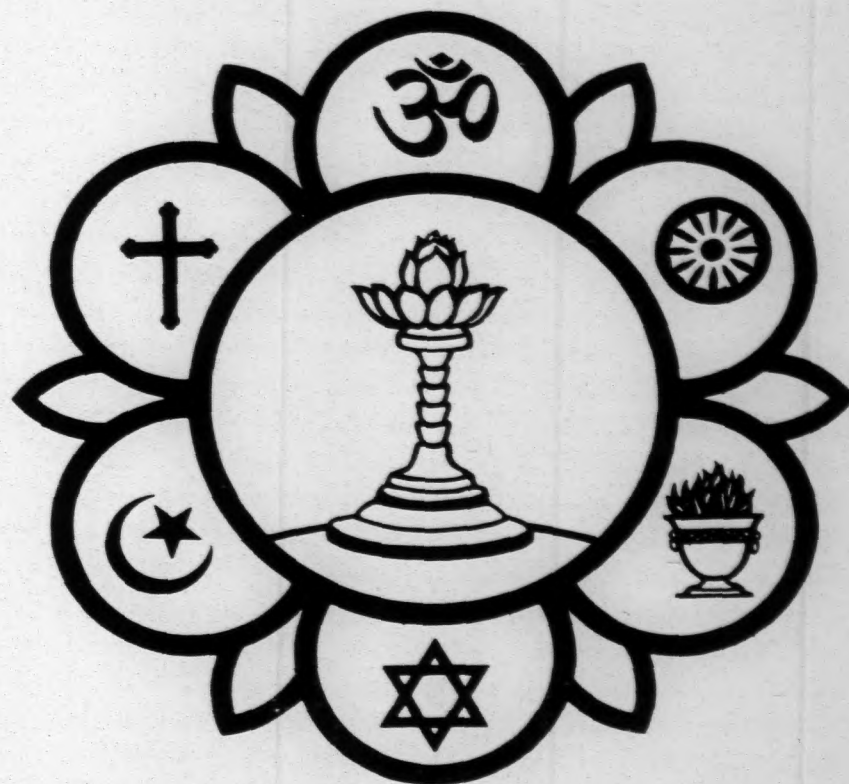


SATHYA SAI



Newsletter

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

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"This human birth is very difficult to attain. It cannot be had for a song. The body is like a hospice, an inn where travelers stay on the way to holy places; the mind is its watchman; the soul is the pilgrim. The pilgrim is bound for the city called Liberation, and the one vehicle guaranteed to provide a trouble-free journey is repetition of the Name of God. Once the seeker experiences the sweetness of the Name, he will carry on his pilgrimage with joy, enthusiasm, and deep conviction.... At the very end of life, everything ends in some bit of net earnings, and those are the experiences that out of all of life's happenings well up in your consciousness at the end. Therefore, direct the entire current of your life toward acquiring the preoccupation which you consider best for the last moment of life. Wish everyone well. Adhere strictly to the truth. Seek only the company of good people. Keep your mind always fixed on God. Live in the world without getting attached to it. If you live your life in this way, your last moment will be pure and sweet and blessed."

--Baba

AN EVENT OF GREAT MAGNITUDE

Two hundred fifteen years ago a small college in the American Colonies purchased a new machine....

"It was a machine perfectly geared to delight. It displayed, on a beautiful field, the motion of earth round the sun and of earth's moon around its properly tilted axis. The other planets moved in corrected relationship, and all were worked from one great spring. The new machine became the object of scientific pilgrimages and served to attract students to the college."*

Two young men were greatly inspired by the sight of harmony and balance among the planetary bodies as they followed their course through the skies, and they tried to inspire a similar harmony and balance in the revolutionary world they lived in. With the course of planetary events firmly impressed in his mind, Thomas Jefferson began the Declaration of Independence, "When in the course of human events...." And his best friend, James Madison, sought to establish "a more perfect union" when devising the government of checks and balances laid out in his major achievement, the United States Constitution. In later years, both Jefferson and Madison credited the Rittenhouse Orrery, the first American planetarium, as a major influence in their view of the world.

This year, on the occasion of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Sixtieth Birthday, a planetarium is being built at the Sathya Sai College at Prasanthi Nilayam. The system to be installed is a state-of-the-art, computerized, astronomical projector made by Spitz Space Systems of Pennsylvania. It will be installed complete with lighting system, projection dome, and computerized automation of all sensory effects.

It seems fitting that the living incarnation of God who planned and created the original, the universe we live in, should use the advances of modern technology to teach the scientific principles behind His creation. This planetarium is designed to teach mathematics, astronomy, ecology, architecture, health, medicine, cultural history, and many other subjects.

The American Sai organizations consider it a privilege to be allowed to donate this major addition to the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Who knows how Bhagavan will use this planetarium to inspire future generations?

Excerpted from a letter by Janet Bock
Los Angeles, California

* from Inventing America, G. Wills, describing the orrery at Princeton University.



THE REPETITION OF GOD'S NAME

Some time ago I found myself facing what seemed to be an impossible dilemma. Both of the choices open to me were equally repugnant. Not only were they disastrous in their implications to my finances and my relationships, but both were in direct opposition to the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, whom I had wholeheartedly embraced as my preceptor. There seemed to be no way at all to avoid acting on one of the choices, and yet both seemed so wrong that I found myself immobilized. For several days and nights the mind ruminated on the alternatives and the various possible results of selecting either.

I became more and more agitated. Finally, in great distress and with considerable emotion, I prayed to Baba to tell me clearly what to do. The desire to be free of the problem and the unhappiness it was engendering was so great that it mattered not at all to me which way I was to go as long as I could feel I had done the best I could under the circumstances.

One evening, I had beseeched Baba for an answer until falling asleep, but awoke in the morning with the dilemma still before me. I spoke aloud, "Oh, please, Baba, please tell me what to do." The thought that came vividly to me at that moment was completely unexpected and could have been no more startling had it been a lion roaring. It was, "Just repeat the Name." I sat down in disbelief and continued to address Baba out loud, saying vehemently, "That's no answer!"

I waited expectantly, hoping for a solution that was a little more down-to-earth. "After all," I reasoned, "I could repeat the Name of God nonstop for twenty-four hours--or even twenty-four days--and when I got through I would still be faced with this decision." But no further direction came. Somewhat resigned that I was going to ultimately have to act without Baba's intervention, I thought, "Oh, well, if I do as it seems I have been told, at least I can postpone taking action for a little longer." So, I began to repeat the Name I love. "Sathya Sai, Sathya Sai...." All day I kept it going. When the mind tried to bring the problem to memory, I would say the Name out loud for a while. When bedtime arrived, I fell asleep easily and the beloved Name echoed peacefully in my dreams.

On awakening the following morning, I was still repeating the Name, but, on another level, I gave the mind permission to look for the answer to the predicament with which I was faced. The mind began to search for the two alternatives which it had been so desperately trying to decide between, and a feeling of strangeness came over me. There had been no change at all in external circumstances, but all sense of urgency was gone. From

a firm conviction that I must decide and act almost immediately, I now felt that there was no need for me to do anything at all. As I repeated the Name throughout that day, the memory of the problem surfaced a few times, but instead of seeming to be a fearsome future decision to be made, it all now seemed more like a dream which had occurred in the past.

In a very short time, even the memory of the dream had disappeared. No decision was made. No action was taken. No miraculous solution appeared. The problem had simply dissolved. If I could remember what it was, I would gladly tell it here.

When this article began to take form, I petitioned Baba again for His help. "Where did the problem go?" I asked. Waiting quietly this time, my expectant heart received a gentle response, "When you removed the problem from the mind, you eliminated it from the only place that it even claimed to exist."

My thoughts ranged over several discussions which I had been privileged to have with Baba in His interview room at Prasanthi Nilayam. During one, I had asked His help with a relationship. I had been estranged from my only son over a philosophical difference, and no action on my part was possible. Baba expressed compassion and told me, "Put all your attention on your Center activities." After two years, during which I served as president of a Sathya Sai Baba Center, putting considerable attention on the Center activities, a letter arrived from my son affirming his love for me and stating that he felt that the bond between us could never be broken. It occurred on the last day of my term of office and came as a surprise, since I had done nothing at all to bring it about. Nothing, that is, except remove my attention from the pain of separation and put it on our Oneness in Baba. The memory of those gentle words comes again: "When you removed the problem from the mind, you eliminated it from the only place that it even claimed to exist."

Continuing to recall conversations with Baba, I remembered asking Him what to do about a chronic health condition. He smiled lovingly as He answered, "Forget it!" This was certainly not the answer I had expected or one I could easily understand. The condition was definitely not imaginary. It could be weighed and measured. It had persisted for over fifty years. It caused emotional and physical pain. It inhibited movement. It affects almost everything I have to do. How could I possibly forget it?

