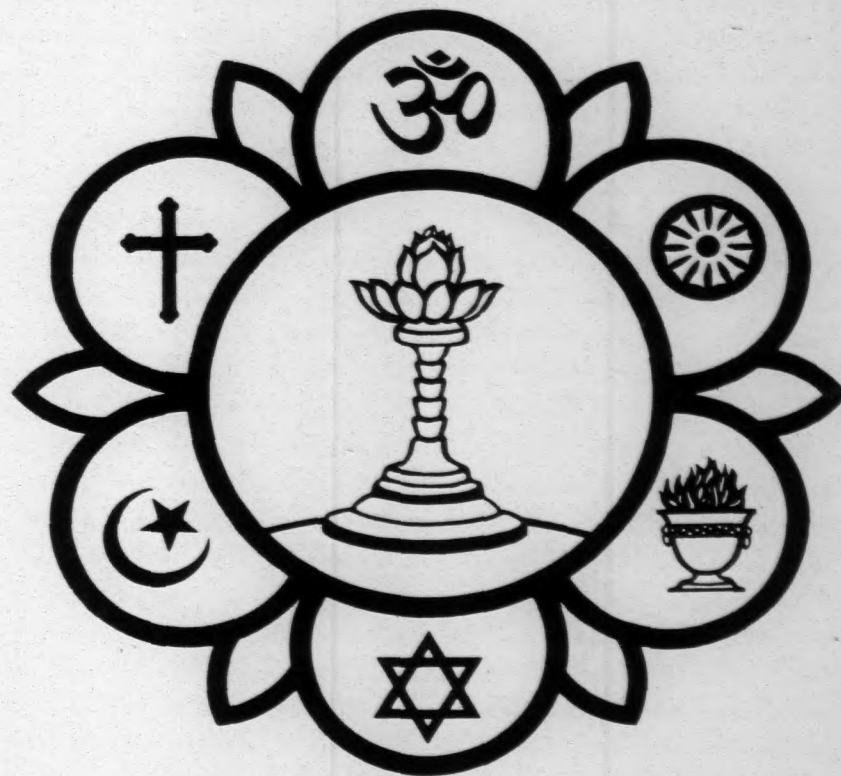


SATHYA SAI



Newsletter

WINTER 1985, '86

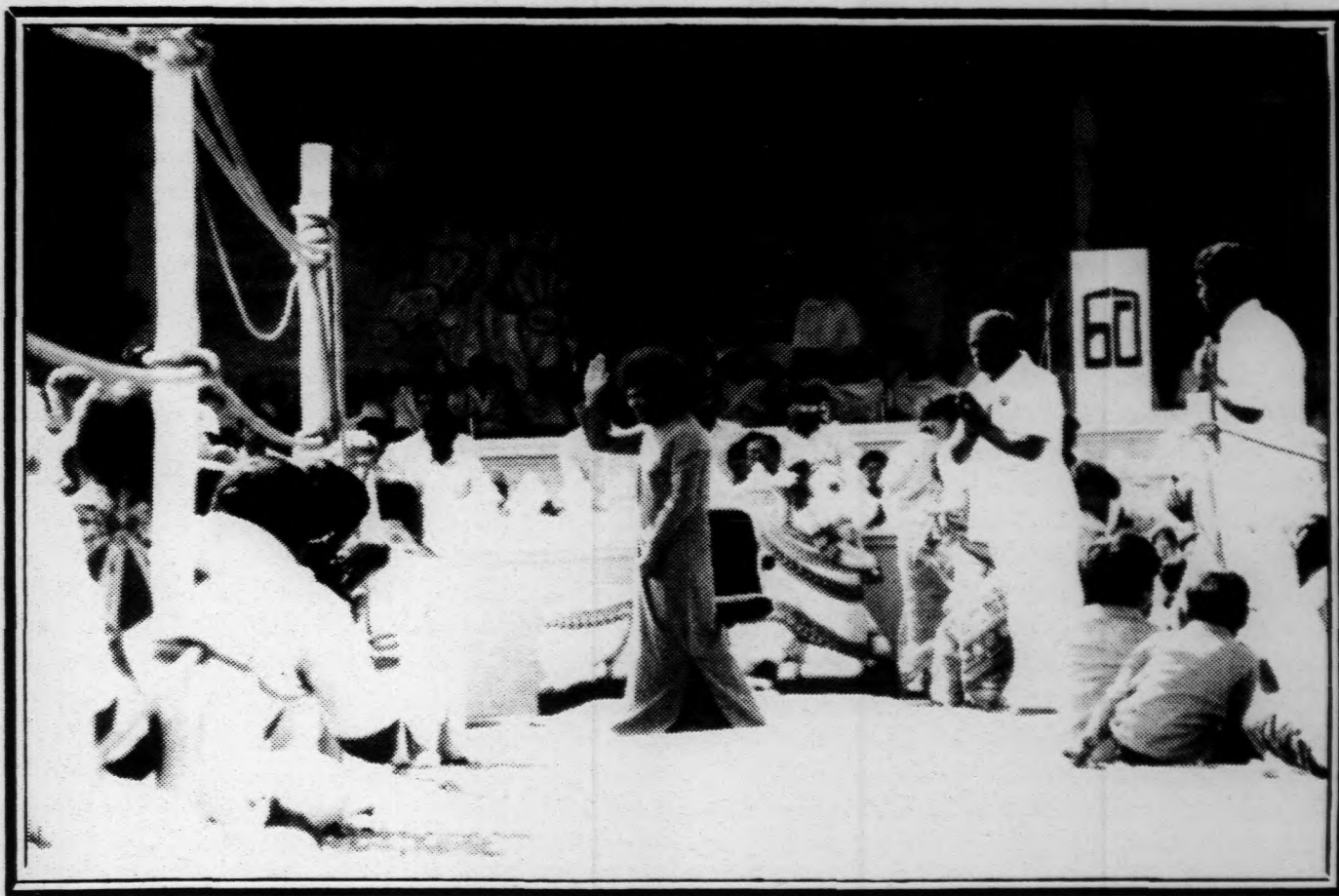
Vol. 10, No. 2

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

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The Sathya Sai Newsletter reserves the right of discrimination in selecting and editing material for publication.



"My hand stretches forth for just one thing and that is your pure, serene, unsullied, unchanging Love. Except for that, My hand only tends to give and give and give. So be firm in the conviction that Sathya Sai has nothing to do with any solicitation of funds. I have never sought, I will never seek, and I am not now seeking money. What I seek and hope for is that these noble ideals of life will evoke a sacred feeling and loving response from you. Even that is not for My sake. It is for the well-being of the world at large. So the purpose for which you are all here is to rededicate yourselves to cleansing and purifying the society around you, and to bring it back to the true values of life. The primary task ahead of us is that of service and nothing but service.

"The second point I wish to make is that we keep referring to ourselves as 'brothers and sisters of the Sai family.' This emphasis on the Sai family is too narrow. Henceforth, omit the word 'Sai,' because this is a universal family. You are members of the world community; you do not belong to a narrow sect. You are verily the children of God. God is everyone and everyone belongs to one God. All names and forms are equally valid."

excerpted from the Valedictory Discourse
November 21, 1985

"IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES..."

The Fourth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations and the Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan Baba were held from November 17 to 24, 1985. It was the largest group of delegates and devotees that had yet come together to further the global mission of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Almost all countries and regions of the world were represented. Even though the Poornachandra Auditorium accommodates thousands, many delegates still stood in the open doorways to hear Bhagavan Baba's inaugural address on November 17, since the auditorium was filled to capacity.

The spirit of celebration permeated every activity. Tents were erected in every available space and colorful flags flew to indicate registration and information booths. Medical centers were established at strategic locations and even the food services were decentralized, in order to feed the hungry throngs more quickly. Huge tents and temporary buildings were erected, permanent installations were rushed into service only moments after completion (the Western canteen and the American round house were two of these), and visitors were housed at the colleges and on verandas, while many camped under the trees.

Meetings and cultural programs were held in the Hill View Stadium. Baba gave darshan and delivered divine discourses from the beautiful outdoor stage, and musical concerts and colorful dances were featured there. From the tiered galleries along the sides of the stadium, there was an incredible view of acres of seated devotees. Due to the scope and magnitude of the happenings, even those who were involved were unable to appreciate the pageantry in its entirety. Films, tapes, and books which will be available in the coming months will enable everyone to enjoy the beauty and significance of the total program. Seeing the gaily caparisoned Sai Gita (Baba's elephant), the chariot, the five white horses, the parade of hundreds of thousands, and Baba in the silver swing were a few of the visual delights which can be had again and again on video.

Even though there were many times during the celebration when Baba appeared to be only an orange dot in the distance, He pointedly addressed the fears of His listeners by assuring them that He would not be out of reach after the Sixtieth Birthday. He said, "My nature will never change.... I will come nearer and nearer to My devotees." That nearness may be experienced in various ways, according to the stage of development and the needs of individual devotees, but Baba has repeatedly emphasized that He dwells in the heart of each. When aspirants look earnestly within themselves, they find Him there. The conference and Birthday celebrations stimulated that search, and for the "embodiments of the divine Atma" it was "the best of times."

The physical conditions generated by the tremendous crowds put egos under

unusual pressures. Loss of privacy and sleep and other deprivations brought about reactions and emotions which many thought had long ago been mastered. It was a time in which each one in attendance was forced to come face to face with himself, to conquer deep-seated impulses, and to forgo negative responses. Baba acknowledged the efforts put forth in His words: "Your devotion, dedication, and faith are exemplary; your tolerance, forbearance, and patience, indescribable. There are many people here who, in their own countries, lead a luxurious life. At Prasanthi Nilayam everything is inconvenient for them. In spite of that, they are carrying on."

He went on to say that "on this Sixtieth Birthday, everybody will have to undergo a test. Those who pass this test can be called true human beings. During this time of many difficulties, praise, calumnies, criticism, ridicule, you should not be weighed down. You must move on and forward. The farmer, after he has harvested the crop, undertakes the task of winnowing. By this process, a sorting takes place. The solid, firm parts remain; the lightweight ones will go. This occasion of the Sixtieth Birthday marks the start of the winnowing process. This process will determine who will remain steady and straightforward and who will be the chaff."

