable or a lasagne portion in the tins, others putting on covers and packing a large thermal container. We all worked together as one harmonious whole, losing ourselves in the work.

By 1:30 we were ready to make the delivery. The car was packed with thermal containers, one for hot and another for cold. None of the four volunteers knew what to expect, but as we drove off I had the feeling I was about to embark on some wonderful spiritual adventure.

We had brought with us a list of the names and addresses of the shut-ins, who spanned the Park Slope-Sunset Park area of Brooklyn. Our route included deliveries to an 81-year-old woman with advanced Alzheimer's disease and a 78-year-old amputee with a heart condition. One woman was so emotionally ill that she would now eat only food delivered by Meals on Wheels and had previously been hospitalized for malnutrition. A crippled young man lived on the fourth floor of a walkup and had no way to get down the stairs. And so it went. All were desperate cases. But somehow when we met these people, it wasn't at all depressing. We were able to see them not as names and diseases on a list, but as

warm, loving human beings just like ourselves.

We made our first delivery to a 74-year-old blind man who cares for his alcoholic wife. Two of us went into the building carrying brown bags filled with food and a third followed. Someone rang the buzzer. When a voice inquired who we were, we said, "Prospect Hill Meals on Wheels." Then we went up to the apartment, and the man opened the door and invited us in. We put the food on the kitchen table and stayed a few minutes to chat. Both the man and his wife were so happy just to have us there that they ignored the food. Before we left, they thanked us for the meals and wished us a happy New Year.

As we deposited our bags of love in each home, we felt wonderfully uplifted. I don't know when it started, but at some point I began to feel the bliss in my heart. It was as if Baba were sitting right beside me in that car, walking up those stairs, giving out the food.

At each stop we were thanked, and often hugged and blessed as well. Our last stop was at the home of a 96-year-old woman who was so frail it took her several minutes just to walk to the door. We had an extra meal and had decided to give it to her. For us it was a matter of practicality. But when I explained to her that she was going to get a double portion, her eyes widened with joyful surprise. "God bless you," she said in a voice filled with emotion. "God bless you."

After New Year's Day, the Brooklyn center decided to prepare meals for shut-ins as an ongoing service project the last Saturday of each month.

J. N. W.
New York, New York

The fostering of pure thoughts will promote the spirit of selfless service in our hearts. Selfless service is a more exalted means of spiritual progress than meditation, singing devotional songs, or other disciplines. This is so because when we undertake these spiritual practices, we do so for our own benefit and not for the good of others. These are aimed at subjugating one's individual desires and securing happiness for oneself. What we should aspire for is the attainment of the good of others without any desire for personal gain.

--Baba

THE SIX ASPECTS OF REALITY

During a meeting of the staff study circle at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, held on December 17, 1983, Vice Chancellor Dr. V. K. Gokak fielded questions from the staff relating to human values, higher education, and the six aspects of reality. One of the questions, with Dr. Gokak's answer, is printed below. Additional questions and answers will appear in forthcoming issues.

Question 1: In addition to the already-existing programs at the Institute, such as social service, prayer, meditation, etc., and the new approach you have spoken about, which exposes the student in each individual subject to the six aspects of reality, would it not be desirable to make the theme of the six aspects itself a separate subject, to be taught by one skilled in it?

Dr. Gokak: This question raises the linkup of moral, spiritual, and academic education which we have been discussing. Specifically, we have been looking at our approach to teaching, the very basis of our teaching, to see if we are leaving anything out. In these discussions we have not been concerned with techniques of teaching, such as the lecture or seminar. We are examining whether, in our present approach to teaching, we develop the full potential that lies in the student. Now, we know that our teaching to date has been dominated by the intellect. The student is approached by the teacher intellectually; the teacher explains all the laws and principles based on the various concepts and facts that pertain to the subject. Even eloquent lectures, wherein the person speaking to you conveys his enthusiasm and passion for the subject, and sometimes adds his own intuitive insights and expresses them in a very inspiring manner, are still for the most part informative lectures about facts and interpretations of facts. What needs to be done is something more than this, and for this new dimension of our teaching we bring in the six elements of reality. Let me recount them: being and becoming, which we also speak of in terms of truth and beauty; consciousness and force, which can also be seen in terms of value or social significance and power; and, finally, love and delight. Through our teaching we want to arouse a perception of these six impulses in the student. When we teach him a certain subject or a certain topic--it could be from any one of our various disciplines--we try to make him aware of the variety of interests and motivations that lies in experiencing these six factors.

Now, these six factors arise because of the one reality that is threefold, which we have spoken of as eternal being, eternal consciousness, and eternal delight, and this threefold reality splits itself then into these six elements or six parts. You may ask why these aspects of reality are three. Isn't reality only one, not threefold? In the monism of Marxism, for instance, there is only one reality and that is matter. But we assume that the universe is not made of matter only, but also of spirit. Spirit becomes matter, too, when out of being arise the stages of becoming. Once we accept this axiom of spirit behind the universe, then the threefold aspect is the way we experience and discuss this reality. It's possible that some of you might have some other philosophy, but this is the philosophy that is accepted in this center. Let us assume for a moment that you were in a Marxist center and you were contending with the authorities there, questioning why they want to have this matter as a base for their teaching. Have something else, you might argue. Have the humanist or have the mystical approach in your teaching. But, no, they won't agree. Why should they? They have their own philosophy and they will have it their own way. Here, obviously, we don't have a Marxist center or a scientific center or a humanist center or a theological center. This is a mystical center, a spiritual center, where education and all other activity proceeds from the assumption that there is a spirit behind the universe, and that this spirit permeates every part of the universe. This is what we start with. This is the axiom with which life starts in this center, and so this is the philosophy behind the system of education we have adopted here. All this adventure, all this exploration, all this responsibility that has been taken on by Swami proceeds from this basic axiom, and we accept and work with it as the motive force for all our activities here.

Once we adopt this axiom of the spirit behind the universe which is threefold, then as a technical device for teaching we can split each of the three into two parts. We find that this split is there in the history of philosophy itself. There is nothing arbitrary about this. This being and becoming, this consciousness and force, and this love and delight, which are inherent in the three aspects of reality, have all been right there from the time of Plato, and even before, right from Vedic times. Now the suggestion made in the question above is that in taking this up, whenever we expose the student in any individual subject

to these six aspects of reality, that we get hold of one man, somebody who has specialized in the philosophy of these six elements. Then we let him talk on the six elements relating to that subject, whether it be chemistry, physics, or any other academic discipline. In other words, we post a man there and announce that this gentleman will lecture on the six elements of reality as they apply to that subject. But this is not the idea. The idea is that we must expand the way in which we are now teaching that subject to the student. At the moment we are teaching him only one of the six aspects. We are teaching him only how to understand intellectually the truth involved in this interpretation of facts, and all the generalizations and deductions that go with that. This is what we are doing. And in so doing, the whole thing becomes dry and, I should say, partial and isolated. Today, 100% of teaching is concentrated on this intellectual approach. In the universities, in our academic disciplines, we have only developed the intellectual approach. When out of the six we are concentrating only on this one element of truth and the other five are being ignored, then in five parts out of six we are divorced from reality. And so, in our teaching, we are divorcing the student from the beauty (becoming), value (consciousness), power (force), love, and delight aspects of reality. These are not even talked about. Now imagine how rich and how insightful the teaching will be if you take all these into account. Then the teaching presentation keeps you in constant touch with all of the aspects of reality. Our own teaching and learning becomes far more effective and far more inclusive when we expand our teaching in this way. So this is the experiment we are contemplating. We want to go in this direction. How far we can apply this approach to all subjects depends on the persons who teach. It is they who have to explore this and find out. It is quite possible that one or two persons may love to apply this to their subjects and the student will have a much more extensive and rounded view of that subject than he would from just a survey of facts and their interpretations.