Repetition of the Name (japa) had been effective when dealing with financial and relationship problems, but it didn't seem possible to apply it to a physical problem of these proportions. Actually, instead of forgetting the problem,

I had almost forgotten the advice, until recently I happened to see a television interview with Herbert Benson, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Director of the hospital's Division of Behavioral Medicine and Hypertension Section. Dr. Benson has authored two successful books, The Relaxation Response and Mind/Body Effect, outlining the benefits to the body of stress reduction through meditation. In this interview, however, he said that he had recently discovered a remarkable new technique which, when combined with meditation, measurably and dramatically improves health. "This technique," he said in the interview, "is the repetition of the Name of God--whatever Name you love." He went on to say that he had, under carefully controlled conditions, documented the strengthening of the healing effect when the "Faith Factor" (repetition of the Name) was added to the "Relaxation Response" (meditation), and that it had not mattered which name for God was used as long as it was one in which the person had faith. I recalled the numerous occasions on which Baba had said, "Call Me by any Name; all Names are Mine."

Dr. Benson has now written a new book, Beyond the Relaxation Response, published by Times Books, in which he tells how he came to recognize the benefits of repeating God's name or a meaningful prayer, and also the results which have been witnessed when this "new technique" is added to standard meditation. He outlines the resultant sequence of events which he has observed in his practice as follows:

- "1. There is less concern about the symptoms or the illness; in other words, the anxiety cycle is broken.
2. The symptoms become less severe.
3. The symptoms are present less of the time and short periods of complete relief are noted.
4. The periods of relief become longer.
5. The symptoms are completely gone or remain in a fashion that no longer interferes with everyday activities. In fact, I have found that many patients have difficulty remembering their original symptoms.

"The time duration for a person to experience these full benefits is quite variable. For some, it can be as short as one to two weeks. For others, up to a year is required. Most people can expect improvement to occur in approximately four to six weeks."

Repetition of the Name erases the thought of the symptoms from the mind and, when they no longer exist in the mind, they no longer persist in the body. Baba's instruction to "Forget it!" was His instruction to me, and His advice to someone else might be different. Nevertheless, those words could have meaning for others as they follow His injunction to repeat the

Name of God. Baba has promised that all illusions will be dispelled, that His mission will be achieved. A Course in Miracles echoes this promise by admonishing students to "Repeat God's Name, and all the world responds by laying down illusions."

Now, in addition to repeating the Name, I have a little daydream in which I indulge frequently. I imagine myself saying, "You know, I used to live in some sort of form which took me from place to place. I needed it almost all the time. As a matter of fact, there was virtually nothing that I could do without it. It seemed paramount to my existence then, but now I can't remember what it was."

Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California

"Forget the thing that has to be forgotten. Forget the objective world; ignore it. It is only relatively real, not absolutely real.

"If you live on the level of the body and the individual, you will be entangled in food, fun, and frolic, in ease, envy, and pride. Forget it, ignore it, overcome it--you will have peace, joy, and calm. On the divine path, there is no chance of failure; it is a path on which every milestone is a monument for victory. It is the path of Love."

--Baba



The staff of the Sathya Sai Newsletter is very grateful to those subscribers who take the time to notify us of an address change. This not only ensures uninterrupted service, but is of great assistance to us in keeping our costs to you as low as possible. As you are aware, the postal rates are continually rising and for every issue returned to us we not only have to pay for the address correction from the postal service, but, in turn, must send an additional copy out to you at first-class rates. It is our pleasure to see that every subscriber gets every issue, but we need your help to see that this happens as efficiently as possible. We do thank you for your cooperation.

--The Editor

One day my sister and
I weren't getting along
so good. When we feel bad,
mad, or sad we sing, so we
made up this song:



I see the spark in you, it's the



same bright spark in me, so I could ne-ver



hurt you, it's the same as hurting me.

2. You are my loving brother,
It's true as true can be,
I see you up and down and around,
And living inside me!

Joshua Kintz, age 10
Tara Kintz, age 8½
Idlewilde, California

AN ARIZONA YANKEE IN SWAMI'S SCHOOL VILLAGE

Medical camps are an established part of the service (seva) program of Sathya Sai Baba Centers in India. Anyone who has been at Prasanthi Nilayam during one of the big festivals will recall seeing the men's and women's medical camps at the opposite sides of the Poornachandra Hall. These are staffed by doctors from throughout India who are visiting the ashram and volunteer their time. Last year, a young American doctor was in India as part of a family practice residency to learn tropical medicine. He wanted to serve in the camp while he was at the ashram, but was told he was not needed. I was surprised, therefore, in registering for the International Seva Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam in November, 1984, to be told that for three days prior to the conference medical camps were to be held in the surrounding villages, and that one medical group was to be from the United Kingdom. I was even more surprised on the day preceding the camp, when the United Kingdom service leader told me I was to be allowed to join their group. Not only was I from the United States, but for over thirty years I had done only radiation treatment of cancer in my medical practice. To relieve my apprehension, they promised me that I could see all cancer patients in the village.

When the service groups which were to go to the villages assembled in the Poornachandra Hall on the evening of November 14, Swami came to give the blessing of seeing a holy being (darshan), and made much fuss over His doctors and nurses. The hall was full of workers who were to go to the villages to provide veterinary checkups, to whitewash schools and temples, to check wells and sewage systems, and to give out vegetable seeds and clothing.

The next morning at 7:15, all the groups assembled behind the round buildings, where a large collection of trucks were lined up, three or more for each of the seven villages. After much confusion and cross-checking of lists, we were loaded in the back of a truck, the ladies (nurses and some doctors) sitting on tarpaulins in the front, the men (doctors and assorted volunteers for the medical camp) standing tightly packed in the back two-thirds. At the turn of the road, toward the older sheds, Swami appeared and just after 8:00 a.m. waved us off as we sang devotional songs (bhajans).

Our group was given the grace to be sent to the village of Bukkapathnam, where Swami went to school. In His youth, Baba had walked across the valley and riverbed to reach the schoolhouse, but now the trucks had to take a big U-shaped detour for four times the distance--no road the short way. Clinging to the side rails, or the man next to you, trying not to fall on the curves and stops, and singing bhajans all the way, we lurched into the outskirts of Bukkapathnam at about 9:00 in the morning. We stopped in front of a beautiful new school that Swami had just dedicated in August,

1984. A large group of men, women, and children had already assembled and were queued up into two long lines behind the school. The electric wiring had not been completed yet, but temporary cords had been strung to all the rooms, and almost all were used.

Each overseas doctor was paired with one from Andhra Pradesh to translate the Telegu, and each visiting M.D. was assigned to a room according to his or her specialty. The eye doctor was the busiest, but the pediatrician and the gynecologist ran close seconds, and nobody had time to waste. I first helped the pharmacist unpack the donated drugs, and group them by type. Supplies were short, so the doctors in charge decreed that only a one-day supply could be given, along with a "Sai Ram." I suspect the latter did more good, but, as Swami says, "Service is for our benefit, not the recipients'." Several cancer patients did appear, one of whom was sent on to Madras for further studies and treatment. Another had a pre-malignant condition of the mouth and was told to give up chewing betel nut. The nut itself is harmless, but it is usually mixed with tobacco and lime, which cause the damage. There were also times to brush up on my diagnostic radiology, which I had not done since my service in the United States Navy. In India, the patient is given his X-rays, as well as all records written by the doctor, and he brings these along whenever he has an opportunity to see a doctor. For many, the camp was the first such opportunity in years.

Toward the end of the afternoon, it began raining, as it had been doing off and on for several days, and I was delighted to accept a ride back in one of the ashram jeeps, rather than wait for the open truck. At least the jeep had a canvas top and flaps to keep us partially dry.

The next morning, the medical teams found that we had been promoted to buses. On the return trip we even got a bus with windows! That morning I was teamed with a surgeon from Trinidad and a young resident in anaesthesiology from Ooty. I saw many tropical and parasitic diseases, which are very rare in the United States--even in the extreme South. I also diagnosed my first case of leprosy. The Andhra Pradesh doctor was unimpressed with my diagnosis, saying, "This is quite common," and gave the patient a note to the nearest leprosy clinic where he could be put on curative medicine.

Everyone finished work about an hour before the bus was due, so we walked into the main part of town. Most of the shops had pictures of Swami on the wall, often early ones we had not seen. On starting the return walk, we encountered other service volunteers who asked where Swami's school was. Since we did not know, having thought the older school building next to our "clinic" was it, we asked a local resident and were directed to go one block up the side street we were standing on. There we found the village

square with temple, school, and mosque all adjacent. The school was being renovated and whitewashed by volunteers, but we were allowed in, to stand in the room where young Sathya had attended classes. Coming out to the square, we met a Moslem man who had been Swami's schoolmate at the time of the sticky chair episode* and he retold the tale with great glee. Home, exhausted but happy.