It has been said before that a journey to Prasanthi Nilayam is not a vacation; it is a spiritual pilgrimage. The body may be subjected to many discomforts. The ego may praise or blame, criticize or be criticized; but those who pass the test by remaining steadfast will find themselves a little closer to their goal. Baba will be recognized as nearer and nearer to them when ego drops away. This Sixtieth Birthday heralded massive reductions of ego. As a matter of fact, Prasanthi Nilayam might accurately be called "the graveyard of egos" and "the birthplace of Self-realization."

Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California



Baba was asked, "Swami, why do we get so many bad thoughts here in Prasanthi Nilayam?" "You see," Sai Baba began, "the heart is like a garden. Grace is like rain. When rain comes, both flowers and weeds sprout. Only when weeds sprout can you recognize them and pull them out by the roots. God is like a great dhobi (laundryman). You are like cloth. If stains are deep, the dhobi has to pound the cloth on the rock. If they are only surface stains, some light scrubbing will do! But God is the best dhobi. He never leaves any stain. Always pure, white." He made a gesture with His hands as if He were washing clothes. "I'm cleaning. I'm doing My work."

excerpted from Good Chances
by Howard Levin

REPORT ON THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE

The Fourth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations was held at Prasanthi Nilayam, November 17-21, 1985, against the backdrop of the magnificent celebration of the Sixtieth Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This historic conference highlighted and reemphasized the Avatar's well-developed plan for promoting good and suppressing evil in the world, thus restoring the practice of right conduct among people of the earth.

As expected, the Sixtieth Birthday celebration drew unprecedented crowds. The official delegates, although numbering almost fifteen thousand, constituted but a small fraction of devotees present. Estimates of the total number in attendance ranged from 500,000 to 750,000.

The major difference between devotees who choose to belong to the Sri Sathya Sai organizations and those who do not has to do with willingness on the part of the former to regularly devote a significant amount of time and effort to living Sai teachings within the framework of an organized structure. The organization clearly benefits the members, as opposed to benefiting Baba, by providing a setting that promotes discipline, cooperation, self-confidence, mutual guidance, and emotional support--necessary ingredients for leading a spiritual life.

Members of the organization who came to Prasanthi Nilayam as delegates accepted the added challenge of reassessing the rules and regulations, the nine-point Code of Conduct, and the Ceiling on Desires program with a view to better insuring the realization of the organization's mission. According to the charter, that mission is to "awaken in man the awareness of the divinity inherent in him."

The opening session took place in the Poornachandra Auditorium, and featured a welcome address by Professor Kasturi and keynote speeches by Mr. Shah and Mr. Srinivasan. Copies of the ninety new publications released in honor of the occasion were placed at the Lotus Feet. The assembly was then treated to the first of the daily series of divine discourses.

In the afternoon, the general session continued with major addresses by Dr. John Hislop and Professor V.K. Gokak on how the organization might implement the conference theme: "Integration of the World Community." At the conclusion of that second general session, the body of delegates was divided into a committee structure in order to more naturally and efficiently work on the key issues under consideration. The twelve thousand Indian delegates formed eight committees, and the overseas delegates, representing forty-five countries, subdivided into four groups along geographical lines. This was done in obvious recognition of the fact that there are fundamental differences in the problems faced by the Sri Sathya Sai Organization inside India, as opposed to those faced by overseas countries.

The United States delegation was grouped with Canada, the West Indies, and various Latin American countries. Dr. Michael Goldstein served as Convener of this group. By employing a formula that took into account delegation size, language, and cultural considerations, he divided this cluster of nations into three sections: the United States; Canada and the West Indies; and Latin America. Among other advantages, this allowed the Latin American delegates to conduct their deliberations in Spanish.

In keeping with the conference theme, delegates were asked to give special consideration to methods of better integrating the three components of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations: spirituality, service, and education. To the delight and satisfaction of all, there was ample time and opportunity for exhaustive discussion of wide-ranging viewpoints and novel suggestions as to how best to: (1) expand the Sai movement in quantity and quality; (2) insure greater adherence by members to the Code of Conduct; (3) bring home to members the inner significance of the Code of Conduct, service activities, and Ceiling on Desires. In short, the process appears to have been as enjoyable and meaningful as the outcome.

United States delegates were also pleased to discover the high degree of overlap among the recommendations emanating from the various groups of overseas countries, as well as their congruence with the proposals that came forth from delegates from India. This, no doubt, explains why almost all of the proposals from the United States appear in the report containing the official recommendations of the conference.

The recommendations, with specific relevance to the Sri Sathya Sai Organization in the United States, are summarized below:

LANGUAGE FLEXIBILITY. Flexibility is given to Centers to use English equivalents for Indian words to describe activities. For example, group devotional singing instead of bhajans; Sai Spiritual Education instead of Bal Vikas; teachers instead of gurus; and community service instead of seva.

ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS. Two levels of organizational units are recognized: the full-fledged Sathya Sai Baba Center and the Sathya Sai Baba Study Group. The difference is that a Center must have a minimum of nine active members, each of whom have committed themselves (pledged to Sai) to undertake a minimum of four hours per week of community service and/or organizational work for the Center. Every member undertaking organizational work should also participate in community service. A Center must also undertake the following activities: group devotional singing; an educational program for children of devotees; community service; and study circle. These activities should give special emphasis to national health and welfare, strengthening of the spiritual base, propagating the unity of faiths, and Ceiling on Desires.

A Sathya Sai Baba Study Group may be formed by two or more devotees (no upper limit) who undertake one or more of the following: group devotional singing; study circle; community service; and education of Sai children.

Such Groups or Centers can be established only under the guidance and with the approval of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of America. It is also noted that an important aspect of the activity of every Group/Center should be to make the public aware of the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, the existence of Sathya Sai Baba Centers, and the scope of Center activities. The sale of Sai literature, the holding of public meetings and seminars, the distribution of books to libraries, the use of appropriate media, etc., should be among the activities undertaken.

The conference reaffirmed the necessity for Sathya Sai Baba Center members to adhere to the nine-point Code of Conduct. However, some minor changes in the wording were suggested. For convenience, the nine points are listed below.

1. Daily meditation and prayer.
2. Group devotional singing/prayer with members of family once a week.
3. Participation in educational programs organized by the Center for children of Sai devotees.
4. Participation in community work and other programs of the organization.
5. Attendance at least once a month at group devotional singing organized by the Center.
6. Regular study of Sai literature.
7. Speaking softly and lovingly to everyone.
8. Not indulging in talking ill of others, especially in their absence.
9. Putting into practice Ceiling on Desires and using the savings generated for service to mankind.

The conference stressed the importance of bringing home the inner significance of the Code of Conduct, human values, Ceiling on Desires, and other Sai activities and teachings. This may be accomplished by:

1. Brief talks on the above before or after group devotional singing sessions. (Dr. Hislop has outlined a model for not more than fifteen minutes.)
2. Workshops on spiritual practices at the Center, regional, and national levels.
3. Training programs for service and educational activities.

Centers should also conduct meditation classes along the lines recommended by Bhagavan Baba, and meditation should be an integral part of group devotional singing sessions. All Centers should endeavor to increase the number of devotional songs sung in English, and these should be in conformity with the religions and cultures of the United States. Holy days celebrated

should include one from each of the major religions relevant to the locale. Further, whenever possible, regular study circles on human values and spirituality should be organized for non-devotees.

A Center should have coordinators for its service activities, for its educational programs, and for welcoming and orienting new members. In the latter connection, United States delegates emphasized the added need for some form of greeting committee to welcome visitors and to sensitively explain to them the Center objectives and activities. Regular meetings of coordinators for all activities should be held to insure cooperation and coordination. There would be corresponding coordinators at the regional and national levels. It is also desirable that the Center officers undertake analysis and planning of all programs. Long-range planning should be a priority.

SERVICE ACTIVITY BY CENTER MEMBERS. Not only was the requirement that Center members regularly participate in community service projects emphasized by the conference, but Baba, in several of His divine discourses, repeatedly made reference to the fact that this was His wish. The conference reviewed the numerous service activities being undertaken around the world by Centers and compiled a list of suggested activities. Considerable emphasis was placed upon the need for well-planned training programs for Sai service workers. Especially noteworthy was the decision that the service coordinator should organize special training programs for aspiring Sai workers, active members, and also members of the public willing to participate in service activities organized by the Center.

SAI SPIRITUAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES PROGRAM. It is recommended that in order to provide guidance, new materials, and feedback to all national and regional bodies, one international board for both Sai Spiritual Education and Education in Human Values should be set up at Prasanthi Nilayam. This international board should consider affiliating itself with the United Nations as a non-parental body. No devotee should undertake to teach Sai Spiritual Education or Education in Human Values without having undergone the appropriate training.

William Harvey
St. Louis, Missouri

They say, "He will come
again." I know of no real
coming or going.
I only know, He is here.

James R. Todd, Jr.
Novato, California



SING YOUR NEW SONG

Fly, my friend,
To an eastern land
Of palm trees and
Ancient temples
And people of brown skin.
Sit on a mountain
And listen to wisdom
Of ten thousand years.
Learn, my friend,
Fill your soul
With love, peace, Krishna, God.
Then, my friend,
Head for the sky
On newfound wings of glory.
Sing your new song!
Sing your song of God!
Soar among the stars,
The galaxies.
Let the universe know
You are reborn.

Richard Kenney
Lincoln Heights, Ohio

COMMENTS DURING THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE

"As for me," said Barbara Bozzani, "the excitement of the conference, appropriately called 'Integration of the World Community,' mounted as time drew near. Swami gave a stirring inaugural address. He told us: 'Sanctify your life by doing pure and noble service.'"

"My first day, sitting in the committee meeting on organization of a Sathya Sai Baba Center and service for the United States, I couldn't help but feel a slight pang of disappointment. The suggestions that were given were items we had gone over many times before. I thought that we were repeating old themes and reminding ourselves of past mistakes. But, two days later as the discussion drew to a close, I could see a useful pattern emerge. Some of the axioms for running a Sathya Sai Baba Center and giving service had to be repeated for the sake of those who might have forgotten or gone astray. Of course, new devotees needed to voice their opinions about organizational concepts, even if they were repetitious.