Again, I want to emphasize the point that the idea is not to get hold of somebody who will talk about these six elements, and thereby add another set of lectures. No, it should not be considered a new speciality, but a change, or an expansion, of our present approach to teaching. The student will have to learn to expect this kind of thing, and the teacher who has explored these dimensions must be able to interpret them for the young person and show him how it is possible to probe deeply into the

heart of a subject and, through this, gain a vision of the unchanging reality. For example, let us consider in botany how the botanist describes a piece that is taken from a plant, say a stem or a leaf, giving a very scientific description of it. On the other hand, we have another kind of description given by Alfred, Lord Tennyson in these lines:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower--but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

So, this very same flower in the crannied wall which the botanist describes in a scientific manner,"...if I could understand [it]... all in all,"--that is, through all the six elements--then, "I should know what God and man is." You see, it leads to our unraveling the mystery of the universe. If we get to know what it is all about, if we could know where this flower comes from, what its true origin is, what force and energy is behind it, then we could find its reality, the same reality that is behind every flower and every object in creation...then, we would know what God and man is. So the idea is to take up a subject and try to unravel the deeper, hidden aspects of it through this sixfold approach, using this method to explore its underlying essence and to experience it directly through the intuitive faculty.



"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"
that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need
to know.

John Keats

THE TRICYCLE

As a service project, the Bal Vikas children of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Los Angeles decided to select from their own toys those which they wanted to give to poor children for Christmas. The toys were collected during December of 1983, cleaned up, and put into working condition.

As coordinator of the project, I had obtained information on five groups which had been brought to my attention as prospective recipients of the toys. After praying to Baba for help in making my choice, at the last moment I was directed me to a program which had received the fewest donations of any group. They had many families who needed food, clothing, and toys for Christmas. The group had already put together food baskets and clothing, and volunteers were ready to come that night to sort out the wrapped toys we would bring. We had labeled each gift indicating whether it was for a boy or a girl and of what age.

One of the Bal Vikas teachers and I delivered the toys to their office a few days before Christmas. The ladies in the office seemed to be rather somber and cheerless. As we unloaded the presents, slowly they began to smile a little more each time they returned empty-handed to ask, "Is that all?" Loading up their arms with more gifts, I would say, "No, there are more!" They seemed interested to hear that the children who donated their toys ranged from four to 16 years. Perhaps they were surprised that our organization didn't want a tax write-off. As we left, one of the ladies stuck her head out of the door and, smiling a little more than before, wished us a Merry Christmas.

As we drove off, I felt a little disappointed that they had not shown more enthusiasm and I mentioned this to the Bal Vikas teacher. He pointed out that these workers had to face poverty all the time, and probably had learned to handle dealing with the poor on a daily basis by not getting emotionally involved, even though this detachment might appear callous at first glance. I realized that what he said was true, for had we not felt the sincerity with which the lady wished us a Merry Christmas? Here was an important lesson for me to remember.

Pondering this lesson, I cheered up. Driving home, I thought of the many wonderful things that had happened. Especially,

I remembered the wonderful tricycle someone had donated. One pedal was broken, and one of the volunteers had not been able to put the front wheel and handlebars together. We cleaned it up twice anyway, and I took it to work with me the next day. One of the graduate students, although not a devotee, had agreed to help fix any mechanical toys our group collected.

He told me exactly what was needed, and that night after work I went to a bicycle shop. It was 15 minutes before closing. A young workman was busy in conversation with a customer, telling how he had escaped two dreadful accidents. An older man, perhaps the owner, told me to drive my car into the alley at the back of the store and unload the tricycle there. He found an old pair of pedals that were cream-colored and rather dusty. My heart sank. The original pedals had been black. But he explained that an unusually wide shaft was required, and the cream-colored ones were all he had.

He took them over to the bench and replaced the broken pedals, tightened all the nuts, and assembled all the parts perfectly. I looked at the wheels and noticed how much dirt was there, even after two people had washed the tricycle thoroughly. I mentioned to the man that I couldn't understand how it could be so dirty when we had washed it twice. He said, "Oh, that's easy--what you need is elbow grease." So he took his rag and vigorously started to rub the dirt away. When I asked how I could get the red paint to shine a little more, he said, "Use an oily rag; it'll make the finish shine like new." And he began to rub and shine away with his oily rag.

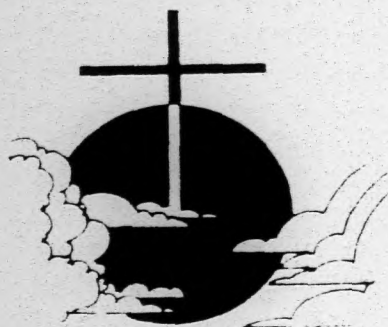
While he worked, I told him about the children's project and that the tricycle would be a gift for a poor child at Christmas. Finally, he sat the trike on the floor and I saw that those ugly, light-colored pedals weren't ugly at all. They were clean now and perfectly matched the cream-colored seat and the cream-colored handlebars. What a blessing! I said with excitement, "Oh, look. What a perfect match!" The young man said, "Yeah, it sure is lucky, isn't it?" "Oh," I said, "I don't believe in luck. I believe in God. He's all the luck you need."

The young man who had escaped death twice said with a knowing grin, "You're right about that!" The older man said nothing. But, as I reached into my purse to pay, he said quietly, "There's no charge. Merry Christmas." I don't know whether he believed

in God or not, but his heart had been touched. I thanked him and said, "God bless you!" and he thanked me too. It was a special moment.

Perhaps each of us had felt in our own hearts what the child who received the toy would feel: unbounded love and joy.