On the last day of the camp, Swami again sent off the buses and trucks, but ours broke down and could not be coaxed to start until after the procession. On arrival at Bukkapathnam, we realized that the drugs and room keys had gone on to the next village, so there was a brief delay. Our surgical trio still managed to see fifty-three patients before lunch. As on the previous day, the food was trucked out in great supply from the ashram canteen. The surgeon also had time to inject two very swollen and painful knees with cortisone and a local anaesthetic. The Andhra Pradesh doctor rounded up the anaesthetic and the syringes, but the patient had to buy the cortisone: nine rupees. One of the patients could not afford this, so we gave him a ten-rupee note, and the young doctor told him in Telegu, "If you don't come right back, I'll have the policeman chase you." He did return promptly, with one rupee in change, and both patients were joyful with the result, dancing around the room with no pain, and many "Sai Ram"s for the surgeon.

The camp ended early in the afternoon and we were thanked with consecrated mangoes (prasad) and flower garlands by another of Swami's former classmates, who is now principal of the school and service director for Andhra Pradesh. He told us many beautiful stories about the early years of Baba's incarnation.

We arrived back at the ashram in time for evening darshan, a special spot being reserved for the medical teams. The lady doctors and nurses were called to the veranda and given saris. When Swami came around the men's side, He stopped in front of us, and in loving tones said, "Doctors." We replied, "Yes, Swami." He said, "Did you get home earlier? That's good." Grace from the heavenly Mother.

The following day, the men doctors were called to the veranda, given gold pens and packets of holy ash (vibhuti) by Swami, and then led to the front of the temple (mandir) for a group photograph. In the center was the perfect divine Physician.

John Evans, M.D.
Glendale, Arizona

*This story is told in The Life of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by N. Kasturi, M.A., B.L., pages 17-18.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF LOVE

Any architect worthy of the name knows the value of cross ventilation in providing natural cooling during the summer months. You must not only provide a way in for the breeze, you must also provide it with a way out so that it can go about its business. You can't capture the breeze, hold it prisoner, and expect to derive full benefit from it.

The architect also realizes that the breeze does not originate at the window. It may, in fact, originate many thousands of miles away and face innumerable obstacles before arriving at the window. Now, the architect can't do much about the distant obstacles, but if he's smart he won't allow any structure or vegetation to block immediate access to the window in question. At the same time, all the careful planning of window placement will be lost if the home's interior is improperly laid out so that internal structures impede the progress of the welcome breeze. It must flow freely from room to room if it is to refresh the inhabitants.

How similar this is to the process of spreading love! We often think of it originating with a certain individual or group, when actually it originates with God. And how often we try to capture and hold it within ourselves when doing so interferes with its ability to refresh us. Obviously, if we are to derive fullest benefit from this endless supply of love we will be careful not to block its entrance or impede its progress through our spiritual home. We will be sure to send it on its way to the next recipient.

Our architect is probably also aware of a phenomenon known as the venturi effect. A law of physics declares that wind, when it is admitted through a small opening and exhausted through a larger opening, increases its speed through the structure and thus provides an even greater cooling effect.

It might be worthwhile to see if the venturi effect also operates in the movement and distribution of love. To test the theory, you need only provide a greater area for its exit than for its entrance.

Jay Jarrett
Lakemont, Georgia

"Fill the heart with pure love. The heart that pours out love is ever full. God is there as love and you are only drawing on Him when you are sharing love with others."

--Baba

CEILING ON DESIRES PROGRAM: DEALING WITH CONTROL

The dictionary definition of control is "to restrain, rule, govern, direct, check, curb, overpower, counteract, influence, hypnotize, dominate, or act like a tyrant by forcing one's will on another."

If we are trying to put a ceiling on our desires as Baba has requested, we need to ask ourselves whose will or desire is in control in our lives--our own, someone else's, or Baba's? Do we try to control other people by forcing our desires or will on them, for whatever reason, whether selfishly for our own benefit, or for what we consider to be for their own good? On the other hand, do we allow ourselves to be controlled by others, often against our own inner conviction of what is right? Or do we try to find out what Baba's will would be?

All living creatures establish what has come to be known as a "pecking order." A hierarchy is instinctively adopted and accepted by the group after the various candidates for leadership have engaged in contests to determine which one will achieve supremacy and become the leader. The others then follow a similar procedure and assume their positions accordingly. The control by the leader is passed down the ladder of decreasing dominance, each creature controlling the one immediately below. This natural method works very well for members of species which live their lives on the level of their bodily functions and instincts.

Baba tells us that those people who are identified with their bodies live like animals. They either control others or are themselves controlled as they all try to satisfy their appetites. This pattern is particularly apparent in ongoing relationships such as marriages, business partnerships, parents and children, and friendships. Where one partner is dominant, he or she will usually make all the decisions. If both of the individuals involved are equally strong, a conflict of desires or wills often results in frequent disagreements or fights for supremacy, as with animals.

But Baba teaches that we are not merely bodies and should not identify ourselves as such. He assures us that every one of us carries within our body a spark of Divinity which is our true reality. We should therefore identify with It, and allow It to take Its rightful place in our lives and control our every move and decision. In other words, "Thy will be done."

During the formative years, children need their parents and teachers to guide them and take the responsibility for controlling them by teaching them what is right and wrong. But, as they mature, young people need

to be given freedom to practice taking responsibility for their own behavior, which is possible only when they are released from the former, necessarily strict parental control. If this does not take place, they cannot function on their own when the parents are no longer available to guide them. If the parents have taught their children that their true identity is the God within, they will have prepared the way for them to replace the outer parental control with that of their own inner Reality.

Now that we have come under Baba's influence, we need to replace all former teachers with Him and His teachings. However, before we are free to do so, we first need to detach from control by anyone or anything which has power over us, for no one can serve two masters. For the same reason, we should allow others the same privilege by relinquishing any control we have assumed over anyone else.

The first step is to determine who or what is in control of our lives. There are the more obvious possibilities such as parents, marriage and business partners, children, friends, and others. But our own desires and possible addictions can control us even more completely by forcing us to satisfy them at any cost to ourselves or others. What do we crave so strongly that we will do almost anything to acquire it? It can be a mate, a child, a job, a car, or some other tangible possession, or it can be something like success, praise, love, fame, or getting our own way. To the extent that we try to control our own lives, or are ourselves controlled, we are not free to give over the control to the Baba within our hearts.

Likewise, if we try to force others to do what we want, even if our motive is to take responsibility for their well-being, we are taking away their free will, which Baba assures us that even He will never do. So how can we differentiate between our own will, another person's will, and Baba's will?

I was given the opportunity to ask Baba this very question at a group interview when several officers of His United States organization were seeking His help with various situations which had arisen. Baba answered by saying that, if there was any doubt about whose will was involved, we should wait before acting. Then we should retire to a quiet place and concentrate very strongly on His form, call on His name from our hearts with intense devotion, and ask Him to reveal His will. He promised that if we would do this we would receive an answer within twenty minutes. I have shared this message with many devotees who have reported that they received clarification in many different forms within the prescribed time. However, even when we have been shown Baba's will, it is not always possible to give up our own desire, or free ourselves from the control of another person's will, or to act on Baba's will.

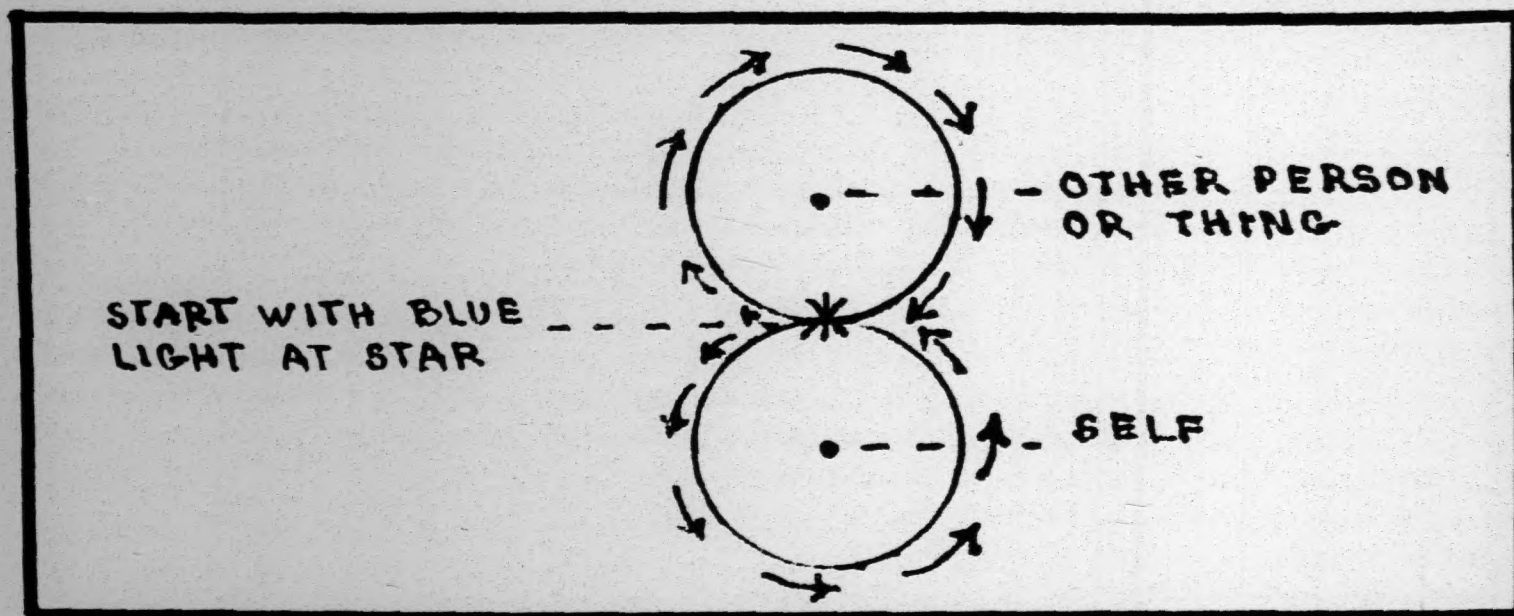
A simple visualization exercise, using a symbol in the form of a figure eight, is a great help in reducing control, either by another person or by our own desire for something. During a visit to Baba I was wearing a ring in the form of a figure eight made of gold wire. He noticed it and leaned over to touch it, saying with an approving smile, "Good. Figure eight is also the letter 'S' for Sai."