"For me, the whole process was a wearing away of more layers of ego. After twelve years, I still didn't know everything there was to know about the procedure for operating a Center or doing selfless service. Also it was most important to practice patience with those who have recently come into the Avatar's sphere of influence. Swami often tells us, 'The only strength man needs is patience.' A valuable lesson to keep in mind!

"Being curious by nature, I couldn't help but ask several other devotees for their reactions to the unique conference. When I asked Audrey Staton of St. Louis, Missouri, for her impression, she said, 'Wonderful.' It was her second trip to Prasanthi Nilayam. She works with Bal Vikas children back home, and found that the review of the procedure for Sathya Sai Education in Human Values would be very helpful in teaching young children. She emphasized that EHV can easily be incorporated into the Bal Vikas curriculum. The training had given Audrey the necessary information for teaching a lesson in love, right action, or any subject, spiritual or secular.

"In his disarming Southern accent, Cosby Powell of Atlanta, Georgia, said, 'I'm honored to be here. By divine intervention everything is provided and arranged.' Denise Dake, an EHV teacher from Oregon, answered, 'The conference was overwhelming. The whole process was a kind of cleansing of one's negative emotions.' She pointed out that 'some of the delegates who attended don't get together in the United States, but they had traveled halfway around the globe for this meeting.' The inspiration for such unlikely circumstances is, of course, the Avatar. A psychologist from New York City, Dr. Allen Levy, felt that the world conference was 'a monumental step in the spiritual evolution of humanity, a turning point, an important transitional stage.'

"Though the comments were as diverse as the people who presented them, there was one theme that was evident. Each delegate expressed, in different ways, the concept set down by Baba in the inaugural address when He said, 'Coming, as you have done, from great distances, undergoing untold suffering and trouble on the way, having come thus to partake of these proceedings, it is My hope that you will make the best use of your stay every minute, and, having listened to all the deliberations, that you shall be inspired and encouraged to plunge into your service activities with greater dedication and greater regard and vitality; this is My hope.'"

SALUTATIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Michael Goldstein, member of the World Council, welcomed Bhagavan to the valedictory meeting of the Fourth World Conference by giving this pledge: "Dearest Bhagavan, we, your humble devotees, from many distant lands, from all of the inhabited continents of the earth, from forty-six different nations, recognize that life is precious; that it is a time span of consciousness that You have given. We pledge not to squander this priceless and sacred treasure. We pledge that we will strive to implement the decisions taken here today,* that we will fulfill our responsibilities as Sai devotees to ourselves, to the brothers and sisters of our respective nations, and to the world at large. We pray to You, in Your divine benevolence, that You will permit us to serve the divine cause always faithfully and effectively. Jai Sai Ram. Jai Bhagavan."

Dr. John S. Hislop, president of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of America, spoke during the Fourth World Conference, making the point: "The three parts of the Sai program, namely, spiritual practice, service, and Education in Human Values, will have a tremendous influence in all countries and bring about the desired change in the minds of men all over the world."

Mr. Robert A. Bozzani, co-chairman for the Sri Sathya Sai International Advisory Board for Trusts and Foundations, gave Swami felicitations by saying that through Baba's grace, compassion, and guidance, he has experienced what Sai often says: "India is the spiritual heartland of the world." To him, one of the highlights of the celebrations was "the example of Baba's giving, giving, for truly only He knows how to give." He repeated Sri Sathya Sai Baba's axiom that "through charity we go to unity, then to purity, then to divinity."

He mentioned that he is slowly learning the true meaning of sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), shanti (peace), prema (love), and ahimsa (non-violence). It follows that with truth comes righteousness; with righteousness, there is peace; with peace, there is love; and with love,

*See the Report of the Fourth World Conference, page 4.

there will be non-violence. He reminded us that, when we return home, Swami wants us to put into practice those teachings which we understand, even if it is only one or two concepts. In understanding another of Baba's teachings, Mr. Bozzani reminded the audience, and himself, that Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "I do not want heroes in speeches and zeroes in practice. I would rather have heroes in practice and zeroes in speeches." He ended the greeting by welcoming Swami back to our hearts.

excerpted courtesy of Sanathana Sarathi

DURING HIS BIRTHDAY SAI GIVES THE GIFTS

The many activities of the Fourth World Conference and Sixtieth Birthday were highlighted by examples of Baba's giving, His charity, and His love.

There were hundreds of thousands who stayed at the ashram in Prasanthi Nilayam as Baba's guests. Meals were free of charge for seven days, and the food was plentiful, well-prepared, and nicely served. Around-the-clock medical clinics and a modern hospital were provided for those who might become ill. Many in attendance received saris or dhotis, the traditional Indian clothing. Swami gave many discourses and personal blessings. He seemed to be everywhere at once, inspecting the living quarters, inaugurating new buildings, taking letters, and talking with devotees. His divine energy was felt throughout Prasanthi Nilayam.

It is difficult to imagine the enormity of Sai's giving as expressed through the thousands of volunteers who worked tirelessly to serve God by serving each other. All this and more Baba did for the devotees and delegates, but His compassion is always greatest for the poor and downtrodden. These less fortunate people came from miles around to receive free food and clothing, which was always given by the service volunteers with love and dignity. Often, Baba distributed the gifts Himself. There were medical mobile units, staffed by qualified physicians. These units went into the villages, where the physicians administered to the ailing. Cows were given to carefully selected families to assure that the animals would be properly cared for. One of the more touching presents given by Baba for His Sixtieth Birthday was the generous gift of sixty small houses, sixty cows with calves, and sixty plots of land to, you guessed it, sixty poor families. These presents were only some of the outward manifestations of His divine grace. His more subtle and profound gifts are His love and protection and the way in which He looks after every detail of our lives.

"I accept only one offering from the world: Love, sacred Love, selfless Love, manifest as service, as brotherhood, as tenderness of heart, as compassion."

Divine Discourse, November 21, 1985

CEILING ON DESIRES PROGRAM: A REVIEW AND A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

Before Baba's Sixtieth Birthday, various rumors were circulating related to how He would choose to mark this important event. Baba had intimated that He would release extra energy to help to accelerate the spiritual growth of His devotees. There were many different interpretations of what that meant. Would He perform some dramatic feat similar to producing a lingam at Sivaratri? Would there be strange signs and wonders as at His birth? Would the increased energy enable devotees to attain enlightenment? There were these and many other more unlikely ideas.

Those who attended the celebrations were at first caught up in the mounting excitement and anticipation as the Birthday approached. But actually, for many people it proved to be a very hard experience on every level: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The little badge given to the delegates to wear bore the inscription "Ceiling on Desires for Spiritual Renaissance" as the theme. Embedded in the '60,' for Sixtieth Birthday, was a small, simulated diamond representing the finished gem after the cutter had shaped and polished it. How very appropriate, as it was indeed a test for everyone. We did not always get what we wanted, and often got just what we did not want. This was undoubtedly Baba's method of shaping and polishing the facets of the rough diamonds we really are.

The immense crowds, dust, sickness, and other discomforts caused great stress. In addition, as Baba released more and more energy, all the desires and negativity usually hidden from sight were flushed up and erupted into full view, much to the horror and distress of many people at what was happening to them. Baba Himself likened it to the effect of a great wind winnowing the chaff from the grain. In one of His discourses, He said, "The reason some people turn away from Me is not because they have lost their love for Me. It is because their wishes have not been fulfilled. Not only this, they are gripped with fear that if they are with Me, their worldly wishes and desires may not be fulfilled. So they go away."

In the same discourse, Baba elaborated on the pure reasons for setting up the Ceiling on Desires program. He explained that "because people's desires tend to be excessive, they cause them to use up too much money in order to satisfy them." He gave as an example the case of a low-paid worker earning ten rupees a day who tends to fritter away two rupees on drink and three rupees on a few other forms of crude entertainment, which deprives his family of essentials. Baba stated that, "One of the objectives of the program is to encourage such people to save money by not smoking cigarettes, indulging in drink, eating meat, or seeking any other such forms of entertainment, and thereby benefiting their families.... The primary goal," He said, "is to guide people to live worthy lives and to be of service

to humanity at large.... But," He added, "some people have misconstrued the reason for the program and thought the Sai organization wanted money, so they continued to smoke and indulge in drinking and the eating of meat, instead of curbing their desires. And, just because they wanted to follow this program, they sent some money to the Trust, thus missing the whole purpose for it, which is to curb desires and not to acquire money." He then announced that he had ordered all the money donated to the Trust to be returned to the various districts from which it had been sent, with the request that it be used to help the poor, destitute, and helpless in each area; in other words, for service.

So, with such strong statements and actions from Baba, each individual devotee needs to review the three years since the start of this program. With sincere introspection, let us honestly ask ourselves how we would rate our own efforts at following Baba's directions. Did we use it as an exercise in discipline, as Baba intended, by putting a ceiling on our selfish or excessive desires and cutting waste out of our lives in the four areas of money, food, time, and energy? Or did we take the easy way by giving money to the Foundation, but ignoring the exercise in self-discipline which was the chief reason for initiating it? Baba made it amply clear that we should not think that the Ceiling on Desires program ends with the Sixtieth Birthday, but should continue to apply it indefinitely as a spiritual discipline. So even if we misunderstood His message, and gave money without applying the self-discipline, it is not too late to remedy that mistake. We can start now.

It is quite obvious from Baba's remarks that it is not a popular program. But then, few people are happy at the thought of lessening their desires. To make it even harder, our egos, from which desires are spawned, fight to keep our worldly attachments. Only with Baba's help can we succeed in vanquishing them. Just as Arjuna could succeed in overcoming the enemy only with Krishna's superior energy to give him the necessary strength and courage, even so, it requires hard work and determination on our part to overcome desires. But the extent to which we are willing to do our part will determine whether we stay with Baba as His devotees, or leave Him for fear that by staying we will not get what our egos demand. So whose will shall we follow, that of our bodies and egos with their desires, or that of the Baba within each of us, the one God, our real Selves?

To help us to start again in earnest, we can apply Baba's illustration of the man earning ten rupees a day to our own situation and find parallels by asking ourselves how we squander money, waste food, time, and energy on unnecessary luxuries of too much food and drink, unfulfilling activities, and expensive habits? We all know what these are in our lives, but we may have chosen to hide from the knowledge, or rationalize and excuse ourselves, instead of facing them squarely as Baba has asked that we do.