Diane Wells
Los Angeles, California



THIS CHRISTMAS

From many foreign countries we've gathered
from distant lands across the seven seas--from
different backgrounds--we've come to see the Lord Sri Sathya Sai
many have come through the form of Jesus

For didn't He say

Believe in Me and I shall take you unto the Father
so many billions across the planet and a few are here

What did we do to deserve such a chance

This Christmas maybe we'll come to know the real Jesus
for our hearts are with His Father
maybe we can see the Christ within
as we kneel to the One He merged with

Yes, may we come to know the Holy Ghost Itself--
the Spirit of Truth as He descends from out the clouded sky
Our beloved Lord--Our Soul's own Source

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai

Michael Hollander
Fort Lee, New Jersey

**CEILING ON DESIRES PROGRAM:
DEALING WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS, PRIDE, AND VANITY**

According to the dictionary, pride heads the list of the seven deadly or capital sins, and is the only one attributed to the angels, specifically Satan. Its meaning is conceit or vanity expressed in exaggerated self-esteem, or an overweening opinion of the importance of one's own ego. Of all the negative emotions, it is the most successful in separating us from our true identity. Baba teaches that our essential self, the spark of life, or *jiva*, is identical in everyone, so how can pride be justified when by its very definition it separates and exaggerates the value of the ego over the God-self?

Pride projects the message that in some way we consider ourselves superior to others, and are proud of our own qualities, achievements, position, possessions, heritage, family, children, and a host of other possibilities. We have all heard the phrase "puffed up with pride" applied to a person with an inflated ego. There is also the charming little fable of the frog who puffed and puffed to blow himself up in an effort to be bigger than any of the other frogs in the pond, only to burst in the attempt.

We have all seen or heard how Baba often showers so much love and attention on certain devotees that they become impressed with their own importance and worth that God should be noticing them. Then, suddenly, and for no apparent reason He withdraws His attention, leaving them bewildered, desolate, and often so angry that they turn against Him. It is as if He deliberately blows them up and then pricks their bubble to test their ability to accept with equal equanimity the pairs of opposites: acceptance or rejection, limelight or shadow.

To enable us to detect pride in ourselves, it is necessary to ask what makes us feel superior to someone else. It is helpful to examine, one at a time, the areas where pride may be operating, physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. Are we proud of our bodily attributes such as a beautiful face, hair, figure, strength, prowess in sports, health, and many others? But Baba repeatedly tells us *the body is like a temporary shelter where we reside for a short while on our journey*. He also cautions us to remember that we are not our bodies and should not identify with them. In that case, what is the point of having pride about them?

Then there are the material objects connected with our bodies, such as money, clothes, jewelry, food, car, house, and all the other possessions which can cause us to feel superior to those who have fewer in number or of an inferior quality. Or are we proud of our mental superiority, intellectual achievements such as degrees, talents, career, or creative abilities? Are we attached to our popularity and the fact that people like us, to our own generosity, compassion, honesty, unselfishness, ability to love? Is pride attached to our spiritual achievements or progress? Do we pride ourselves on our holiness and disparage others who follow other paths? Do we let pride creep in as we follow the ceiling on desires or selfless seva programs? Baba recently warned devotees not to allow gifts of money and clothing to replace true compassion which springs from a desire to relieve the suffering of others.

One common cause of pride in devotees is aroused when Baba pays attention to us, gives us something, or showers his affection on us. We tend to forget that He does so, not because we are special, but because we need His help. Pride in any or all of the above areas inflates the ego, separates us from our true identity, makes it impossible to practice "Thy will, not mine," and prolongs the time it will take to reach the goal of liberation.

There is a story which illustrates the need to detach from pride. In answer to a devotee's request for his grace, Baba asked if she could accept the three zeros. The first is to be cut off from kith and kin, the second is to be deprived of the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter, and the third is to lose one's reputation when it is questioned by the world. If, in the face of these three, the devotee still has unswerving faith in God, she will be blessed by the greatest gift of all, God Himself. If pride is attached to any of the above three categories, it behooves us to detect it and hasten to withdraw it. Baba also warns us that, if our hearts are filled with pride and other negative emotions, there is no space for Him to reside in them. He can operate through us only where we are not proud of our own abilities.

With the approach of Hanukkah and Christmas, there will be many opportunities to catch sight of pride in action in ourselves as we check our motives for giving gifts. Are we giving to impress the recipients with our generosity, kindness, cleverness, or creativity in choosing unusual gifts, time and energy spent on

finding or making them, or are we really giving from our hearts? Baba recently said that to do something which is beyond our capacity is a sign of ego, yet to give less than we are able makes us thieves by denying others what is their due. We must be discriminating in giving, as well as in any other service.

The next question is, "How can we let go of pride when we have detected where it is operating in our lives?" There does not appear to be a quick method with which to eradicate it. However, we can use it to attach ourselves more and more to our own God-selves by turning to Baba in our hearts every time we catch ourselves being proud of something connected to our egos, and give thanks to it for lending to us for this lifetime whatever it is we are feeling proud to own.

A little poem came flowing through one day which illustrates this point, so I will include it here.



I love you all, every single one,
For deep within I see
Beneath the ego layers
Your own Divinity.

No one of you is special
Or more lovable to Me,
For each of you possesses
Your own Divinity.

So don't compete with others
To seek security,
When My love you have already
From your own Divinity.

But direct My love to all those
Who are blind and cannot see,
The love they seek so desperately
Is their own Divinity.

For as you see in everyone
The counterpart of Me,
You'll begin to open up your hearts
To your own Divinity.

Phyllis Krystal
Pacific Palisades, California

SATHYA SAI BOOK CENTER OF AMERICA

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Tustin, California 92681-0278

(714) 669-0522

Contact the Sathya Sai Book Center for a complete, complementary listing of the books, tapes, and other articles that they have available. A group of new video cassettes, along with all prices and instructions for ordering, will be included.

SAI FOUNDATION

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For all their information regarding audio and video cassettes, movies, photographs, and books, contact the SAI Foundation and request their free catalog. The catalog includes some new video and audio tapes, all prices, and a handy order blank.

WELCOME TO THESE NEW GROUPS

L
SATHYA SAI BABA LATIN AMERICAN

STUDY GROUP OF MIAMI FLORIDA. Gervasio Guizan
1421 NW 1st Street
Miami, FL 33125

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF

ALAMEDA, NEW MEXICO. Stephen Houdobre
P.O. Box 732
Corrales, NM 87048-0732
(505) 898-9785

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO. Maxine Durden
1604 Kentucky NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 265-4173

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF

CERRILLOS, NEW MEXICO. Althea Reustle
Cerrillos, NM 87010

SAI ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONALLY The **Sathya Sai American Bal Vikas Syllabus** for groups I, II, and III has been completed and presented to Bhagavan Baba. He has given His blessings and the syllabus will be distributed to the centers very soon.

The task of **training American teachers** in EHV (Education in Human Values) and *Bal Vikas* will be accomplished by a series of regional seminars after the EHV and *Bal Vikas* books have been distributed to all American Sai centers. These seminars will be put on video film or audio cassette and the EHV/*Bal Vikas* Committee will establish a library of films and tapes that will be lent to all centers that are conducting *Bal Vikas* and/or EHV classes.