The first step in using it is to visualize, imagine, or think of a circle of gold light. To establish the size of the circle, imagine it to have the radius of your extended arm, with a straight line falling from the fully-extended fingertips. It is important to think of this circle on the ground around your feet. Immediately in front of you, visualize a similar gold circle just touching your own, the two forming a figure eight. Place the person or thing which controls you in the middle of the second circle.

Starting at the point where the two circles touch, imagine a pale, neon blue light flowing around the second circle in front of you in a clockwise direction, from your left around the outside and back to where the two circles meet. Let the blue light continue on around the left side of your own circle, behind your back, around your right side, and back to where they meet. Continue to visualize this flow around the figure eight for two minutes and repeat it whenever you think of the controlling person or thing during the day.

This exercise will greatly lessen the control over you by either another person's will, or your own attachment to something you desire. You will then be free to follow Baba's will instead of your own or someone else's.

Phyllis Krystal
Pacific Palisades, California



SERVICE PROFILES

A COSMIC COINCIDENCE

Last spring, in Santa Barbara, California, our Sathya Sai Education in Human Values group investigated the possibility of visiting a nursing home. Upon learning of our group's studies in human values and world religions, the social director invited us to conduct a worship service with elderly residents of the home, commenting that they might well benefit from our "universal" approach.

As cosmic coincidence would have it, on that very day, Mother's Day, 1984, while our children were conducting the service, a related event was taking place on the other side of the world. Sri Sathya Sai Baba had called Santa Barbara devotees Richard and Terry Nelson in for an interview. In the course of the discussion, He asked, "...human values...?" Terry replied that we were "working hard." Baba smiled and said, "Very happy, very happy!"

Meanwhile, the nursing home social director visited our EHV class the following Sunday to report that the elderly residents had loved our visit, and she was hoping that we could continue our project on a monthly basis. The children were buoyed up by their experience and when Terry Nelson's letter arrived a short time later, revealing the date of their interview and Baba's remarks, we were all tremendously elated. In short, we decided to resume our visits in the fall, when our EHV class reconvenes.

And so, since last October, on the fourth Sunday of each month we have been visiting the nursing home. The children take turns leading prayers, devotional songs, a guided meditation, and presenting a short talk on one of Baba's human values. Some of the children bake cookies which are shared at the close of the program. The atmosphere is permeated with joy as the very young and the elderly visit. Then the children escort the patients, most of whom are in wheelchairs, back to their rooms.

Mary Lynn Radford
Santa Barbara, California

SERVICE PROJECTS FROM METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

Since the International Bal Vikas Conference held in 1983 at Puttaparthi, there has been a tremendous spurt in our Bal Vikas/EHV* activities. We have twenty-five children in three age groups, with ten teachers. The children presented an excellent program, "Unity of Faith," during Bhagavan's Birthday celebrations last November. They also sang Christmas carols in a senior citizens' home, bringing joy to the residents. A beautiful play, "The Birth of Christ," was the highlight of our Christmas celebrations, with the children singing the Christmas songs sung at Prasanthi Nilayam.

We now have a service program every Sunday after our usual Center activities. Each week we feed about one hundred homeless persons with a homemade lunch, perhaps their only meal, as soup kitchens are closed on Sundays. On the fourth Sunday, groceries, as well as clothes, are distributed to needy families--a program begun after the Third World Conference in 1980. As a part of our Christmas celebrations, about 120 inmates of a night shelter for the homeless were fed.

We are registered as a volunteer organization with DuPage County's Department of Health and Human Services, the American Red Cross, and the Jewish Council. Five members are delivering hot meals to senior citizens under the "Meals on Wheels" program. Twelve members are spending one hour per week with homebound persons, some of them retarded and handicapped. Such assignments are being arranged for nine more members. One law student is assisting at a law clinic for the poor. Another member serves on the school board's special committee for retarded and handicapped children.

D.K. Majumdar
Westmont, Illinois

*Both Bal Vikas and EHV, or Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, are programs for teaching children respect for all religions and to reinstate human values.

AN ADVENTURE IN SERVICE

Being current-day archaeologists, garbologists, or, if you will, garbage pickers, has always been a fascinating and rewarding experience. However, now that we're doing it to serve our fellow man, it has taken on an entirely new dimension. We feel that our salvage adventures these days are guided by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

A family who had needs we could supply was brought to the attention of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Long Island. It came out during a discussion that the family needed a chest of drawers. Fred Greenberg suggested that we ask Swami for help to fill this need. "Don't worry," he said, "just put in your request."

That Sunday night during our usual salvage search, our eyes caught a glimpse of the license plate on the car in front of us. It read "LUCKY." We took this to be a word of encouragement, so we continued our search. In a very short time we found a delightful, petite, antique dressing table with glass handles, and it needed only moderate restoration.

We have found that God will lead, but that man must understand God's language and then follow through with his own effort. Our conclusion is that God is in the salvage business!

Here are a few of the things we have found: a new desk lamp, clothes, kitchen tools, a color television, an electric organ, a kerosene stove, antique books, vases, religious items, toys, furniture, one ram's horn, and a sewing machine. Almost all of these things have gone to families who have real need for them. Those who are in need of goods for their service activities or for personal use will find this activity productive. Remember, Swami says, "Waste not." Good luck!

Len Wojno and Sharon Bressler
Inspired by Hilda
Long Island, New York

WELCOME TO THESE NEW GROUPS

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA.....

Richard Karst
111 Harvard Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 423-8623

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP AT
THE UNITED NATIONS.....

G.V. Subba Rao
Box 20, G.C.P.O.
Room 2-2088
New York, NY 10017
(212) 754-4515

SATHYA SAI BABA CENTER OF
DALLAS, TEXAS.....

Sunita Suritani
5330 Harbour Town
Dallas, TX 75252
(214) 248-8510 (H)
(214) 980-4333 (O)

IMPROVISATIONAL THEATER

The world is a giant improvisational theater. The Producer-Director stands off-stage and cues the actors as necessary. Every now and then the actors get in such a muddle that they forget the plot. Sometimes the confusion gets so bad that they even forget to listen to their cues from the Director. After a while His cues don't seem related to the action anymore.

When this happens, the Director stops the play, walks onto the stage Himself, and reminds the actors of the plot and their roles.

Then the play continues....

Susan Evans
Tucson, Arizona

THE RIDER UPON THE WHITE HORSE

Behold! I look ahead and see
In Revelation's Mystery
A Holy Man on steed of white,
With bow and crown He goes to fight.
The arrow of His bow is Truth,
The crown upon His Head, the proof
That He is King to rule this age
And all in Revelation's page.
"Hold back the winds," the angel said,
"Till seal of God be on the head
Of all who praise the Living God,
Who rules with Love instead of Rod."
Who can afford to jest with truth?
Who tarries seeking further proof?
Have faith, have trust, heart full of love,
And trust in guidance from above.
Sai Baba, Avatar of Light,
Is He Who rides the horse of white;
And His the Seal of which was told
Protecting all who fit the mold.
Oh Revelation's cryptic lines,
Unfolding in this very time,
With cloaks of darkness, cloaks of light,
And winged monsters all in flight.
A fairy tale 'tis surely not,
Symbolic in its very plot:
And as the Lotus Blooms unfold,
So will this story tale be told
And understood at every stage
The cryptic code of every page.
The power, glory, Kingdom come,
The Avatar with God is One,
And One with man who holds the light
Of God to help Him win the fight
To rid this Earth of evil deeds,
The sorting of the grain from weeds.
The mighty hand of God is spread
To sort the living from the dead;
But not the dead in mortal flesh,
But those whose souls with evil mesh.
And gently as an Angel's wings



The Hand will lift the soul that sings
Of praise to God and Glory Be,
Of Peace unto Eternity.
And gently still will hold the cup,
Immortal life of which to sup.
The key is there to fit the lock,
Take heed of the Celestial Clock
As fast the hour cometh near
Oh, ye with ears, please listen clear
And count your blessings, one by one,
Be staunch and say, "Thy Will Be Done."
Hold out your hand to those in need
And shun materialistic greed.
The pot of gold at Rainbow's End
Is there for all who will attend
The call to fill this world with love,
On Earth as in the Heaven Above.