Are we slaves to fashion, feeling that we must have a new outfit every season or a new car to impress people? Do we overestimate how much we can eat, or serve too much food, or too many varieties, to impress guests? Do we waste time in gossip on the telephone or in idle talk? Do we engage in exhausting and unnecessary activities such as attending parties? These are just a few suggestions as examples. The idea is to reduce unnecessary waste, but not to deprive ourselves or members of our family of the basic essentials for a happy and healthy life.

Another way to detect when we are too attached to desires is to watch for the underlying reason for negative emotions, such as anger, envy, jealousy, pride, etc., as there is always a thwarted desire as their cause. The most effective method is to ask Baba to indicate in some way where we should cut out waste in each of the four categories of money, food, time, and energy. If we genuinely want to do as He asks, it is amazing how He will draw our attention to wasteful activities which we had excused or avoided admitting. He repeatedly assures us that if we ask from our hearts, and really want to be free from attachment to our desires, He will help us first to see them clearly and then to release them. All we need to do is to be willing to ask Him to show us.

It has been suggested that a booklet be prepared for Centers to use, containing suggestions for initiating a regular study circle to help members put this program into practice. This idea was tried in the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Los Angeles on a once-a-month basis and found to be helpful. In the same way that it is easier to be regular and disciplined with physical exercise in a group rather than alone, so it is helpful to have the input of others and the encouragement of all working on the same program together.

Any suggestions that anyone has found useful would be appreciated, as well as questions about the program and particular aspects you would like covered in the booklet. Send all ideas and suggestions to:

Phyllis Krystal
P.O. Box 865
Pacific Palisades, California 90272



Please, O Baba, come to me
Bless me with Your company
I will accept and shall obey
My role within Your Master play.

Hanna Hamilton
Desert Hot Springs, California

DO YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION?

It has been brought to our attention that there are individuals or groups who wish to have more information regarding Sai activities in their area. Send us a letter or a postcard and the Sathya Sai Newsletter will put you in touch with one of the eight regional directors of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of America.

The regional director will provide you with the locations of Sathya Sai Baba Centers and Study Groups, and information on service activities, public meetings, retreats, etc. For those who are interested, they will also explain the procedure for establishing a Sathya Sai Baba Center or Study Group.

Send, with the words "Regional Director," your name, address, and phone number to the Sathya Sai Newsletter, 1800 East Garvey Avenue, West Covina, CA 91791.

WELCOME TO THESE NEW GROUPS

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP
OF UPLAND, CALIFORNIA

Dr. Shiva S. Dandappanvar
9731 Willowood Drive
Alta Loma, CA 91701
(714) 945-9544

SATHYA SAI BABA CENTER
OF HILO, HAWAII

Anil Kumar
270 Kaiulani Street
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-8961

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP
OF MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Vijay H. Rawtani
5231 Walnut Grove Road
Memphis, TN 38117

The Christmas activities at Brindavan will be reported in the next issue of the Sathya Sai Newsletter.

CHILDREN'S CORNER: ST. FRANCIS AND THE DOVES

In the town of Siena, Italy, a boy once caught a number of turtle doves in a snare and was carrying them alive to the market to sell. St. Francis saw the doves and was stirred by love and pity. He was always very kind and wonderfully compassionate, especially towards gentle animals and little birds. He said to the boy who was carrying the doves, "Good boy, please give me those doves so that such innocent birds, which in holy scripture are symbols of pure, humble, and faithful souls, will not fall into the hands of cruel men who will kill them." At first the boy hesitated, then he was inspired to give all the doves to St. Francis.

When the kind saint had gathered them to his bosom, he began to talk to them in a very gentle way, saying, "My simple and innocent sister doves, why did you let yourselves be caught? I want to rescue you from death and make nests for you where you can lay your eggs and fulfill the Creator's commandment to multiply." He then made nests for them.

The doves settled in the nests, laid their eggs, and reared their young right among the friars, and the doves increased in number. They were so tame and familiar with St. Francis and all the other friars that they seemed to be like chickens that had always been reared by the monks. They did not leave until St. Francis gave them permission with his blessing.

At the time the boy handed the doves over to the saint, he had been told, "My son, one day you will become a friar in this order, and you will serve our Lord well." And it happened as the saint foretold, because later the boy entered the order. Through the merits of St. Francis he led a praiseworthy and very exemplary life until he died.

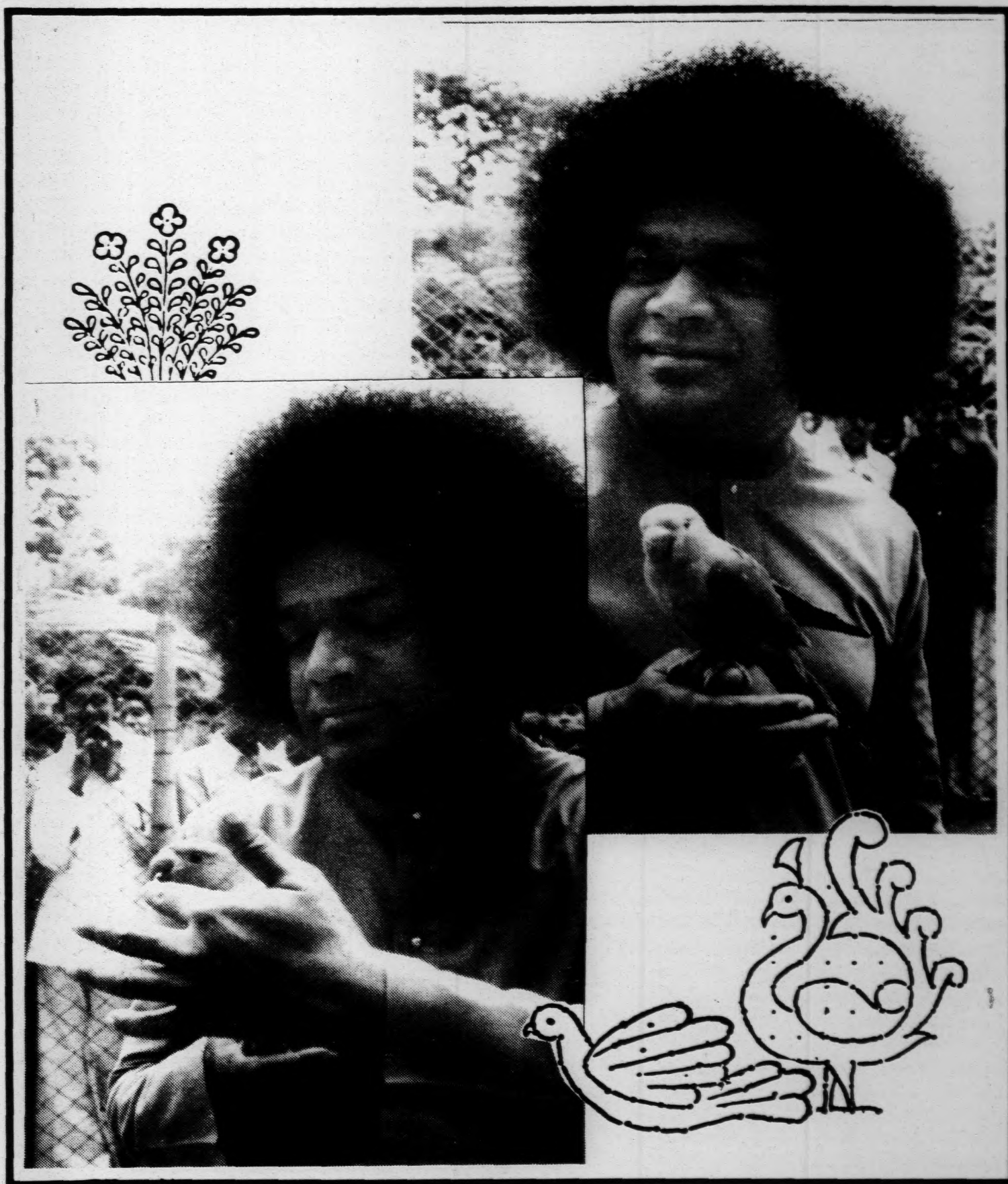
So St. Francis not only obtained comfort for those little birds, but also the joys of eternal life for that youth.

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Quarterly, Vol. 9, No. 4

"...We saw lions, leopards, cheetahs, zebra, bison, giraffe--in fact all species of wildlife and game. If one observes all these wild animals living in close collaboration in these areas, one is filled with pity at the human species which has lost the qualities of mutual help and loving cooperation. These animals are friendly with each other. They drink from the same pool. They eat together. One species are comrades of another. We found representatives of what are called natural enemies caressing each other. I felt they were teaching man a lesson in social and spiritual behavior...."

--Baba

written from Kampala, Africa, 1968



EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES PROGRESS REPORT

One may note that the decisions and recommendations made during the Fourth World Conference relating to Sai Spiritual Education and Education in Human Values are very much in the forefront in the United States. In August, an international EHV teacher-trainer workshop symposium was conducted in Los Angeles, drawing participants from Canada, the West Indies, Latin America, and the United States. Among other accomplishments, the symposium produced a clear distinction between Sai Spiritual Education (Bal Vikas) and Education in Human Values, which was then disseminated to all Centers.

The great success of that inter-hemispheric (Zone 1 of overseas countries) symposium led to launching, in the month prior to the Fourth World Conference, a series of similar workshops in the cities of San Francisco, St. Louis, and New York. As a consequence, Sathya Sai EHV in the United States now has over two hundred trained and certified teacher-trainers. Dr. Michael Goldstein, under whose direction the training workshops were conducted, has indicated that the next step in the evolution of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in the United States will be initiation of a twofold campaign involving the training of public schoolteachers and the implementation of EHV classes for children participating in programs run by community agencies with national affiliations. Dr. Goldstein expressed gratitude to the corps of senior teacher-trainers--Bea Flaig, Ronne Marantz, Saroja Girishankar, Nadine Clegern, Denise Dake, and Berniece Mead--for their invaluable contribution to the great success of the Zone 1 Education in Human Values training effort.