Nadine Clegern will change *OM Publication* to the ***Journal of Sathya Sai EHV***. She will continue to maintain the same standards of excellence in that publication and will add a section of newsworthy items on the accelerating developments of EHV and *Bal Vikas* all over the world. To obtain the *Journal of Sathya Sai EHV*, contact Mrs. Clegern, 17 McDivitt Drive, Manchester, CT 06040.

NEW JERSEY On October 6, Saroja Girishankar conducted an EHV seminar in New Jersey for the Northeast Sai centers. The seminar featured guest speakers who are scholars on the major religions of the world and workshops in children's theater and child psychology. This seminar was recorded on audio cassette.

NEW YORK On October 20, the Northeast Regional Teacher Training Seminar was conducted in New York by the Sathya Sai EHV/*Bal Vikas* Committee of the Council of America. Bea Flaig, Nadine Clegern, Ronne Marantz, and Saroja Girishankar gave instructions to teachers on how to conduct *Bal Vikas* and EHV classes. The seminar was filmed by Jack Lenchiner.

CALIFORNIA On Friday, October 5, Sai devotees gathered at the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Los Angeles (formerly Hollywood) to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the center. Several speakers, who have been devotees for many years, shared their experiences. The extraordinary contributions made by Richard and Janet Bock to the American Sai family was a recurrent theme in all of the talks. The occasion was a tender moment during which everyone felt united in Sai.

Denise Dake will conduct a teacher training seminar for *Bal Vikas* and EHV in Los Angeles during the month of February, 1985.

Specific information will be sent to the centers by Denise. This seminar will be filmed by Richard Bock for the EHV/Bal Vikas film library.

HAWAII In keeping with Baba's instructions to hold public meetings, the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Honolulu had their first public meeting. This most successful event took place on Sunday evening, October 14, in the Garden Lanai room of the Ala Moana Americana Hotel.

Kanta Devi, a former concert pianist and long time student of Vedic philosophy, was the first speaker. She entertained and informed the audience with parables from the *Upanishads*. Kanta Devi put forth the concept that we should each think of ourselves as "incubators for the Divine Spirit."

The next speaker, Robert Bozzani, pointed out that being a practical business man and treading the spiritual path are indeed compatible. He stated that there are no dualities when we allow God to work through us.

Clayton Naluai, a native Hawaiian, brought in a local flavor by emphasizing the spirit of *Aloha* which has always had as its deeper meaning, Universal Love.

Michael Goldstein's meticulous introductions laid the foundation for each speaker. After a showing of Richard and Janet Bock's most recent film, Dr. Goldstein gave an inspirational conclusion to the evening's events.

SAI ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

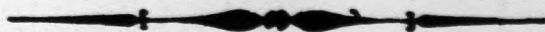
INTERNATIONAL BLOOD DONATION DRIVE was held last September 22 and 23. As yet, the results of the drive are not available. We wish to remind the public that blood donations may be given to the American Red Cross at any time in the name of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organizations. The Red Cross has allocated a beautiful certificate to Bhagavan which reads as follows: "In appreciation to Sri Sathya Sai Baba for outstanding achievement in meeting community blood needs."

INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL AKHANDA BHAJAN will be held November 10 and 11, 1984. This is a continuous 24-hour *bhajan* (devotional songs) session for world peace. It will be held in Sathya Sai Baba centers throughout the world, starting Saturday, November 10 at 6:30 p.m. and ending at the same time on Sunday. See page 18 for the Divine Discourse.

MEXICO On September 4, 1984, a Sai public meeting was held in Mexico City. Speakers were Sam Sandweiss and Michael Goldstein. The film *Aura of Divinity* by Richard and Janet Bock was shown with narration in Spanish. On the day following the public meeting, a conference was held for the Mexican devotees who had gathered in Mexico City. Dr. Sandweiss discussed the function of a Sai center, Dr. Goldstein discussed the structure of the worldwide Sai Organization, and Berniece Mead, Malaika Horne, and Ann Balasuriya gave a presentation on Education in Human Values. After this meeting the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations, with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, established the Sri Sathya Sai Coordinating Committee of Mexico with Dr. Luis Muniz as chairman. We welcome our Mexican brothers and sisters to the worldwide Sai family.

INDIA American Sai devotees who wish to attend the International Service Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam, November 16 through 24, should contact their regional directors as soon as possible if they have not already done so.

UNITED KINGDOM There will be an international seminar on Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in London, March 29 to 31, 1985. The Sai family of the United Kingdom has made considerable progress in the areas of EHV and *Bal Vikas* and in this seminar they will share what they have learned. Any American devotee wishing to attend this conference should contact Ronne Marantz, P.O. Box 142, Westhampton, New York 11977. Miss Marantz will be giving a presentation on Sathya Sai EHV in America, and she will coordinate with the United Kingdom for all American devotees attending the conference.



Photographs, drawings, literary contributions, and news of activities are always welcomed by the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*. However, the Newsletter does reserve the right of discrimination in the selection and editing of any material for publication. Please send contributions to: *Sathya Sai Newsletter*, 1800 East Garvey Avenue, West Covina, California 91791.

GLOBAL BHAJAN
EXCERPT FROM A DISCOURSE GIVEN
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST AKHANDA BHAJAN

Embodiments of the pure Atma Principle!

Last November, on the 23rd (1975), people from all parts of the world had assembled here to celebrate the Golden Jubilee (Baba's 50th birthday), and office bearers of the centers were here for the second World Conference and other functions that took place. Later, these groups asked to be allotted a date, before the close of the Jubilee year, when they could, in their own places, celebrate the happy occasion. It was decided that all over the world, in all centers, bhajans (devotional songs) would be held for a full 24 hours, beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday (yesterday) and ending at 6:30 p.m. today. Therefore, in 42 countries around the globe, more than 7,000 centers have enthusiastically taken up this assignment.

This has been named an Akhanda Bhajan, that is to say bhajan done without any break. But is it really an Akhanda Bhajan? It is begun at 6:30 in the evening of one day and ended at 6:30 in the evening of the next day. Can we call it unbroken bhajan? What is a period of 24 hours, when we consider the vastness of the universe and the eternity of time? It is just a wink--a tiny part of the life of man on earth. By reciting the Name of God for one single day, you claim to have done bhajan "without break"! Akhanda Bhajan must be as continuous as breathing itself, if it is to deserve the name.

For this is a singing that originates from the heart, not the lips or tongue. It is an expression of the joyous thrill that wells up from the heart when the glory of God is remembered. It is the spontaneous manifestation of inner ecstasy. No attention is paid to the blame or praise that others may give. It does not seek the admiration or the appreciation of the listeners. It is sung for one's own joy, one's own satisfaction, one's own delight.

Singing this intense yearning for God helps to purify the atmosphere. Man is today forced to breathe air polluted by sounds of violence, hatred, cruelty, and wickedness. The vibrations of the bhajans can cleanse the atmosphere and render it pure, calm, and ennobling. It was with this high purpose in view that the program of global bhajan was designed.



The 59th birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be observed on November 23, 1984. Devotees throughout the world will be celebrating this occasion with *bhajans* and prayers.