J. Miller

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR

DATE &
REGION

COST

THEME OF
RETREAT

May 24-27 Southern California Region	Adults: \$47.60 Children under 10: half price Children under 3: free	"Annual Memorial Day Sathya Sai Baba Retreat"
May 25-27 Central Region	Adults: \$49.00 Teens: 13-18: \$42.00 Children 4-12: \$33.00 Children under 4: free	"Service to Man is Service to God"
June 7-9 Northwestern Region	Adults: \$35.00 Children 8-12: \$26.25 Children 2-7: \$17.50 Children under 2: free	"Sixth Pacific North- west Sathya Sai Baba Conference"
August 30- September 2 Southwestern Region	Full Retreat: \$60.00 Campers: \$45.00 One day, with meals: \$17.00	"Land of Enchantment Retreat"
September 6-8 Northwestern Region	Cost not established	"Annual Northern California Regional Retreat"
September 6-8 Northeastern Region	Cost not established	"Tenth Annual North- eastern Sathya Sai Baba Retreat"



"While all is calm, the feather and the rock appear to be the same. But, when the wind rises, only the feather is tossed about."

--Baba

THESE 1985 SAI RETREATS

LOCATION	INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS
Camp Colby in the Angeles Forest near Los Angeles	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Rinehart 777 North Indian Hill Rd. Claremont, CA 91711 (714) 625-5347
Camp Wyman, Eureka, near St. Louis, Missouri	Mr. Ed Leinartas 910 S. Clinton Oak Park, IL 60304 (312) 383-8462 (312) 968-0889
Shiloh Retreat and Study Center, 20 miles southeast of Eugene, Oregon, in the Cascade Mountains	Mr. & Mrs. James Peden 06784 Canary Rd. Westlake, OR 97493 (503) 997-7383
Bodhi Mandala, Jemez Springs, New Mexico (located between Santa Fe and Albuquerque)	Mr. Michael Spaeth P.O. Box 9654 Santa Fe, NM 87504-9654 (505) 988-1201
Camp La Honda, in the Santa Santa Cruz Mountains	Ms. Jeanette Rhamsey 380 N. Ivy St. San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 626-8921
Camp Colang, in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania	Dr. S. Siva 30 Ridgewood Rd. Woodbury, CT 06798 (203) 263-0033



"It's easy to be an angel if nobody ruffles your feathers."

Anonymous

WORLD COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLANETARIUM PROJECT A Spitz 512 planetarium system is being purchased for the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in honor of the Sixtieth Birthday of our beloved Bhagavan Baba. The building that will house the planetarium system is being donated by the Sai Centers in India. The planetarium system is being purchased in America by the Sathya Sai Society of America, Robert Bozzani, president. American and Canadian Sai devotees may contribute to this cause. (For more background information, see page 2.)

POSTPONEMENT OF TRIPS Extensive construction is currently taking place at Prasanthi Nilayam. A central library, museum, planetarium, and other buildings are under construction. Due to these activities, Bhagavan Baba has given instructions that overseas devotees should postpone their trips to the ashram, if possible, until after July, 1985. (Please note: this is a change from previous information.)

UNAUTHORIZED PUBLICATIONS For the benefit of mankind, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has written books which should be regarded as sacred texts by Sai devotees and serious spiritual aspirants. It is illegal and unethical in all countries for any person or organization to edit and publish for sale Bhagavan's divine message without His approval. If there is any question regarding the validity of a publication, you should contact Dr. John Hislop in America, or Dr. Viswanath Singh in Canada.

Sai Ram,
Michael Goldstein

SAI ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE NATION

A SAI FAMILY MEETING IN NEW YORK CITY

On Saturday, March 23, 1985, members of the six Centers in the New York City area met for devotional songs (bhajans), good company (satsang), and business, followed by a potluck dinner. Over one hundred devotees from Brooklyn, Flushing, Long Island, Planetarium Station, and Manhattan Centers, as well as the United Nations Study Group, came together for the first "mini-regional" meeting of the newly formed Mid-Atlantic region.

Bhajan leaders initiated the meeting in Regional Director Hal Honig's Manhattan apartment. Council Director Anne Sohani gave a moving and inspiring talk about the twin paths of love for God and repeating the Name of God. She also announced that Swami has given His American devotees permission to donate money to equip the new planetarium at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam. Anne compared this privilege to the time, ten years ago, when devotees carried stones

and sand to help build the Poornachandra auditorium in Prasanthi Nilayam. When Hal Honig addressed the group, he emphasized that this opportunity to make a donation was so unusual that Dr. Goldstein had made a special trip to India to receive Baba's assurance that this was indeed acceptable. Hal also spoke of the remarkable changes that have characterized our Centers in the last year. Formerly, only individual service projects were the rule. Now, all the Centers have group service projects. In fact, the Saturday "Sai Soup Kitchen" on the Bowery is shared by several Centers in the area, each taking a different Saturday.

Following the talks and announcements, the children of the Brooklyn Bal Vikas entertained the group with several songs from the new EHV songbook. Their enthusiasm and fine singing brought joy to the entire group. They were followed by an entertainment program conducted by the Planetarium Station Center, featuring poems, a spiritual word game, and a program of inspiring songs by the Planetarium Station Seva Singers, a group that entertains regularly at nursing homes and hospitals.

Mimi Goldberg
Pound Ridge, New York

A STEP FORWARD IN AMERICAN EHV AND BAL VIKAS

April 20th marked another milestone in the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values and Bal Vikas organization. Special meetings were called to inform Center officers and members of the goals and objectives of this national program. Dr. John Hislop, Dr. Michael Goldstein, and the newly formed EHV/Bal Vikas Board of Directors met with a large group of devotees in Orange County at the Sathya Sai Book Center of America in the morning. A similar meeting was held in Los Angeles County at the Arcadia Center that same afternoon. That evening a national meeting of the Sathya Sai American EHV/Bal Vikas Committee was held at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Michael Goldstein. The objectives were to consolidate all resources and accomplishments in American EHV and Bal Vikas, to review everything learned at the excellent London, England, EHV conference last month, and to progress to the next step in the American EHV campaign. The mission was accomplished. A teacher-training manual will be produced shortly, and the first definitive course for teacher trainers will be held in mid-August. EHV teacher-trainer teams will be assembled for the United States and other countries. Denise Dake, editor of the Sathya Sai Children's Newsletter, was appointed national Bal Vikas convener and regional Bal Vikas directors will be appointed shortly. Committee members and council directors traveled from all parts of the country to contribute to this important work.

Hal Honig
New York, New York

SAI ACTIVITIES AROUND THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES LONDON, ENGLAND, MARCH 29-31, 1985

Teachers from twenty-six countries traveled to London to attend the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Conference. One of the speakers, Sanjeev Chaudhry, described the methodology of EHV, pointing out that the EHV program could be used directly with groups of children, integrated into school curriculums as well as into extracurricular activities. Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai spoke on the five basic values of truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence, and how they help to mold the child's character. He also told personal experiences which warmed the hearts of the listeners. Representatives from various religions spoke about their social service projects and the unity of religions.

On Saturday, several educators described how the human values are used in primary, secondary, and multi-ethnic programs. In the afternoon, the participants chose three of seven workshops to attend. The workshops were a great success, as the majority of the attendees felt this was an excellent means of learning. Nadine Clegern and Saroja Girishankar of the United States were chairpersons for two of the workshops.

On Sunday, other countries reported on their EHV activities. Mr. Thorojorn Meyer of Denmark outlined long-range plans for Europe. Ronne Marantz and Bea Flaig, both of New York, gave lively presentations of EHV teaching methods used in the United States.

Saturday evening, talented children put on a performance, and their pure sweetness showed that the future is in good hands. The enormous success of the conference was due to dedicated planning by Lucus Ralli and Victor Kanu of Great Britain, and the selfless work of the service volunteers.

From a report by Nadine Clegern
Manchester, Connecticut

EHV PUBLICATION

The Sri Sathya Sai Journal of Education in Human Values (formerly Om Publication) will become an international journal. It will be printed in India for the Asian countries and in the United States for North and South America and Europe. The first international issue will come out in June for the all-India teachers' conference. For more information regarding this publication, please contact Nadine Clegern, 17 McDivitt Drive, Manchester, CT 06040.

ITEMS OF INTEREST: NEW BOOKS AND TAPES

As a service for our readers, we are announcing some of the new devotional material which is now available. These items, along with many others, can be obtained through the organizations listed below. Please contact them directly for further information and catalogs.

Birth Day Publishing Co., P.O. Box 7722, San Diego, CA 92107 or phone (619) 296-3194. When ordering, please include \$1.00 per item for postage. California residents add 6½% sales tax.