William Harvey
St. Louis, Missouri

EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES IN THE COMMUNITY

Last summer four teachers from the St. Louis Sathya Sai Baba Center participated in a pilot program of Education in Human Values (EHV) in the community. After an EHV presentation had been made to the Soulard Girls' Club, we were invited by the director to teach the values program. We had two classes, ages nine through eleven and twelve through seventeen; each class had approximately fifteen students.

Soulard is a community in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. The girls' club has a membership of 250, ages six to eighteen years. Most of the girls are from low-income and one-parent families. "Fighting and lack of discipline are behavior problems of most of the girls," stated the director, Wanda Alexander, who was most interested in our values program.

During the summer, I taught a ten-week course on EHV to the nine-through-eleven-year-olds. I used the EHV program material on right conduct, and taught using all the five elements of tuning in, quotes, songs, stories, and activities. It was most effective. As I taught the sub-values of right conduct, perseverance, and sacrifice, I stressed community involvement. The purpose was to instruct the students in their "brotherhood role" of helping each other. The students in my class had two community service projects.

One of the advantages of teaching EHV in the community is that it provides the students with a theater to perform experiential learning. The values taught in the classroom can be practiced in the community. The opposite is also true: the community can learn from the example of the teachers and the students. When I came in contact with people from the community--local business, organizations, or clubs--they asked about the program. I gave a brief explanation and always got the same response--the response of encouragement. The community is supportive. One of the local businesses donated "muny opera" tickets for all the EHV classes. The gift was a positive reinforcement for their effort and attendance in EHV last summer.

The last class included a graduation ceremony and party. The girls were so excited! They received their EHV graduation certificate for the ten-week course from the club director. It was their first "graduation" and they knew they had accomplished something of value. We have been invited to teach another course this fall.

Our thanks to Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who made this class possible.

Rita Bruce
St. Louis, Missouri

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

Sai Baba, Light of my life
Lead kindly Light, I pray
Lost in the world of illusion and play
Salvation is the only way
Ocean of mercy, love, and compassion
Bless me, O Lord, this day
Lead kindly Light, I pray
Sai, lead kindly Light, I pray

Deepak G. Bhat
Troy, Michigan

TEN PRINCIPLES FROM SATHYA SAI BABA

"I am giving you ten basic principles. **The first** is to have a sense of pride in your motherland. Just as your mother has given birth to you, so too the land has given birth to you. Whatever country you belong to, you should have a sense of patriotism. You should not indulge in criticizing other countries or people belonging to other nations. Having trust and faith in your own country, you won't try to put down any other country. Never bring grief or sorrow to your country. To have pride in one's own motherland is important.

"**The second** principle is never to have hatred towards any religion. Honor and respect all religions equally. Even as you are a citizen of your motherland but respect all countries, also respect all religions equally.

"**The third** principle is to develop a sense of the brotherhood of man. Look upon each person as your own brother. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. All of us belong to the human race, so everyone is equal. Therefore, love each one equally.

"**The fourth** principle is to keep one's own house and its surroundings pure and clean. This hygiene will keep you healthy and benefit your worldly life.

"**The fifth** principle is to be discriminating when dispensing charity. In the name of charity or philanthropy, we tend to do injustice to this country. Charity does not mean that the land should be full of beggars. We can provide some support and means for the beggars, but provide food, clothing, and other conveniences in such a way that you are not encouraging laziness and begging.

"**The sixth** principle is never to give or take a bribe. Giving bribes, or accepting bribes, is contrary to the very name of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations. Bear this in mind continuously.

"**The seventh** principle is that we must seek ways to solve difficulties such as hatred, envy, and jealousy. To curb this sense of envy and jealousy, we must develop a broader outlook. Do not differentiate on the basis of race, caste, creed, or country. Follow your cultural and religious customs in your own home, but do not attempt to impose them on society. Rather than this, love each person as your own brother, not seeing him as belonging to another creed, religion, or country.

"**The eighth** principle is that the members of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations should do things by themselves; they should not depend on others. You may be very wealthy and have servants and assistants to help in a few tasks, but your own work you must do yourself. If you wish to be of service to society, serve yourself first. One who will not serve society has no right to belong to a Sri Sathya Sai organization.



"**The ninth** principle is that you should never go against the law of the land. We must follow the letter of the law. The members of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations should follow the law in spirit also, and be models for the government.

"**The tenth** principle is that you must love God and avoid sin. Love God incessantly. As long as you keep committing sins, God will never be yours.

"Firmly implant these ten points as your guiding principles. I am helping and blessing you, so you shall succeed. Not only the public but even the government should take note that you are really doing things that need to be done. These principles outline our primary duties. Following them will help bring about unity within both our society and the organizations. Once we live by these injunctions, the organizations will run by themselves and we won't have to do anything else.

"The first and foremost thing is Love. There may be shortcomings and faults in others, but never look at them. Rather, ignore them and overcome them through the expression of Love."

--Baba
excerpted from the Valedictory Discourse
November 21, 1985

A SAI RETREAT: TIME FOR LEARNING AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Last fall, approximately three hundred devotees from New York, New England, and the Mid-Atlantic states gathered at Camp Colang in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania for the tenth annual regional retreat. A separate area of the camp was set aside for the Bal Vikas camp, which was conducted simultaneously, with about forty children participating. Since the weekend marked the traditional date of Krishna's birthday, a special bhajan was held from 10:00 p.m. to midnight on Saturday night. The rest of the weekend was devoted to talks by guest speakers, workshops, bhajans, a performance by the children, and video.

Mr. C. Balasingham, a member of the World Council, spoke on "Krishna Reborn." In the course of his inspiring talk, Mr. Balasingham told the group that Swami has said that many of His devotees are reincarnations of the gopis who adored and played with the young Krishna in the past. Regional Director Hal Honig gave a moving address on devotion, and Nadine Clegern, editor of the Sri Sathya Sai Journal of Education in Human Values, talked about the outreach of the human values program throughout the world. In the course of her talk, she asked teacher-trainer Bea Flaig to report on the success of the pilot project in the borough of Queens in New York City. Bea told the group that originally fifteen teachers were incorporating the EHV program into their classroom curriculum; there are now forty-five.

Bob Bozzani, council director and president of the Sathya Sai Society of America, also talked on the Krishna theme. He spoke of the importance of the Bhagavad Gita and the Gita Vahini in his life. Saying that "we are all Arjunas," he spoke of his own spiritual struggles and emphasized Baba's teachings on love. As president of the Society, Bob answered questions about the tax-exempt foundation, stating that none of the money is used for Baba's personal expenses.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Clokey from California and Council Director Anne Sohani also spoke. Anne's talk about Baba's teachings in our everyday life emphasized the practical nature of all Swami's familiar sayings. She spoke of her own experience in putting these sayings into practice and reminded us of Baba's emphasis on the repetition of the name of God. The Clokeys, who spoke of their personal experiences with Baba, also gave two special programs for the children, showing the "Gumby" films originally made for television and for the Lutheran church.

Mimi Goldberg
Pound Ridge, New York

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE SAI RETREATS

DATE & COST	THEME & LOCATION	INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS
Memorial Day Weekend: May 23-26 Cost not established	Southern California Region "Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence" Camp Colby, in the Angeles Forest, near Los Angeles	Surendar & Shakuntala Patel 18212 Leaf Circle Huntington Beach, CA 92648 (714) 947-0043
Memorial Day Weekend: May 24-26 Cost not established	Central Region "Ninth Annual Central Region Sai Conference" Camp Wyman, Eureka, near St. Louis, Missouri	Raghavan "Chuck" Chakraverty 4612 Parc Orleans Ct. Bridgeton, MO 63044 (314) 291-5846
June 27-29 Cost not established	Northwest Region "Northwest Regional Sathya Sai Conference" Shiloh Retreat and Study Center, Springfield, Oregon, 20 miles southeast of Eugene, in the Cascade Mountains	Tom & Kay Scovill P.O. Box 881 Mt. Shasta, CA 96067 (916) 926-2485

Please refer to the next issue of the Sathya Sai Newsletter for the costs of these conferences and news of additional retreats.

IN YOUR PRESENCE

You smiled,
and light filled the world.
You laughed,
and music was born.
You looked,
and love touched my heart.
You spoke,
and grief was gone.

--Anonymous

DATES TO REMEMBER IN 1986

March 8 Mahashivarathri. Maha means great, shiva means auspicious, and rathri means night. Is observed during the new moon and symbolizes the renaissance and rededication of spiritual life.

April 18 Sri Rama Navami. The day to honor and celebrate the birth of the Avatar Rama.

May 6 Easwaramma Day. A time to pay homage to the memory of the mother of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

July 21 Guru Poornima. This day is set aside for the adoration of the guru or spiritual preceptor.

August 27 Sri Krishna Jayanti. Recognition and celebration of the birth of the Avatar Krishna.

September 15 Ganesha Chaturthi. To honor the Lord Ganesha, who is the remover of all obstacles and ignorance.

October 3 Dasara Festival begins. This is the beginning of the festival dedicated to the divine Mother in her various aspects.

October 12 Vijaya Dasami or Dasara. Last day or culmination of the Dasara Festival, celebrating the triumph of good over evil.

November 1 Deepavali or Diwali. The festival of lights to commemorate the victory of righteousness over wicked forces.

November Akhanda Bhajan. Akhanda means nonstop. This is a continuous, twenty-four-hour bhajan session for world peace, held in Sathya Sai Baba Centers all over the world, starting on a Saturday at 6:00 p.m. and ending the next evening at the same time. Akhanda Bhajan is usually held in November. We do not have the exact date at this time. Please check the next issue of the Sathya Sai Newsletter.

November 23 The Sixty-first Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

December 25 Christmas. Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

HOME

My friend, oh loving friend
I have searched so long to find you.
I'm lost as I move,
When still, you call me home.

James R. Todd, Jr.
Novato, California

ORISSA SERVICE PROJECT

Service, service, service. Love, love, love. These were the two words that came loud and clear from our beloved Sai through all the discourses that He gave during the Fourth World Conference and the Sixtieth Birthday celebrations. He even told us that calling ourselves a "Sai family" is a narrow concept, as we are all part of the one, great, universal family.