The Names of God are many--even countless; it is so in all languages. For God, as the Vedas declare, has "a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet." Yet some people do question the propriety of calling on God by means of such a multiplicity of names. But each Name is representative of only one aspect of Divinity. Each denotes but a single part of the Supreme Personality. The eye, the nose, the mouth, the hand, the finger may be denoted by distinct words, but they all belong to the same individual, don't they? So, too, one must remember that every Name is but a facet, a part, a ray, of the Supreme.

Those who rely on reason alone, or on the limited laws of science, argue that the repetition of the Name, which is, after all, sound, cannot cleanse or correct the mind of man. But the Name is not just sound. You are sitting quietly alone, listening, but if someone says "scorpion" you will be frightened and start trying to escape it. The mere sound creates so much reaction! Or you may be sitting before a plate of delicacies, but, if someone speaks of something dirty or disgusting, you are tempted to refuse the food.

When words referring to worldly situations have such transforming effect on the mind of man, certainly words conveying spiritual and elevating meanings will help in cleansing and correcting it. When we fill the air with harshness, we become harsh in nature; when we fill the atmosphere with hatred, we too must breathe the air and are hated in return. When we saturate the air with sounds full of reverence, humility, love, courage, self-confidence, and tolerance, we benefit from those qualities ourselves.

So decide always to do good, see good, remember good, and be good. Do not seek to discover or discuss the evil in others, for the attempt will tarnish your own minds! When you are engaged in searching for the faults and failings of others, you are paving the way for the development of those faults and failings in yourself. Dwell on the good in others; some time or other, this will prove an asset to you. The goodness latent in you may be prompted to sprout and bloom.

When you sing the Name, it must be sung for your own delight, to slake your own thirst, to appease your own hunger. No one eats to satisfy another's hunger, nor do they swallow medicine

to alleviate another's illness. So do not care what others feel about your dhyana (meditation) or bhajan. Do not seek the approval, appreciation, or admiration of others, nor refrain from dhyana or bhajan because others dislike or ridicule you. Be self-reliant, self-confident. See through your own eyes; hear through your own ears. Most people today believe their ears and deny their eyes, or they use the eyes and ears and even the brains of others! And so they fall into error and fear.

This program of bhajan for 24 hours, continuously done, all around the world in all lands, has spread the message of love through the Names of the Embodiment of Universal Love; it has saturated the atmosphere with the thought of God and of the peace and joy that He showers. The bhajan that you have done here has affected not only this particular area and its environment, but it will transmute the entire atmosphere. Continue this attitude of devotion and humility, of service and tolerance, and the atmosphere will not be polluted by hatred. Do not contaminate the air by voicing acrimony, scandal, insult, or slander. Keep silent when you feel like expressing such ideas; that in itself is service to yourself and others.

Life is a song--sing it. That is what Krishna taught throughout His life. Arjuna heard that song on the battlefield, where tensions were at their highest and when the fate of millions was to be decided by the sword. Krishna sang the Gita, so that Arjuna might listen. Gita means "song." He sang, because He was ananda (highest bliss), wherever He was: in Gokulam, on the banks of the Yamuna, or at Kurukshetra between the warring armies.

You, too, must pass your days in song. Let your whole life be a bhajan. Believe that God is everywhere at all times and so derive strength, comfort, and joy, singing in your heart in His presence the glory of God. Let melody and harmony surge up from your hearts, and let all take delight in the love that you express through that song.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
November 14, 1976

Note: We thank the editors of Sanathana Sarathi for the use of this discourse, which appeared in its entirety in their December, 1976, issue.

For information on Akhanda or global bhajan, see page 18.

BLISS IS MY FOOD

How many times do we come across someone who has a gift for putting things so succinctly that it takes our breath away? It is not uncommon to find that the world's great truths have been expressed in very few words, yet their essence and impact have been found to be timeless. Volumes have been written, for example, on the theory of relativity, but it was Einstein who made the briefest statement on it: $E=mc^2$. The great sage, Vyasa, wrote several verses on the timeless wisdom embodied in the *Bhagavad Gita*, yet Lord Krishna is said to have uttered only three words to the bewildered Arjuna on the battlefield: "*Mamanusmara yudhya ca*" (Remember Me, and fight).

It is not easy for most of us to grasp the deep philosophical meaning hidden in such gems of wisdom without some kind of elaboration. Great scholars, philosophers, scientists, and yogis seek the profound truth behind such flashes of wisdom and teach it to mankind. The driving force for all such endeavors is inquiry. Man, by virtue of the intelligence bestowed upon him by God, strives to know. This tendency sets him apart from the lower forms of life. Indeed, contemplation of the truth, seeking of knowledge, inquiry into the unknown--these activities are not just unique to man, they are an essential part of his existence.

The contemplation of words of wisdom is a very pleasant exercise. It helps to calm our wandering minds. It opens a great vista of knowledge before us. It helps us to channel our thoughts toward God, Who granted this knowledge to us. Sometimes, it jolts us into an awareness of our true nature. And it requires nothing more than an open, rational mind and faith in God, which makes us believe that He is looking after us. Then we are ready to undertake deep contemplation of the wisdom He teaches.

Let us consider a profound statement made by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He declares, *Bliss is my food, my sustenance*. Let us delve into this statement and try to understand what He is telling us.

To begin with, let us ask ourselves, "What is bliss? Is it the same as happiness?" If it is, then we have many reasons to be blissful. We know of many ways to make ourselves happy. We want to be happy because it always feels better to be happy than

to be sad. And Baba says that bliss is His food. So, if we were to be full of happiness, or bliss, He would not go hungry.

Having rationalized the need for being happy, let us now consider the various things that we do to make ourselves happy. For example, if we were to get up as soon as the alarm went off in the morning, instead of turning it off again and again to catch a few extra winks, we would be happy. If we were to get everybody's cooperation during the day at work, it would make us very happy. If we were to find the perfect dress that we had been looking for, and find it on half-price sale, it would make us even happier. And, after a hard day's work, if we were to find that the children ate their vegetables at dinner, finished their homework instead of wasting time in front of the television, and went to bed on time without throwing a single tantrum, our joy would know no bounds.

These are the kind of things that seem to make us happy. Now, let us look at the other side of this. What if these things did not happen as described above? We would be disappointed, frustrated, angry, and ultimately miserable. Thus, we see that our happiness is closely interwoven with our desires and expectations. If these are fulfilled, we become happy. Our happiness seems to be dependent upon the actions of others.

We find ourselves at the mercy of others for our happiness because that is the nature of happiness. Sai Baba has said, *Happiness is temporary; it is given to us by others. Next comes joy. One is joyful while filling the stomach--it comes and goes. But bliss is one's rightful nature; it is one's real nature and is permanent.* Thus, He teaches us that anything temporary cannot give bliss.