SAI Foundation, 7911 Willoughby Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046 or phone (213) 656-9373. When ordering, please include \$1.00 per item for postage. California residents add 6½% sales tax.

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

BOOKS

A 1,008 Names of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba: Sahsradalakamala Written in the Indian language with English translations. Sathya Sai Book Center of America. \$1.65

Vidya Vahini: The Stream of Thought That Illumines The most recent of the Vahinis, written by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Book Center of America. \$1.95

(Above published by the Sri Sathya Sai Book & Publication Trust in India.)

An Eastern View of Jesus Christ, translated by Lee Hewett and K. Natraja. Offers three of Sai's Christmas discourses in poetry. Birth Day Publishing Company. Soft cover \$4.50

VIDEOTAPES

V07 Dr. Gokak's Interview Drs. Sam Sandweiss, William Harvey discuss the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the Education in Human Values program with Dr. V.K. Gokak. Sathya Sai Book Center of America. 140 mins. VHS \$35.90 Beta \$34.60

V08 A Cable TV Show: Loving Interview of Dr. William Harvey on commercial television in St. Louis, Missouri. Recommended as an introduction to Sai and His teachings. Sathya Sai Book Center of America. 55 mins. VHS \$33.60 Beta \$32.40

V02 Professor Kasturi Lectures on the Annunciation Poem

V05 Drs. Hislop, Sandweiss, Harvey Discuss Sri Sathya Sai Baba

V07 Dr. Gokak's Interview (described above)

V08 A Cable TV Show: Loving (described above) All four tapes are offered for rent by the Sathya Sai Book Center of America.

VC-11 Sathya Sai Baba: Nectar of Immortality Baba distributing nectar (amrit) on Guru Poornima day, 1970; darshan in Prasanthi Nilayam before reconstruction. SAI Foundation.

VC-12 Sathya Sai Baba, An Introduction Deals with service, Education

in Human Values, and unity of religions. SAI Foundation.

30 mins

VHS \$25.00

Beta \$25.00

(Note: Foreign countries may order PAL system videotapes.)

STEREOTAPES

SC-020 Raja Reddy Sings Bhajans SAI Foundation. \$5.00

SC-021 Veena Vijaya Sings Bhajans SAI Foundation. \$6.00

SC-022 Giving and Forgiving English devotional songs, words and music by Dennis Gersten, M.D. SAI Foundation. \$6.00

SC-023 Sai Priya Bhajans by Nagaraj SAI Foundation. \$5.00

THE NEXT TEN YEARS

In an interview on October 22, 1984, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba responded to Dr. John Hislop's questions regarding the function of Sai Centers and activities of devotees in the United States.

Hislop: Ten years ago when Swami formed the American Sai organization, He gave what He said was the single most important rule for American Sathya Sai Baba Centers. For the next ten years, what is the single most important rule for our Centers?

Sai: What is your idea?

Hislop: Swami's first rule--have as little as possible to do with money. It seems to me it must continue.

Sai: Yes, that is correct. The rule cannot be changed. It must continue unchanged through the next ten years.

Hislop: Then what shall be the particular emphasis for American devotees for the next ten years?

Sai: The emphasis must be the spiritual discipline (sadhana) of purity and sacrifice. Purity is Divinity. Through sacrifice there is purity of mind and heart. By purity, Divinity is realized. Sacrifice is an offering, a giving up to the Lord, a dedication to the Lord. What is to be sacrificed to the Lord is the sense of ego, of "mine." Once all sense of ego is sacrificed to the Lord, given up to Him, then the heart and mind are purified of ego attributes and Divinity can then be realized.

Hislop: During the course of the next ten years, is the American Sai organization to remain a spiritual organization, or is it to change its mode of life so as to become primarily a service (seva) organization?

Sai: The organization is to continue to be a spiritual organization with some changes, but not major changes. Devotion to God, the purifying of mind and heart by sacrificing to God all ego tendencies, is to be the purpose and the practice of the Sai devotees in the American Sai organization.

GOING HOME

Jon Gilbert, thirty-seven, died in Prasanthi Nilayam on Sunday, February 16th, surrounded by his Sai brothers holding him and singing to him, and within a half-hour or so of having had Swami's blessing (darshan). It was a sacred moment. He was like a yogi leaving his body, the long battle with cancer finally over and won. On his lips there was a beautiful, beatific smile. It was the Sunday before Mahashivaratri. It could hardly have been a more auspicious time and a more auspicious setting. On this very day he had planned to return to New York; a taxi was waiting for him outside. But the Lord had other plans.

The Mahabharata, the great war of ancient times, lasted only eighteen days, but for Jon the struggle went on for twelve years. Throughout those years he was a frequent visitor to the ashram, becoming a well-known and much-liked figure here. So, on his last evening he had many farewells and good wishes to impart. That evening he was in excellent spirits, seeing many friends, and then taking a long walk before going to his room to pack. I told him I would come by in the morning to say goodbye. When I arrived at his room early the next day, he was lying on the bed with a sweet expression on his face, but unable to speak. I don't quite know what got into me, but I picked him up and held him, and said, "Oh, Jon, I'm so happy! I'm so happy! You're going home! Swami is taking you home!" Other friends came and soon there was such a warm and wonderful feeling of love in the room. Jon's smile was infectious; we were all very joyous. He couldn't talk, and he could only breathe slowly, but he was obviously delighted to be in the company of brothers who loved him and shared his beliefs and faith. We just spontaneously sang a happy song, "...God's love is so wonderful, so wonderful, so wonderful...." We washed him, changed his clothes, got a stretcher, and took him down to darshan. In every way, the timing was exquisitely perfect. Swami was already on the men's side. We put down the stretcher at the end of the row. When Swami came by, He stopped and inquired about Jon, but before we could explain, Swami continued gently and lovingly, "Yes, I know, I know." He told us to take Jon to the hospital right away.

It wasn't much more than half an hour later, in the loving company of his brothers standing around his hospital bed, caressing him, and chanting, "Om Sai Ram," that Jon breathed less and less, and less and less, and just quietly and peacefully departed--after giving us all that smile which had become his signature in recent months.

On the previous day, Jon had sent a telegram to his mother, saying, "Coming home soon. All is OK. Love, Jon." When his mother received the telegram

she telephoned the hotel in Bangalore where Jon usually stays, hoping to encourage him to rest and take a slow, easy trip home. Jeff Baker, one of those around Jon's bedside during those last moments, was himself on his way to America and happened to stop at that same hotel. He answered the telephone and when he found out it was Jon's mother, half a world away, he said, "Oh, Mrs. Gilbert, Jon is already home. He left his physical body at the ashram this morning." Swami says, "It is best to do everything heart-to-heart." No cold telegram words for Jon's mother--heart-to-heart. After imparting the news to Mrs. Gilbert, Jeff was immediately able to comfort her and describe to her Jon's final moments, with his Sai brothers chanting and embracing him. How wonderful are the Lord's ways.

A wish that Jon had expressed so often during these years was carried out, and his body was cremated on the dry riverbed of the Chitravathi, the holy river on whose banks the Avatar of this age was born and grew up. It was a few days before the holiest day of the year for those following the ancient Indian tradition. It's the day when we remember Lord Shiva, who is said to frequent the burial and cremation ground, freeing us of the body and sorrow and showing us the way home. Well, during that cremation at sunset on the sands, a gracious Presence was very much in evidence, making the experience most inspiring for the two dozen or so brothers who were there. When we got back to the temple (mandir), evening darshan was long over; in fact, devotional songs (bhajans) had begun fifteen minutes before and Swami was already seated on His chair in the prayer hall. He could not have seen us directly, but He got down from His chair, came out of the temple, walked across the compound, called me over, allowed me to touch His feet (padnamaskar), and asked about the ceremony. I related all the details, including even the devotional songs we sang. Swami was very pleased, and I had the distinct feeling that Jon was pleased also.

Jon's last rites were held on Thursday, after morning darshan, when about ninety devotees who had known and loved Jon gathered at the Ganesh Temple in the ashram. Jon's holy ash (vibhuti) box now contained not only his vibhuti, but also his ashes wrapped in one of Swami's handkerchiefs. Some of his friends from the ashram led the procession with the ancient Sanskrit chants of the Vedas. In the back, the ladies sang bhajans as we wound our way down the street to the dry sands of the Chitravathi. There we gathered around a deep pit that had been dug down to the moisture level. I put on the Jewish prayer shawl that Michael Hollander had brought and donated at Christmas time, and we sang and recited a heartfelt thanksgiving to the Lord for His shower of blessings. It was a very moving occasion for all, standing around the circle in the warm February Indian sun, singing those beautiful, ancient psalms, while our incense sticks wafted their delicate aroma of jasmine towards the sky. The box was passed around, and those



who wished to do so took some of the ashes and committed them to this holy river. And then a number of us shared our experiences of these many years of knowing Jon, watching how his heart had sweetened and filled with goodness, how much he had accomplished during these ten-odd years--lifetimes' worth of inner transformation.