Shortly after the first week of November, Baba began distributing saris and dhotis (garments for women and men, respectively) to various groups as part of the Birthday celebration. One afternoon, a large group of seva dal women workers were called by Swami to be given lovely silk saris. This group, we learned, had offered to take charge of the sanitation service during the massive celebrations. All of them came from the state of Orissa in eastern India.

For the last few years, it has been observed that the seva dal group from Orissa has received special recognition from Baba. That fact inspired us to explore the service activities being done in that state. To get all the facts accurately, this writer talked to the president of the Sri Sathya Sai Organization of Orissa, Mr. Brahmananda Panda, who explained that the group has been doing all kinds of service besides sanitation in Prasanthi Nilayam for the past ten years. They have been exclusively in charge of sanitation (not one of the more desirable tasks to perform) during festivals for almost five years.

Upon being asked what led the volunteers to undertake this particular project, Mr. Panda narrated a little story. Lord Jagannath's temple is very famous. It is located in Puri. During the Rathathsava (chariot festival) it had been an age-long tradition that the King of Orissa took a golden-handled broom and swept the street before the Lord was taken out in His chariot. This fact inspired the seva dal workers to take up this kind of service for our Sai Jagannath.

Seven hundred and ninety-seven volunteers from Orissa were present at the Fourth World Conference. Three hundred and sixty-five were women. An interesting thing happened. Swami told Mr. Panda that He wished to distribute 250 saris, so Mr. Panda was in a fix. How could the rest of the women be disappointed? He immediately requested the lady seva dal coordinators to eliminate all office-bearers and those workers who had previously received saris from Sai's hands. It was interesting to note that many of them voluntarily abstained from going to get a sari, in order to give newcomers an opportunity to have one. However, all were very happy. What a wonderful team spirit.

During every festival in Prasanthi Nilayam, a contingent of workers from Orissa is sure to be present, and they happily take over the sanitation and

maintenance of cleanliness. A group of electricians and plumbers also offer their services. Of course, there are groups from all over India who come and are happy to be useful.

It gives great joy to learn that, not only in Orissa, but throughout India, the Sathya Sai organization is highly respected and has the best reputation for integrity. It works as an intermediary between the villages and the government agencies in order to accomplish growth and development in the villages.

Vidya Alekal
Tucson, Arizona

EARTHQUAKE IN MEXICO INSPIRES SELFLESS SERVICE

"It was like an atom bomb had fallen--dust and chaos." Sai devotee Gail Muniz was remembering her first view of downtown Mexico City only hours after the initial September 19, 1985, earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale. Gail recounted quickly the moving events which led to her weeks of selfless service alongside other Sai devotees.

The time was approximately 7:00 a.m. on a typical day. The television was playing while the Muniz family went about their daily routines. But the routine was interrupted as the house began to sway in response to formidable earthquake tremors. The television blacked out because the Channel 2 studio collapsed, trapping many employees inside. Switching to an operating channel, Gail heard incomplete, live reports of the unsuspecting city's instant devastation. Her house in the suburbs had been rocked badly but was intact. Tediously placing many calls on faulty telephone lines, Gail realized the magnitude of the quake. Sai Center members were unharmed, although some had lost their homes.

With intentions to serve the needy, Gail, her driver, and daughter Monique rushed to the Red Cross to offer their help and to donate blood, if needed. At the shelter, sandwiches were being served to volunteers. "I saw the need to feed the volunteers, to be the volunteer of the volunteers," Gail said. Drawing on her nineteen years of vegetarian restaurant ownership and experience, she purchased food supplies from military sources. She contacted other Center members, and they proceeded to a devotee's home, quickly made five hundred sandwiches, and sent them to the shelter.

The next day, the Sai devotees learned that, in the wake of the tremors, some tenement houses had crumpled. The homeless needed food, shelter, and support. Could they help? Given government approval, they set up a "kitchen" in a one-story school in the damaged area. With no gas available

for cooking, they had to improvise. Gail said, "Everyone was giving us food and donations of things, like soap. I have never seen anything like it ever, ever, except Baba's giving. Everyone was getting together to help." Another Sai volunteer, Maria Silva, added that "each time we ran out of tomatoes, bread, or other supplies, mountains of them would appear." In one instance, Gail was asked what the shelter needed. "I said I needed a refrigerator, and the next day I had one. It was Baba's work," she said with a hint of emotion in her voice.

A regular crew of fifteen Sai devotees and one nun prepared and served lunches. "On weekends, more devotees came to serve and clean up. Even people who hadn't attended Center functions for a while came." Gail's day began with food preparation and cooking at 7:00 a.m. and ended late in the evening. Sai volunteers provided food at the shelter for one-fourth of the approximately one thousand needy people per day, including refugees, rescuers, volunteers, and doctors. The fare was basic, healthful, and vegetarian--a Mexican meal of rice, beans, and tortillas with occasional treats such as cookies or fruit salad. A few homeless, elderly ladies received special, limited supplies of Jello.

The food crew made an impression on the refugees they served. Devotee Cristina Lara said people noticed that preparation of the food by devotees "was done with love and the food was clean and fresh." They would ask, "Who are you? Are you a religious group? You are different. You work so much and are so kind and nice to us and serve us with love." The devotees' answer would initially be, "We are all religions. We are people who want to help," and to the persistent ones, "We are Sai Baba devotees."

But Gail saw a problem developing at the shelter. The refugees enjoyed the atmosphere and the quality of food so much that they were not making any effort to become self-sufficient, to find homes, or to help with kitchen work. So, silently, Gail decided the next day would be her last. The next morning, one homeless man sought out Gail. Presenting her with roses, he told her, "These roses are for the people who have been feeding me." The cooks cried, their already open hearts moved.

Maria Silva related how terror again struck at the hearts of all in the shelter when the second strong earthquake rocked the city. "We sang a bhajan and people put away their fears, stopped screaming and shouting, and listened." It was an instance illustrating the unity of all religions.

Sai devotees manned the shelter kitchen for a total of four weeks. During that time, a blossoming of unity was noted in the Sai Center. This was true, selfless loving service in action, blessing all concerned.

Andrea Holly Gold
Ojai, California

HOW SAI SERVICE HAS CHANGED MY LIFE

Service has brought me home to God in my heart. Swami talks about the importance of self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and self-sacrifice which brings one to self-realization. These words signify to me my total process of returning to Him.

Before becoming aware that I was a devotee of Sai, I spent many years on the stage. During the course of my career, I learned to perform well enough to command applause, to play my audience like a piano. Then I discovered that they often applauded a mediocre performance, or were distracted and might not applaud my most sublime creations. Thus I learned gradually to perform for **my** approval, and I grew unconcerned about the approval of others. I had developed full self-confidence. So I retired from the stage.

Still hungry for something, I was allowed lengthy draughts of Swami's darshan, allowed to live and breathe near His physical form for a long time. I had done all I wanted to do with my life, and the final satisfaction was Sai nourishment. So there were no goals or ambitions left. It seemed I was quite satisfied with my life. That is, of course there were many things I could and should have done differently, but there was nothing further that the little me craved to do. I was self-satisfied.

Then came the time for self-sacrifice. I was to relinquish all that had provided the little me with confidence and satisfaction. Bereft of power, of safety, I was gone from the stage, gone from India. All that had gratified the little me was sacrificed. I could only survive this by forgetting little me in long blissful moments. Meditation does this for some. For most of us, Swami has provided service. In selfless service, I become so absorbed in the needs I see before me that I forget me and my needs completely. I am merged in the moment of service, I am relieved by the relief of my brother's need, I grieve for his grief, and rejoice in his joy.

Service provides the sacrifice of the small me, in favor of something much greater, much more worthy of confidence, much more satisfying. Service was the pivotal point upon which I turned to confidence in my sweet inner almighty, to the constant deep satisfaction of inner Sai nourishment.

It is too bad that people equate self-sacrifice with martyrdom or self-righteousness. It is too bad that self-sacrifice has such a bad reputation, for true self-sacrifice is so natural, is so wonderful and fulfilling. Now I "long" to serve, I "crave" to forget myself in the care of my brethren, I "feast," yea "gorge," at the table of my Lord within. We think that we are doing something for another when we serve, but, in selfless service, God gives Himself in generous servings to us.

A Southern California devotee



THE NEW PLANETARIUM/SPACE THEATER FOR THE SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE

On November 22, 1985, the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning achieved the unique distinction of being the only university in India to have a modern planetarium/space theater for educational purposes for primary to university levels. The planetarium is now appropriately called the Sathya Sai Space Theater. The dome of the theater is faceted like a diamond, painted in different colors, and is an architectural showpiece. The entrance is modern in design, and the ground-floor foyer is to be used for exhibitions explaining what the viewers will see.

After Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the new facility, there was a one-hour demonstration of the heavens as they appeared on November 23, 1926, the date of Baba's advent, followed by a showing of the sky on November 23, 1985, the Sixtieth Birthday. (In India, a child is considered one year old at birth.) The commentary, in English, was accompanied by classical Indian music.

This was only a small glimpse of what the space theater can provide for students and other observers. However, the facility was temporarily closed for further fine tuning of the technical equipment, and is expected to be fully operational early in 1986.

excerpted courtesy of Sanathana Sarathi

WITH SPIRIT
STRIKE EIGHTEEN MATCHES...
TO REKINDLE YOUR FLAME OF DEVOTION

There are periods in the life of nearly every devotee when the cares and demands of life seem to compete for our time and attention to the devotional disciplines. Very often the mere incorporation of even one of the following acts in our daily routine can reorient us in faith and direction.

1. Plan to attend a retreat.
2. Enjoy satsang (be in the company of good and godly people).
3. Keep a "Ceiling on Desires" journal.
4. Chant the Gayatri Mantra thrice daily.
5. Start the day with spiritual reading from Divine Discourses, such as in Sathya Sai Speaks, or from the Bible or A Course in Miracles.
6. Sing bhajans or hymns throughout the day, or while driving.
7. Create or reorganize your prayer room.
8. Start or join a study circle.
9. Start a weekly volunteer project that is close to your heart. (Baba requests four hours of community service per week.)
10. Meditate.
11. Practice forgiveness by releasing fear or grievances and by seeing the light in others.
12. Repeat the name of the Lord.
13. Practice silence.
14. Attend your local services or Center meetings and really participate.
15. Be in the moment.
16. Keep your thoughts, words, and tone pure and uplifting.
17. Subscribe to the Newsletters and let "spiritual news" influence your life.
18. Imagine seeing a candle in the heart of everyone you meet, as a means of experiencing God within others.