Not having understood this distinction between happiness and bliss, we run after things that we think we need. We get attached to trivial things. We fight with others. We become jealous of others. We become slaves to our senses. And, as a result of all this, we become unhappy. Then we blame God for our troubles. What is the result of all this foolishness? We are deprived of bliss, and God is deprived of His food.

What is the solution to this? Sai Baba tells us about a way to achieve lasting happiness. It is best to understand the difference between wants and needs, and it is best to expect

nothing in return for our actions. Lord Krishna called it the path of *nishkama karma* (action without a desire for the fruits thereof). If we did not have wants, desires, and expectations, we would not suffer from disappointments, frustrations, anger, jealousy, or misery. These emotions would not exist, because their cause would not exist.

Let us take this thought a step further. It becomes obvious that a state of mind in which such negative emotions are non-existent brings us contentment. We are content because we are satiated. And the important point is that we are satisfied, not by pursuing the impermanent joys of this world, but by being unattached to them. Sai Baba says, *Bliss is an inner treasure, won by detachment and discipline. We must have a plan for bliss, peace, and contentment.*

Contentment--that is the keyword. Baba exhorts us to be content. He tells us to yearn for contentment, for that is our task. He tells us to struggle, for that is our assignment. And He assures us that, if we do all these things sincerely and steadily, and offer all our efforts at His feet, He will grant us bliss.

Our goal, therefore, is to endeavor to attain bliss by curbing our desires. Sai Baba has given us several guidelines for carrying out the Ceiling on Desires program as part of his 60th birthday (November, 1985) celebration. As we do our *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) along these guidelines, we ought to remember the reason for doing it. It is to help us achieve bliss, for then the Lord Who resides in our hearts will also get bliss. *Our bliss is His food*, He has declared.

Thus, as we contemplate these words, their majesty, glory, and splendor unfolds before us to enlighten us, to guide us, to console us, and to give us courage so that we may remember Him and fight the battle of life.

Deepak G. Bhat
Troy, Michigan



When you are happy, pray for satisfaction. When you are sorrowful, pray for peace.

--Baba

A LETTER TO MY BELOVED

It was in July of 1972 in my native Netherlands--when I was still unaware of the existence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba--that I felt prompted to sit down and write a letter to the "Someone" unknown to me who was to fill the void in my life. My pen never hesitated; the words came in a steady flow. I remember the day and the place vividly. After I wrote the letter, I put it in an envelope and tucked it away. Whenever I moved to a new residence it always went with me, though I hardly ever looked at it. Early this year, however, the letter came to my mind. I felt the desire to reread it. As I did, tears of pure joy came running down my cheeks, since I realized that the one for whom it was meant was our beloved Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I immediately sent it to Him. As of yet, I have not met Baba in the bodily form. My heart is waiting anxiously....

My Dearest,

I do not know You; I do not know Your name; I do not know where You are, but nonetheless I love You because You are so very close. Always You are around me. You are so dear to me.

In the past I was still unaware of Your existence. But suddenly I heard the rain whisper about You. Time and time again I was confronted with You, and slowly there grew a place for You in my heart. Its space became bigger and bigger and sometimes the emptiness of it was hard for me. I am gradually learning to fill it with my love for You. Nonetheless, I have to confess that I have not always been able to live with just Your spiritual presence. At times I have lost my self control. Forgive me my impatience. I am weak because of the hard influence of the material world. Help me to overcome this.

I need Your help so much--that's why I long to find You. Meanwhile I will carefully fill the time with giving You my love and receiving Your love. I can feel that this love is growing. It is present everywhere. I can feel You in the kindness of the people, in the silent smiling of unknown eyes, in the touch of a hand, in music, or by the ocean. The wind tells me of Your joy while the sun warms my heart with Your love. I long so much for your presence; then I shall find the peace, silence, and contentment of which my heart already softly sings. These written words are my first material welcome to You, my Beloved.

Jeannette Caruth
Oxnard, California

CHILDREN'S CORNER

FLOWERS FROM BABA

It seemed like just any other Sunday *Bal Vikas* class (children's religion classes), but it turned out to be very special for my sister, Kiran, and me. As usual, *Bal Vikas* started at 10:30 with *bhajans* (devotional songs). We had a small group of children, as there were only four present. After *bhajans*, we split into our different groups. Since the only student in Group III was Kiran, and I was the only student in Group II, Srinivas Uncle (who is the teacher of Group III) and Dorothy (my teacher) decided to join the two groups. We talked about many things, like Baba's teachings, what He says about children, and His miracles. Then we began talking about how Baba shows His presence by dropping flowers. They told us two stories related to the subject.

The first story was about a family in India. Whenever this family had *bhajans* at their home, the flower garlands swayed to the rhythm of the music. The other story, which also took place in India, was about ten families. While singing *bhajans* at a lady's house, they saw a garland drop from one of the pictures. It broke into ten pieces. As there were ten families present, each family got one section to take home.

Just then, two yellow hibiscus flowers simultaneously seemed to jump from two different pictures on the altar. We knew that it could be no one else other than Baba showing His presence. My sister and I each took a flower. I think that Baba had dropped two flowers instead of one for two reasons. First, if only one flower had dropped, it would not be as special as two flowers dropping. A lot of times one flower falls from a picture, but never before have I seen two flowers drop at the same time from two different pictures. The second reason is that if one flower had dropped, we wouldn't know whether the flower was for me or for my sister. From that experience I also learned that things can happen not only to older people in other countries, but to a child like me, too.

Harini Reddy, Age 11
Arcadia, California

When the tender plant of devotion begins to grow, it must be protected. When a young tree is growing, various animals will eat it and kill it. For this reason a fence is placed around the young tree to protect it.

--Baba



DIVINE DISCOURSE ON HUMANNESS

On the evening of August 20, 1984, word was circulated within the ashram at Prasanthi Nilayam that Baba wished for all the foreigners to assemble in the mandir (temple) the next morning. So, shortly after eight on the morning of the 21st, virtually all of the foreigners crowded into the mandir. The doors and windows were ordered shut by Baba, and two translators were summoned. Mr. Narasimhan translated from Telegu to English, and Mr. Craxi translated from English to Italian. The transcript of that discourse follows.

Having taken this precious birth as a human being, we must realize what that humanness means. Man means the mind. Mind means desires. The result of desires may be good or bad. You experience the consequence of those good or evil things in your daily life. Therefore, the first thing you have to do is to realize that you are human.

Having been born as human beings, we must make an effort to live up to our human values. In matters relating to food, sleep, and enjoyment, the behavior of man has much in common with animals. We take food. We sleep. We enjoy the pleasures of the senses. Similarly, birds, animals, and other creatures also experience this. What is the distinction between human life and the life of other animals? What is the purpose of life? Many people do not think about this.

Having been born as human beings, we must live as human beings. Discipline, manners, behavior, dress--in all these four things we must behave like human beings. Today we are living very much the life of animals. We think that man's job is to enjoy the senses. This is not true humanness. Compassion, love, adjustment, conduct, manners, understanding--these are the qualities that human beings should develop.