His mother wrote, "The pull and devotion Jon had for Swami was enormous. When he was at home, suffering with his illness, he was sustained only by his love for Baba and preparing for his next flight to the ashram, to be near Swami for His grace. Jon was only happy at the ashram with Sai Baba and with his friends whom he loved." It was that devotion that earned him this wonderful blessing of leaving his body hearing the name of the Lord, repeating the name of the Lord, remembering the vision of the Lord, feeling immersed in the love of the Lord, and having his ticket changed to take him directly home. The Lord guides all our comings and goings. He is our travel agent. He may not always cancel our cancers, but He will cancel death for a while to give us a chance to do our real work and get the job done here so that we can go home. Jon's life and death remind us of all the beauty and joy surrounding us.

Al Drucker
Prasanthi Nilayam, India

DIVINE DISCOURSE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1984

"One could master the contents of the Vedas or other sacred texts and scriptures, read the contents from beginning to end, gain mastery over communicating those contents, but, unless good habits and traits were cultivated as a result of the reading, it would all be merely rhetoric. God is unique. He wills, and it is His will that is manifest in the diversity which you see in this creation. He has laid down the paths of action (karma), devotion to God (bhakti), and inward-directed worship (upasana) so that, by pursuing these paths of endeavor, the multitudes can solve the riddle of creation.

"There was a seeker of liberation (mumuksha) who proclaimed the truth of the statement 'Thou Are That' ('Tat Twam Asi'). All of his teachings were directed toward helping an individual understand his own nature. Being permanent, being pure, and being whole--all these are Being, Awareness, Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda), God without name, form, or cause. God transcends all limitations, all barriers of attributes (gunas), and is beyond all comprehension. However, that it is possible to understand this primary Truth, this primary Entity, is the message contained in this person's words. It is commonly said that truth is an attribute of God. This is not correct. God Himself is Truth. It is an indication of one's ignorance that one attaches attributes to that Entity which is attributeless, and which is pure in its innate form.

"There are different ways of trying to understand the nature of this Whole, of this total Being who energizes everything. The sages (rishis) and God-centered men (yogis) and other such illustrious ones have undertaken penance in the deepest recesses of the forest in order to see and visualize God. Then there are those who have sanctified their lives by renouncing everything, by donning the ochre robe and searching for Truth. There are also those who discharge their responsibilities and duties with a firm conviction that through this process they will see God in this world. Then there are people who, having sharpened their intellectual abilities, would proceed on the process of inquiry and try to have the firm conviction that they have indeed come across the Truth that is God. 'Listen here, folks,' they tell mankind at large, 'here is the effulgent One who lies beyond the darkness of ignorance, who is all-radiating, all-splendor, and we have found Him. Listen and be rich with that experience.'

"But the Upanishads and the Vedas extol God in His formless aspect and describe Him as being attributeless, as being beyond comprehension, as having no name, being permanent, and being pure. It is easy to read these

words, but it is difficult to give substance and meaning to them. Only when we understand the significance behind these words can we regard this formless God as being within our reach. We do not know where He resides; we do not know what motivates Him; we do not know anything of His destination. So, when you seek such a God, where can you go? He is to be found everywhere, within, without, and in all things, all beings around us, and yet we seek to find Him. This is sure evidence of our ignorance. God Himself declares in the Bhagavad Gita, in the eleventh chapter in verses (slokas) 48 and 53, that you cannot 'understand Me or determine Me through the Vedas, through charity (yagnas), right action (dharma), or any mundane activities.' It has been proved beyond doubt that neither wealth, possessions, nor self-control (dana) will enable us to see and reach God. Only through the medium of sacrifice can we become One with this Immortality.

"What is it that you should sacrifice? Is it your house and its contents? Or your family, kith, and kin? Or your wealth and material possessions? No, if you really believed that by renouncing these you could have seen God, it would have been extremely easy for you to do so. Giving up these things cannot be construed as sacrifice. It is only when we renounce attachment, hatred, and ego that we can secure deathless Life.

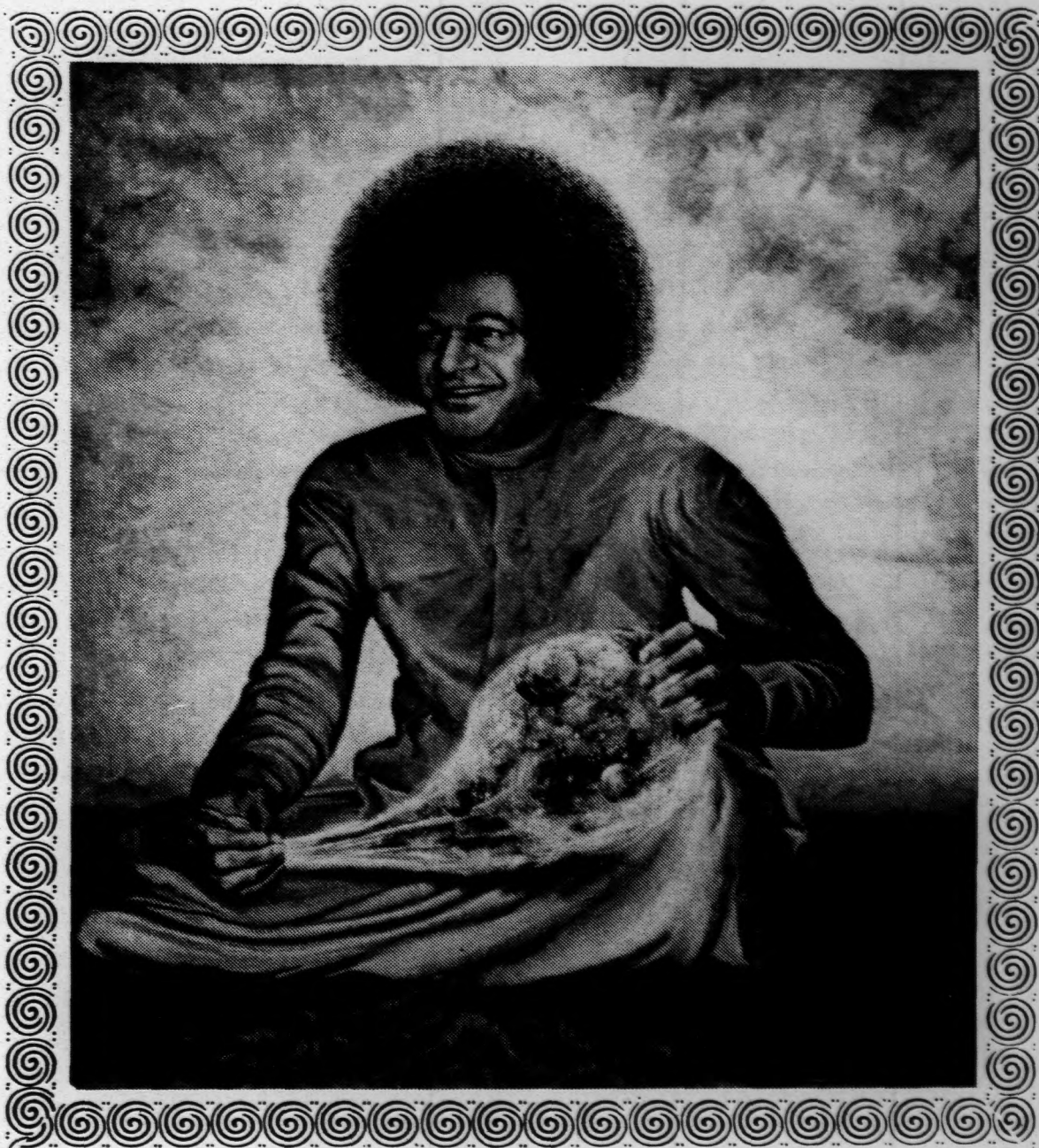
"God is everywhere. He is the Self, but this inner reality is being screened out by one's sense of ego. Shankaracharya has this comment to make: 'Man is seeing God, but he proclaims that he is not seeing Him. Whatever he sees is God, but he laments, "Where is God? I am not able to see Him."' Now what is it that he sees? This creation is God; all that you see through your sensory perception is God. God is present everywhere, all around you, and you are seeing It every second of your life, and yet you lament the fact that you are not able to see Him. This is because the mind is carried away by the sense of duality (dvaitha). Man regards everything in the world around him through the medium of his body, and he separates himself from God in that manner. It is often said that God is dearer to you than your mother, and He is closer to you than your human father. Can you possibly say that you are separate from such a God? Mother might be at a distance, but not God. The mother may be different from the child, but when the individual himself is God, how can God be different from the individual?

"Now this steady, pure, attributeless Entity that is God has three things which go with It--Being (Asti), Effulgence (Bhati), and Bliss (Priyam). These three are to be found everywhere. You cannot have a material thing in this world which is devoid of any one of these qualities. But then Being, Effulgence, and Bliss are not qualities to be associated with God; all these verily are God. These three are Energy (Shakti), and Energy is verily God.