Connie Shaw
Littleton, Colorado



"The journey to inner consciousness, to calm the storms that rage there, is more important than the journey to the moon or Mars. The latter may be more spectacular, but the former is more beneficial. Life without goodness, good actions, good thoughts, and good words is like the moonless sky at night. It is like a wheel without spokes."

--Baba

A SELECTION OF VITAL POINTS FROM BABA'S RECENT MESSAGES

"Indulge in actions which are good, godly, and noble; lead a life of sacrifice; further the cause of love--develop, cultivate, and sustain it; perform charitable and philanthropic acts; and keep thinking of God and God alone. This is the way to lead your daily lives.

"Embodiments of the divine Atma! If you wish to know whether or not you have attained Godhead, the only true index is whether or not you know yourself. Everything else is insignificant. To realize one's self as the Atma verily confers immortality on you. One's life is the bridge linking this world with the world beyond. The innate divinity in man can be brought to the surface through the medium of sadhana. What is meant by sadhana? That which is motivated by a sense of intensity, that for which you yearn, that which you have a strong belief in, that which you are guided to do through your sense of discrimination, that is sadhana. ¹

"SERVICE IS THE PRIMARY SADHANA"

"There is no room for laziness. Each must strive to take to paths that give a meaning to life. A life devoid of service is like a temple without light. It is service that fills your life with a glow. It broadens your vision, your outlook, and makes room for divine thoughts and ideas. It brings about the very best of feelings in your heart. The unity thus experienced will transform man into God. This is what service does for you.

"Every individual should strive to do service without an eye on the fruits. There is no point in wasting your time with mere words. There is no point in saying 'God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent' if we're only going to rejoice in listening to the words and clap in appreciation. The question is: How many really translate these words into action? Without action, the words have no meaning....

"Keeping this firmly in our sight, we should proceed on this journey of ours. What is the final destination? It is to see the One within you. By plunging the body into service, by performing actions which are selfless, by living a life devoid of a sense of ego, you will thus become steadyminded, equanimity will reign supreme, and you will see God. Allow no room in your heart for hatred or attachment. Endeavor to see to it that neither body nor mind are defiled. All that is pure and noble may be gained through service.

"Through service, we gain love; and through love, righteousness. The basis for love is faith, and these two confer peace. The basis for peace is truth, and for these sacrifice is necessary. It is sacrifice that leads us to immortality. A life spent in sacrifice of our own selfish satisfaction will become full of love, experience peace, and maintain a sense of faith. One

who has faith in man will certainly have faith in God because man is God and God is man.

"LOVE IS THE PRIMARY GOAL"

"It is love which bridges these two entities. Have love as your primary goal and service as your primary sadhana. On these two wings you will reach your destination. These two will lift us to a higher purpose in life. Embodiments of Love! We get involved in conferences and gatherings of many descriptions, and, after participating, we must ask ourselves: 'How far have we progressed? What progress have we made? How far have we gone towards our destination?' If we merely engage in debates and arguments, discussions and decision-making processes, we are only wasting our time and money. Out of the decisions made, we must put at least one or two into practice. When we speak of business transactions, we should be thinking of heart for heart's sake and love for love's sake. Nothing like money should enter such transactions. When organizations get bogged down in financial details or material possessions, they can never progress. We must aspire to bridge this gap. Establish love from one to another. Get together and start giving service. In this manner you will be able to visualize the universal cosmic form. Don't just read books and texts or listen to discourses. Unless that which you hear or that which you read touches the heart, there is absolutely no point in such futile exercises. Plunge into service activities. One who does not do service has no right to talk about it....What you say, do that. What you cannot do, don't talk about!... Whatever is done should be done to please God. We serve God Himself when we serve man. That is the main purpose of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations. Love others and God will love you.²

"Of all the virtues, the greatest is pure, sublime love, the second name for which is compassion. We tend to look upon love as a relationship between one individual and another or a link between an individual and material things. This defines love as an external commodity. This could be called love, all right, but it is a love which is selfish in nature. This is love which furthers your own cause. That which is motivated by your own interests, how can it be a pure love?

"Love which is sacred, whole, and pure has no selfishness at all. Love which is selfless is the Love of God. If you do not see selflessness in it, it cannot be called true love. It is through pure and unsullied love that you can secure God.

"It is a case of pure illusion on our part to think: 'God is here' or 'God is there.' He is present everywhere. But it is only under certain circumstances, in certain places, and in certain situations that we can realize this truth. This, in turn, is an index to our own sense of purity of purpose. When a person with a pure heart sits steadily, thinking about Him and meditating

upon Him, God will show Himself to that person. You often indulge in talk that at that time He was in Shirdi, and now He is in Parthi. This is your way of interpreting events, because true devotees recognize that Sai has always been present at all times and in all places. You only have to look out to Him with open eyes, and He responds and comes forth to you. Sai is not One who can be influenced and carried away by empty words, nor does He indulge in empty words and empty assurances. He is there for all to see, perceive, and experience at all times, if only you have purity of thought and purpose.

"For those devotees who cry out to Him: 'O Lord Sai, come to our assistance and help us cross this ocean,' He is tangibly there, firmly giving them His support and His assistance. But, at the same time, what is this Sai? He who is there is a tiny, short person. If you look around, there He is. It is in Sai's nature that, at times, He indulges in pranks and in being playful. He is enthusiastic, but in whatever He does or says, there is a deep inner significance. Not all are given the capacity to recognize this inner significance. In their own strength of perception, they give different interpretations to what Sai says or does or means. In every word of Sai there is an energizing force, a supreme strength of conviction, and you can feel this force. Momentarily, of course, you may not be able to understand what it denotes, but, gradually, you will be able to perceive the significance.

"The other day, for example, while giving a discourse, Sai talked about the theme of Ceiling on Desires. He emphasized that He has nothing whatsoever to do with money and that all that has been accumulated should be used by you to benefit your own states and regions. I am making it a point to impress upon you the truth that Sai has no aspiration for material things. If there is perfect harmony between thoughts, words, and deeds, one is a man of truth. If there is a contradiction between one's words, thoughts, and deeds, then he is not a real person. This Sai is Sathya Sai; so the word of Sai, the thought of Sai, and the action of Sai will always be in perfect harmony. About these sixty lakhs (one lakh is 100,000) which have been accumulated, He was not talking merely to impress you. He would like to show to you in action what He really meant. Even if sixty crores (one crore is ten million) rupees were being given to Me, I would discard them as I would discard the most insignificant paisa. All that Sai ever asks for is pure, unsullied love.

"To a person who gives this pure love to Him, Sai is prepared to give him anything. Sai will give Himself to such a person. Now I would particularly wish that those people who are assailed by doubts, from time to time, should understand this clearly. It is man's nature to have a wavering mind. All the while, because of this continuous thinking process, the mind tends to discard that which is good and noble. That is why Arjuna had this to say

about the mind to Krishna: 'No doubt, Krishna, the mind is a very powerful thing. It can really achieve wonders but, at the same time, it is of a wavering kind. So I am hoping that this wavering nature of the mind can be arrested by you.' Exercise strict control over the mind and let it not be influenced by superficial considerations.

"On the one hand you keep proclaiming God as being omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent; but, on the other hand, you are led away by a feeling of doubt. That is an index of your weakness, rather than your strength. Whatever may be the provocation, whatever may be the circumstances, your word should uphold your conviction. Now, if somebody utters something contradictory to what we believe, we tend to be influenced. If the mind which is influenced thus shakes at the very mention of something which we do not really have in mind, what is the use of offering such a mind and heart to God? Now even as you are trying to say that there is God, that you have a firm conviction and belief that there is God, someone comes along and challenges you by saying, 'There is no God.' We must have the strength to face up to this challenging statement. Faith is not something which can be accrued from the outside; it must grow from within. In this world there are two categories of people: one proclaims, 'There is no God,' and a second one says, 'O.K., if God exists, can you show Him to me?' How can one who says, 'There is no God,' ask you to show God to him? He has no right. As far as he is concerned, there is no God, so he has no right to bring such pressure upon us. What is the answer that we give? We should answer, 'Look here, you are saying that there is no God, but I am contending that there is God. As far as I am concerned, God exists. Your God may not exist for you, but you have no right whatsoever to say that my God does not exist.' We should project the strength of our convictions in such situations.

"The second category says, 'O.K., if God exists, can you show Him to us?' The answer that you must give is, 'If you really wish to see God, follow me. You do not wish to follow me and yet you wish to see God? How is this possible?' I maintain that there is butter in milk, but the other side says, 'O.K., the milk is there, but show the butter to me.' The answer we have to give is, 'O man, make this milk into curd and churn this curd. Then the butter is there for you to see.' On the other hand, if you keep holding this vessel full of milk, saying, 'Milk, milk, milk,' for ten years, you can never get butter out of it. It will decompose. If you wish to see butter in milk, then you must perform the necessary sadhana (spiritual discipline).