All of you are coming here spending a lot of money. Why are you coming? Are you regarding this as a picnic, or a holiday? Or are you regarding it as a tourist attraction? No! No! You have come to broaden your hearts. You must confirm the principle of Love. It is not a love based on selfishness. This is a love which is combined with Divinity. We must make a firm resolve to pursue the spiritual path. You must journey from the starting point of "my" and "mine" to "we" and ours."

In these days man is regarding life as consisting of sensual pleasure and, therefore, is wasting his time. You must realize that this is really animal behavior. You must develop character. Nowadays, man does not devote much attention to character. Without character man is like an animal. Animals have many husbands and wives. If man also, or woman, has many husbands or many wives, he or she is worse than the animals. So, you must develop the point of view of one husband and one wife.

You must come to understand why you have come. You come after spending a lot of money, yet you are wasting your time strolling about and engaging in unnecessary and useless talk. Please realize that time is the most important thing. No other thing is as precious as time. If you lose your health, by various steps you can regain it. If you lose your wealth, by making various efforts you can get it back. But if you have lost time, you cannot get back even a single second. Every man, every object in creation, everything is being carried in the stream of time. Because all are being carried in the stream of time, you should not attach yourself to things of no value. There is only one who protects everyone, and that is God. Therefore, hold on to God.

Do not waste time! Many persons, even here, waste their time. TIME WASTED IS LIFE WASTED! By wasting time one is developing laziness. Laziness is rust and dust. Therefore, you should under no circumstances waste time. Whatever bad qualities you have, you must get rid of them. Having come to a sacred place like this, you must try to get rid of at least some of your bad habits.

You must also control improper looks. In the western countries the bad habit of men gazing at women and women looking at men has developed to a great extent. This is really the quality of an animal. It also develops demonic tendencies. And the tendency is getting worse in the case of young men and women. So, first of all, plan to control your sight, your looks. Rather than to look at things with an evil eye, it is better to lose your sight altogether.

The next evil thing is improper talk. It is a very negative quality for men to go out and talk with women and women with men. Control your speech. You talk of friendship. What is friendship? The real friend is God. All other friendship

continues only as long as there is something to be gained. It is temporary. When a person is prosperous, there is friendship. When the money is gone, when youth is gone, when he is down and out, there is no more friendship. When the pond is full of water, frogs gather there. When the pond goes dry, no frogs can be seen there. By cultivating such temporary friendships, we are wasting our whole life.

Selfishness should be avoided. Self is loveless. Love is selfless. So what you should develop is not worldly love, but Divine Love. Now many go around talking about "Divine," "Divine." But they indulge in "deep wine." You do not work hard enough. Just eating and going around, even the dogs do that. We are not dogs; we are Gods. We are the embodiment of Love. We are the embodiment of God. Realizing this truth, we must pursue our life.

The next thing is hearing wrong things, improper things. We should not listen to these things. By hearing improper things, by seeing improper things, and by talking about improper things, our whole heart gets polluted. Take the case of the camera. The lens will take any picture toward which it is focused. Our mind is like the lens of a camera. If you turn the mind toward improper hearing, improper talk, and improper sights, your heart is imprinted with these pictures. Keep the heart pure by turning to God.

Man is really full of Divine Will Power. When you waste your will power, the mind gets weaker. Because you are indulging in unnecessary thought, unnecessary speech, and unnecessary action, you are losing your will power. Here is a small example. There is a radio set. When you switch it on and tune it, you get news. When the radio is on for half an hour, a lot of current is spent. Our body is like a radio set. Our concentration is the tuning mechanism. Our thoughts are the programs. When you go on talking and talking, a lot of energy is spent. When your energy goes down, you develop allergies. When energy goes, the mind becomes weak. Because the mind becomes weak, mental diseases start. This is the reason that in the western countries a large number of people develop mental diseases. They are unable to keep their minds steady even for a moment. With all the money they earn, they waste it on eating and entertainment. Rather than lead a life of this kind, it is better to die. Why should we live? You must live for an ideal. If there are no ideals, then there

are no objectives.

Man today observes no season, no reason. The first thing we must develop is our human qualities. You must ask yourself these questions: "Why have I come here? Am I achieving the purpose for which I have come? Or am I doing something else?" Why should you go around unnecessarily in groups? Is going around like that why you came here? Whatever time you have, sit down quietly and contemplate God.

One thing that is harming us and our countries is laziness. By being lazy we are being treacherous to our own country and our own community. We must control our desires. Put a ceiling on desires. The first rule is: do not waste money. The misuse of money is evil. A lot of money is being wasted on unnecessary travel and other unnecessary things.

The second rule is: don't waste time. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. By wasting time we are wasting our Divinity, our Divine Power.

The third rule is: don't waste food. And the fourth rule is: don't waste energy. Western people waste all four of these things. They waste money, they waste time, they waste food, and they waste energy. Because of the waste of these, all of life is wasted. Life is a valuable thing. Life is full of Divinity. But we are spending all of our time looking at the external world. How long will this world last? Turn your sights inward. Countries like America, Russia, and others are now exploring outer space. Scientific developments are occurring very fast. But nothing is being done to control the senses. People who are exploring outer space are not even traveling half an inch inside the heart. Man is able to fly in the sky like a bird. He is able to go in the water like a fish. But he has not learned to live on the earth like a human being. What good is it to live like a bird or a fish? Being on the earth, you should live like a human being. Being a man and not having learned the qualities of a man, why learn any other thing? Therefore, we should understand the Divinity that resides in our hearts. Do not develop a monkey mind. It is not an ordinary monkey. It is a mad monkey. The body is like a water bubble. Do not be led by the body. Follow your conscience. If you follow the dictates of your conscience, you may reach a good life. On the contrary, man obeys his monkey mind and caters to his useless body. That is the reason why

the human qualities are declining. Wherever you go, you must constantly remind yourself: "I am human. I am human." It is not enough to remind yourself that you are human, you should also remind yourself that you are not an animal.

Try to find out who you are. This is my body. This is my hand. This is my head. But who am I? That is the first question. This is my body; therefore, I am not the body. This is my kerchief. The kerchief can be separated from my person. I am not the kerchief. Likewise, this is my body. I am not the body. Who am I? I am God. I am God. I am God. The mind, the body, etc., are all instruments. Do not for a moment consider that you are the body. As long as you identify yourself with the body, lust will develop. The body is like a dress that you wear. Just as you change your dress, your body also changes. Therefore, don't bother about the dress. Bother about the Divinity that is inside. Death is the dress of life. Birth and death exist only for the body. For the soul there is no birth, no death. You are the embodiment of the soul. Don't think of the body. Don't think of the mind. Think about the soul. Make it pure; keep it pure. Because of your desires it gets impure. Here is a piece of cloth. White is its true nature. When it is used, it becomes soiled. You give it to a dhobi (person who does laundry) for washing. When the dhobi brings it back, it is again white. Now the dhobi has not made it white. White is its true nature. What he has done is to remove the dust and dirt from it. Similarly, the soul is naturally pure. But the soul acquires dirt and dust through desires. Sadhana (spiritual discipline) is the dhobi for purifying the heart. The "dhobi" of sadhana removes the dust and dirt from the soul. When the dust that is covering it is removed, the soul recovers its purity. Therefore, you must see to it that the heart doesn't contain dust and lust. Lust is the worst quality. It is the number one enemy of those who are going along the spiritual path. If you want to go to heaven, you have to develop a pure heart. All your thoughts must be turned towards God.