Along with this there is Name and Form, which is known as matter (prakriti). The individual person, associated with his body and senses, having attributes and ego, is a form of matter. The coming together of these two diverse, disparate things, matter and energy, we name the world. In this world, this creation, you have God everywhere, and that which is beyond your sight is also God. You are seeing God in this manner, yet you feel that you are not seeing Him. This is illusion (maya). Illusion is a screen or a mist made up of your attachment, hatred, and jealousy. It is also the screen or shield which protects your ego and covers up your ignorance, blinding you to reality. But then, in this vast creation of His, in order to uphold the doctrine of right action (dharma), in order to show the way to mankind at large, God has come in the form of the Avatar.

"He assumes a form and a name, but just because He does these, it does not mean that He is removed from His own Being. Consider a rope and a snake. In one situation you may regard the rope as a snake, but in another you may see only a rope. For example, in darkness we regard the rope as a snake but when we light the lamp we see it for what it is, a rope. The fact that you saw it as a snake is your own illusion; the snake has not come, nor has it gone away. So, in the same manner, this Godhead does not come and go. In our state of ignorance, we regard Divinity as creation. When we have secured the supreme knowledge, we regard creation as God. So, what there is is One, the One as the many. There is only One without a second. This is God and, in order to secure God, we really don't have to go anywhere, we don't have to seek the assistance of anybody, and we need not do anything either. What is within a person, in terms of his attachment, hatred, ego--if these were to be removed, one could see the Self. Now what is this process of inquiry pertaining to God? This inquiry, or this search, does not mean sitting in meditation, or doing repetition of the Lord's Name (japa), or doing worship, or the singing of devotional songs (bhajan). These are good actions, no doubt, ways of putting to good use the time which is available and the faculties which are given to you. When the body itself is temporary, however, how permanent can any action be that is performed by the body? So what is this search? This search, or inquiry, consists of ridding yourself of the evil traits of attachment, hatred, and ego in your mind.

"If you have a layer of dust covering a mirror, when you remove the dust you can see your own form clearly in the mirror. Just as the mirror shows your face, just as the thermometer shows the temperature of your body, a pure mind will show you your own pure form. The mind full of evil tendencies and traits will fill you with dread and fear. When do you become afraid? When do you fear? When you are in a state of ignorance. When does this ignorance creep in? When there is an increase of the idea of



"THE INDWELLER OF MY HEART AND CREATOR
OF THE UNIVERSE"

Painting by Sid Stave
Ukiah, California

dualism in you. When do you get under the grip of this dualism? When you have the twins of attachment (raga) and hatred (dwaisha) in you. When do you become victims of this raga and dwaisha? These are at the very roots of existence and birth. This is what is contained in the riddle of action (karma).

"The word 'karma' should not be taken to mean just action. The body has another name and that is 'karma.' This body is given to you as a fruit of your actions, so it is verily a form of karma. This body, every second, performs some action or other. Because it has this source of karma within, it also has been called 'maya.' All this life is a long, drawn-out process of illusion (maya). The things that bind us--life, worldly existence, and death--are illusions (maya). Since this life is illusion, why struggle so hard? Maya envelops the body; karma envelops the body. We might say we are not performing any action, but we are performing something all the time. Now this karma, or action, should not be taken to mean only what you perform with your hands. For example: the eyes blink, the lungs expand and contract, the heart beats, the blood circulates--if all these are not actions, what are they? You regard as actions only those which are externally performed, but you do not know that these external actions are manifestations of the internal actions. So, the body, in its fullness, performs karma. The individual is born in karma, grows up in karma, and it is this karma which keeps him company. Karma is verily the God for man. Karma is responsible for your joys and sorrows. So, the body, in its essence, is full of karma. You may say that you do not want to do anything, but that is impossible. So, since it is necessary that you perform karma, sanctify your actions by making them good and virtuous.

"From good actions (sat karma), go on to the stage of acting without attachment to results (nishkama karma). When you can act, feeling no desire for the fruits, you can exterminate your selfishness and ego, and through this nishkama karma you can attain purity of heart. Once you have this purity of heart, you have the lamp of wisdom (jnana), and once you have this supreme knowledge, you can secure God, the lasting One. Only then can you proclaim to yourself that That and I are the same and also be able to say 'Wisdom is That' (pragnanam Brahma); you are verily the effulgent One. You will also proclaim with confidence, 'I am the God within (Atma),' once you have reached this stage, and then the truth will dawn on you that, 'I am the Absolute (Brahma).' So, in order that you may understand the significance and meaning of these sacred statements or divine axioms (mahavakyas), this path of karma has been laid down. So, the reading of texts or doing of spiritual disciplines (sadhana), should not be regarded as futile exercises. We should certainly be reading the Vedas and other texts, we should be taking part in charitable activities (yagnas)

and going to sacred places (yagas), but what is it that should motivate us to do this? God goes by the feeling behind any action of yours. The question is not how many pilgrimages you have performed or how much wealth you have given. The question is: with what feeling have you performed these actions? Have you done them with an eye on the rewards (paradharma)?

"Paradharma fills us with fear and anxiety. You should not feel that paradharma means some other religion or some other faith, some other country or nation. Paradharma simply means whatever you do from the point of view of the body. 'I am doing this,' 'I am seeing that,' 'I am singing,' 'I am enjoying happiness' are bodily motivated experiences, and acting from the point of view of being a body will lead you to bondage. How? Whatever we do, we will have a result in the end. In order to reap the fruit of our actions, we have to take birth again. In the process of an eternally continuing cycle of life and death we are caught up in the midst of grief, sorrow, and bondage. So, it has been said, 'Think of Krishna, who destroys the sense of 'I' and 'mine' (Murari), and understand the truth.'

"Now you might ask how this paradharma fills you with anxiety and fear. In your present incarnation you may not experience this grief and sorrow, but you do not know what type of sorrows you may have to experience in the life to come. You cannot avoid another birth because you have sown the seed, and showers are watering it. You have the seed, you have the rain, certainly it will give rise to the sapling. You have already sown the seed; it is bound to become a big tree. It is only when you do not sow the seed that there is no way for the tree to appear. What is this seed? This seed is what you are trying to get from your actions. For every action there is bound to be a result. This is the message of the Gita. Don't have an eye on the fruit of your action. You have a right to perform your duty or actions, but you have no right to look for the rewards thereof. So, the true way consists in our regarding this life as a means of performing actions so that we may sanctify our existence, either good or bad, either comfort or sorrow. Let our actions be motivated by the thought of offering them to God, because everything is motivated by God (swadharma).

"When the elephant, Gajaraja, was fighting the crocodile, he depended initially on his own physical might. He felt, 'What is the strength of this crocodile as compared to my own might,' and, goaded by this ego, he fought. Gradually, he lost his physical strength, and his ego began diminishing. Then he cried, 'Oh, Lord, You and You alone. There is nobody else. Do come and save me.' If he had had this understanding at the onset of the fight, of 'You and You alone,' he would not have suffered because of the crocodile. So long as you have a sense of ego and attachment, you cannot free yourself from suffering. So, our effort should be directed toward

curbing and putting down the sense of ego, and gradually the ego will be exterminated. Rather than being carried away by insights about the body, try to be dictated to by the the spark of Divinity within you that is your higher consciousness.

"Only when we follow the dictates of higher consciousness can we reach our destination. Only when we understand the significance of what we have to do in terms of our actions can we really reap the benefit. One who has preached to you the secrets, one who has shown you the destination, one who has shown you your real form in order that you may merge into your own true self and nature, is the Avatar who has come. These sacred truths cannot be understood by reading textbooks (granthas), nor can you secure them by listening to teachers (gurus). Only through the medium of one's own efforts, one's own spiritual disciplines (sadhana), can you understand this.

"There is what is called a guidepost at the junction where four roads meet. At these junctions, the signposts indicate that if you go this way, you will reach this destination. So, this guidepost, while it indicates the direction to reach a particular destination, does not follow you to that destination. You have to travel that path. You have to reach your destination. In the same manner, the Bhagavad Gita, so as to make you realize yourself, come to understand this vast creation, and understand the significance of God's actions, merely explains these to you, but you have to perform them to experience them. Therefore, this is what we must understand. Merely reading through the texts, trying to understand the contents and master them, will only lead to an increasing state of despair and frustration. Have this feeling well up within you: "I am God, I am God, I am God," because this body, this mind, this intellect, these sensory perceptions are merely instruments for you. Making the fullest use of the instruments given to us, we must try to reach God, our own true Self. Our efforts are of paramount importance.

"Without understanding the meaning, if you continue to utter the words, it will be a futile exercise. At the very outset, you must have confidence in yourself. Try to believe in yourself first. One who believes in himself first, will believe in his guru, or God. This is also called self-confidence. Try to further and strengthen this, because Atma is God, God is Atma. So, the true, right, royal path consists in understanding the supreme truth, in putting aside the qualities of attachment, hatred, and ego, and then traversing the path leading to God."

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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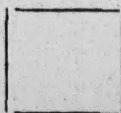
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