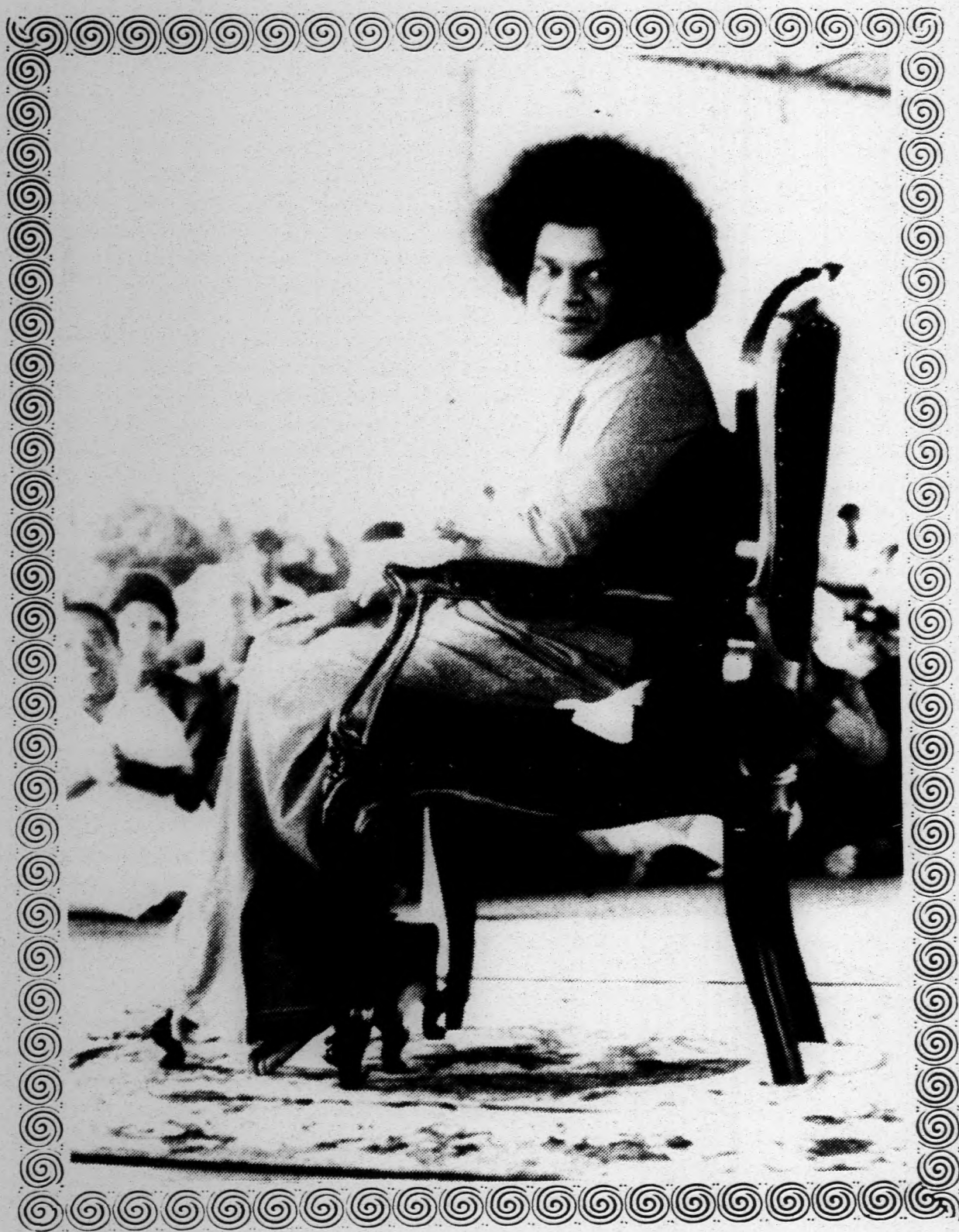
"In the ages gone by, in the court of King Janaka, there were two pundits. They were called Panchasika and Disika and were learned scholars and firm believers. But there were also people who could be called rationalists and atheists, and the second category came to these two knowledgeable scholars and said, 'We wish to engage you in debate.' At first Panchasika

and Disika would not agree to enter into the debate, but because of King Janaka's presence they agreed to argue with the rationalists to a certain extent. The main plank of the rationalists' argument was: 'We shall prove that what you say exists, does not exist.' It is meaningless to say that something exists and you want to disprove it. Panchasika entered the debate with this statement: 'The wife of King Janaka is a chaste woman.' Now it is in the nature of rationalists to negate a statement, but faced with this one, they had no answer. So they maintained silence. Then Panchasika put the second question: 'O son, you are the one who is born to your father. Is that not true?' How could the rationalist argue that he was not the one who was born of or to his father? Then the third statement made by Panchasika was: 'O son, you have a mother.' The rationalist was again stumped; he could not say he had no mother. Where statements are clear-cut and straightforward, how can you engage in argument? Today's world abounds with people who engage in pointless debate. Argument is merely a pastime for them. We need not bother about such people and need not engage ourselves in debate with them. By so doing, we may find our own hearts and thoughts disturbed.

"Here is a small example. We visit the goldsmith, wearing clean, white clothing. We sit for a while and our clothing becomes dirty because he keeps using the bellows. So if we keep company with the goldsmith we can be changed for the worse. In the same manner, if we seek the company of the bad, we are influenced. Therefore, right from ancient times, the efficacy of satsang (keeping good company) has been highlighted.

"Some people may be thinking: 'Sai Baba, in the name of Ceiling on Desires, has accumulated lakhs of rupees.' But these people do not know Sai Baba. They may be educated, but what is the use of studying unless that study confers humility on you. Education, as I told you the other day, does not imply scholarship. [Education does not connote scholarship. While getting to know the contents of books, you should also recognize the salient fact that scholarship is not contained in them. The content of the books goes to the mind; true education is that which brings about the transformation of the heart.' Baba's Divine Message, November 22, 1985 (Hill View Stadium)] Many educated and intellectual ones may not understand the truth that, without a selfless purpose, Sai Baba would not embark on any task. They themselves do not help, and that does not matter, but they criticize those who wish to help.

"So it is now Sai's will to open the eyes of such persons through proper action. They should recognize that whatever Sai attempts is for the well-being and prosperity of all mankind. With this clarification, I now announce that all the money that has been accumulated under the theme of Ceiling on Desires, I am returning to the various states, so that they, in turn, can channel the money for the development of projects undertaken



by the respective states and districts. Every state should have a small committee for this purpose. These committees should consist of the state president, the trust convener, and a few other members. They should supervise the distribution of this money. They could deposit it in a bank, and the interest that accrues could be used for the projects undertaken. This is My hope. With this money you can do much-needed service.

"In addition, there are people who want to come forward to take part in these activities. You can welcome them into your fold. The Sri Sathya Sai organizations do not misuse even a single paisa. The people who work under the banner of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations have nobility and virtues which are matchless and exemplary. There are lakhs of such workers in the Sri Sathya Sai organizations. I would like the state presidents and other officials to make use of this immense human resource. Along with these countless workers, if the state presidents, conveners, and other officials provide the necessary leadership, any number of tasks can be achieved. Those who are motivated by a sense of purpose and love will sacrifice. It is this sacrifice that is going to be the main support in your life.

"You may feel that your business commitments, your job, and other allocations are going to support you. No, sooner or later they will leave you. They are like passing clouds, fleeting and moving. So long as you are alive, money can be yours, the factory can be yours, your business can be yours. Once you are dead, there is no link between those and you. The permanent assets that you have are sacrifice, love, and service. Even after you are dead, they will be with you. Those which accompany you hereafter are true assets. So, from today, I am hoping that you will embark on service activity with greater vigor and dedication.

"Further, you should also have a feeling of brotherliness among you. There should be unanimity of purpose and no differences of opinion. Even if some differences come, you must remove them through the medium of love. It is this unity which is supreme sadhana; this is our ideal. Along with this sense of unity, our own innate purity is important. And to achieve this innate purity, sacrifice is necessary. Without sacrifice, there is no place for purity. Without purity, there is no purpose in unity. So you have charity, purity, unity. These three together will confer divinity on you. These are the four flames you must show to the world. We talk of the four purushartas (goals of human life): dharma (right action), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation). But they are not the ones. The true goals of human life are charity, purity, unity, and divinity. Without these essentials, life is meaningless. It is fruitless. It is a futile life and, therefore, as part of this World Conference and all that has gone by in the last few days, you must have this basic lesson: charity, purity, unity and divinity are what you must seek and express in your life.

"I am returning these sixty lakhs of rupees to the states, as mentioned

earlier. In addition, many people have, as part of the poor-feeding program, made donations. I am returning these thousands of rupees. The love they have given Me has reached Me and I have accepted their love, but I do not want their money. Money does not exceed love in value. In fact, there is nothing that can exceed love in value. So, in this money which is now being given back, I also include the money which was given for serving the poor and feeding the masses. The states should use this money in their own respective places and have joy as a result.³

"In the Purusha Sukta it has been stated categorically that God is the masses, this vast conglomeration of individuals, mankind at large. The society around you is verily God and your primary task is to serve God by serving them. Service to society is service to God. We should be firm in this conviction. Man is part and parcel of society, but he tends to go out of his way to seek faults and point them out. Of all the qualities one might express, the most wicked is to look for shortcomings in others. You tend to ignore faults in yourself, seek them in others, deride them, and put them down. Jesus once said, 'O man! First try to remove what is contained in your own eye. Why do you go out of your way to look for that insignificant thing in the other person's eye?' Even Vamana said, 'One who wants to look for faults in others does not think about the faults he himself has!' If you wish to point out the shortcomings of others, first be free of any shortcomings yourself. In our organization we must strive not to see faults in others. Now, if a devotee wears a new outfit, we say he is a show-off. If he remains silent, we say he has no intelligence. If he talks, we say he is a chatterbox. Thus, evil thinkers will find evil wherever they look. We should not allow room for such traits to enter into us. We should never harm the feelings of another through our words of criticism. If someone else indulges in speaking ill of another, we should not give ear to it. One who listens to such words is liable to become infected with evil tendencies also. True sadhana is when we try to curb even such incidents in our daily life. Both criticizing others and listening to criticism of others are undesirable traits. The solution to these problems is love and love alone. Love is God. So when the workers of the Sri Sathya Sai organizations take upon themselves this task of serving society, they must not look for faults in others. Understand the nature of Sai, what He stands for, and behave accordingly." ⁴

¹ Baba's Divine Message of November 20, 1985 (Hill View Stadium)

² Baba's Divine Message of November 17, 1985 (Poornachandra Auditorium)

³ Baba's Divine Message of November 24, 1985 (Hill View Stadium)

⁴ Baba's Divine Message of November 21 (a.m.), 1985 (Hill View Stadium)

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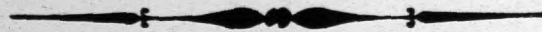
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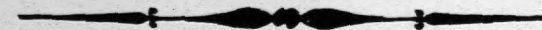
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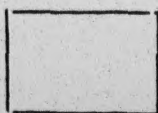
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