Our spiritual heart is like a lock. Mind is like a key. If you turn it towards the world, you get attachment. If you turn it towards God, you get detachment. So, you must concentrate your mind on the heart and turn the hearts towards God. This is the primary sadhana which everyone has to do. Life is an extremely precious thing. In life you will experience some difficulties, some losses, some troubles. Do not become bothered

about these things. Be fearless! Life is a challenge, meet it! Life is a dream, realize it! Life is a game, play it! Life is Love, enjoy it!

Awareness is life. The difficulties which come and go are like passing clouds. You should not unduly worry about them. By worrying about these things, you waste time. During these times of trouble and worry, think about God. Then the mind acquires peace. You acquire peace of mind. People come here and say: I want peace of mind; I want peace. In the sentence "I want peace" how many words are there? I-want-peace...how many words? I-want-peace---there are three words. "I" is ego. "Want" is desire. Remove ego and desire and you have peace. Because we develop ego and desire, we have no peace.

In this world there is no peace. Peace is an internal feeling. Outside it's only pieces, pieces, pieces. There is division. Therefore, you must try to live in your heart with peace and bliss and quietness. The proper study of mankind is man. Thoughts, words, and actions together make man. Today thoughts are in one direction, words are in another direction, and actions are in another direction. Therefore, there is no integral humanness, no code of conduct.

So, you must develop manners. We are living in the world, in society. Therefore, we should behave in a way which is not offensive to society. When you are in your own country, you behave according to the laws and customs of your country, and no one is offended. But when you are in India, you need to be very careful about your conduct.

The first requirement is proper dress. Many of you are coming here dressed in what we regard as an unbecoming way. Many are walking about in very short shirts and even dirty clothing. Such persons do not look like gentlemen to us, but like beggars. If the clothes are dirty, how can the mind be clean? You should wear the kind of dress which will develop your character. Here you should dress in accordance with the customs of India. You should come and represent your country well. You should not soil the name of your country. Cover the entire body. Be careful about the dress you wear. This helps you to keep yourself healthy and also to develop a healthy mind.

The next requirement is you must keep your mouth very clean. Because the mouth is the main entrance for the food, you must



The 59th birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be observed on November 23, 1984.

clean your teeth properly and wash your mouth properly. No foul smell should come from a person's mouth. If the mouth is not clean, the health is not good. When the health is bad and the stomach is not working right, even your Divine practices cannot be proper. Even for righteousness and truth, health is very important. When it comes to attaining success in spiritual pursuits, health is the most important thing. Without good health, you cannot pursue sadhana and attain the Grace of God.

Mental cleanliness is as important as physical cleanliness. Both are important. Cleanliness, then, is the first requirement for a spiritual life. The second is respectable dress. The third requirement is character. And the fourth is silence. The mansion of spirituality is built on these four pillars.

Don't go about outside too much! By going around outside, the mind also goes around and around. What is the meaning of what is called meditation? It means a steady mind. When the body is kept steady, the mind also is kept steady. The body is like a pot. The mind is like the water in the pot. If the body is unsteady, the mind is also unsteady. If the pot shakes, the water in it also shakes. Similarly, if the body shakes, the mind is also agitated. So, if the body goes wandering around, the mind also goes wandering around. It is to steady the mind that you sit in meditation. Do not wander around aimlessly. Don't have wrong thoughts. Wrong thoughts, improper looks, improper speech, and improper hearing, all these things should be given up. Replace them with Love.

Having come to India at great expense, you must take back good habits and spiritual truth that you have developed here. Only then will there be some gain, some benefit from your having come to this country. Having spent so much money and time in coming here, if you develop good thoughts, good habits, and good qualities, the trip will benefit you. Concern yourselves with developing a relationship between yourself and Swami and do not go around developing relationships with others. You have come here, leaving behind your father and mother and other relationships. Why should you cultivate new relationships here? The relationship which should develop is between you and God.

Now this does not mean that you should slight anybody or develop hatred for anybody. But it should be just, "Hello, hello. How are you? How are you? Goodbye. Goodbye." The relationships developed should be kept to a minimum. You must each be alone and develop your spiritual qualities. If you associate with others, then preferences will start. If you wear two bangles, they will make a noise. If you wear only one bangle, there will be no noise. If you remain alone, then your mind will be at peace. When you associate with two or three other persons, the noise will become great and there will be no peace.

Do not develop new relationships. You come alone; then you develop a relationship with another. After a few weeks, you think of marriage. But if your objective was to get married, you need not have come all the way over here. Having come here, you should value and use the sacredness of the Divine and not seek to acquire more bondage. Work to develop freedom from bondage. Work for

liberation, and do not waste your time developing other kinds of relationships.

So, manners, discipline, proper behavior, these are the most important things when you are here. While here, in your room, or outside, don't engage in unnecessary talk.

There are other things that shouldn't be happening. I shall give you an example: you have plenty of money. For something that is worth only one rupee, sometimes you give ten rupees. Ten rupees may not mean much to you, but for the local people it is a big amount. You are staying just temporarily. After you leave, having paid these large amounts for things, you are making life difficult for the permanent residents. So, when you pay too much for things, do not imagine that you are doing some service. You are really doing harm. Don't waste money. If you keep this advice in mind, you will have plenty of money, and you will also progress spiritually.

The important thing is discipline. You have come to acquire devotion for God. Therefore, develop this bhakti, this devotion. If you develop this, then Swami says, "I am yours, and you are Mine."

There is another thing you may have noticed about the people I call for interview. The students are sitting on the veranda, and they will form the wrong opinions if you come dressed inappropriately. This is the reason I do not give some people an interview. Dress properly and I will call you. Otherwise, the students develop a poor attitude about the countries from which people come. When you are at home, you may wear short shirts, etc., but when you come for an interview with Swami, you must dress as a respected visitor. Then others will respect your country. I know your mind and why you have come, but others judge only from your appearance and your conduct. When you come to Prasanthi Nilayam, you must have good manners, modest dress, and appropriate behavior. Not only that, when you have learned this behavior and go back to your country, you will be able to teach others. If you earn respect here, wherever you go you will earn respect.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."..Jesus, King James Bible, Matthew 11:6

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SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER
1800 East Garvey Avenue
West Covina, California 91791
Editor & Publisher, Barbara Bozzani

Published quarterly, with annual rates of:

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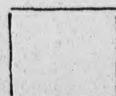
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F/84

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