

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



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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"Satwic (pure, soothing) food which is congenial for the mind is necessary to develop qualities of love. Today, many people think that a satwic diet consists of milk, curd, and other foods. You must understand the real nature of a satwic diet. You take satwic food through the mouth. The mouth is only one of the five sense organs. A satwic diet does not mean simply the food we take through our mouth, but also the pure air we breathe through our nose, the pure vision we see through our eyes, the pure sounds we listen to through our ears, and the pure objects we feel when we touch them. All that we take in through the doors of the five sense organs may be described as our diet. If we live only on yogurt and milk, it does not follow that we are nourished by a satwic diet. It may be that through the mouth we are taking satwic food and, through the other four sense organs, we are filling ourselves with many kinds of impurities. A satwic diet means the synthesis of eating pure food, breathing pure air, listening to good sounds, looking at good sights, and touching pure objects."

--Baba

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1972, pages 244-245

THE EIGHTH GUIDING PRINCIPLE

"God is love. And so are we. Love alone will set us free. Love all! Love all! Love all!"

Here is a little song which summarizes Swami's teachings, and also points out to us a most difficult, but vital, sadhana--love all! That includes, first and foremost, love God, and it includes love all living things, even those that are not very friendly towards us. And, perhaps most difficult of all for some of us, love yourself, be good to yourself, take care of yourself, serve yourself. It is this last point that Swami stressed in the eighth of a series of directions that He has given us for purifying our lives. It reads: "Do not depend on others to serve your personal needs. Become your own servant, before proceeding to serve others."

In other words, be a servant unto yourself. Take care of your own needs. Become self-sufficient, self-reliant, free of dependency on others. Be your own man. Develop confidence and satisfaction in yourself. Be your own best friend. There is a popular song which goes: "Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, the other is gold." That old, golden friend is you, yourself. In Hamlet, Shakespeare says:

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Well, having been a bachelor all my life, this injunction to take care of one's own personal needs is something I have always more or less taken for granted as something that is completely natural. What a wonderful freedom it gives to live by oneself. When it comes to my personal life at home, I don't have to think about the moods or wants of anyone else, or be accountable to anyone except Swami, with whom I can commune in my heart without distraction. Cleaning one's room, making one's bed, cooking one's food, washing one's dishes, sometimes washing one's clothes and stitching them when they need mending, etc.--all these daily tasks come natural to one who lives by himself. And, by necessity, one learns to live one's life very simply with a minimum number of needs, because one will himself have to spend precious time filling those needs as they arise. Therefore, Ceiling on Desires is a completely natural outgrowth of taking care of one's own personal needs and, in self-interest, keeping them modest and simple.

But, for some of us, this way of life may not be natural at all. Many of us have forgotten how to do these simple things and take care of ourselves, and so Swami says in this guiding principle that we must rediscover our self-sufficiency. A good example from nature of how a being loses its native ability to fend for itself is the queen bee. She starts life as an

ordinary worker bee, but she is fed and attended to all the time, and soon she forgets her ability to suck the sweet nectar from the blossoms, and to play out in the fragrant breezes and sun-filled days. She becomes a prisoner of her own privileged status as a queen, locked up in the dark inner recesses of the hive with her attendants. When I was in the army, I often heard the remark, "Rank has its privileges." But Swami teaches us that the proper word is not "privileges" or "rights," but "duties" and "responsibilities." We have seen senior officers, or high-level professionals, who are quite helpless without their assistants. The executives hardly move from their desks, unwilling to perform the simplest task which might be considered below their status and appropriate only for a subordinate to do. But that is no way for a leader of men to act, or for a nation to prosper. Swami has taught us a different way of functioning in the world. He gave the example of Lord Krishna during the Mahabharata War. Although He was recognized by all as the most powerful leader in the field, the supreme kingmaker, He chose to drive Arjuna's chariot and to wash the horses and tend to their wounds when the day's fighting was over. When it was time for dinner, He would insist on being the one who served the food. But we need not go that far into history, as we have the example of Swami Himself, who, as we all know, is a servant to everyone, having devoted His whole life to selfless service; and who, at the same time, takes care of His own simple, personal needs. So, in effect, His teaching is: Roll up your sleeves and consider no task too menial. You have been given one stomach, but two hands. Use those hands to serve yourself and to serve others. There is a great dignity in manual labor; do not consider it below your rank or status.

I remember, about twenty years ago, going for a visit to the tiny country of Israel, and spending some time living on a kibbutz, which is a collective settlement usually situated near the border of the country. In a kibbutz, everyone, permanent resident or itinerant visitor, is expected to do some community work. In the fields, I became quite friendly with the tractor driver, an older, German-speaking man, who always had a joyful, easygoing air about him. I noticed that three days a week he would disappear and then come back and clean his plow, or whatever attachment he was using, fuel up his tractor, and go back to work. But he always wore gloves, and that seemed out of character with the tough, rugged casualness of the typical Israeli, who call themselves Sabra, which is a hard, spiny desert cactus filled with a luscious sweet nectar. Once I asked him about the gloves, and he explained that he had to protect his hands because he was a neurosurgeon--as it turned out, one of the most renowned in Europe and western Asia. Three days a week he went to the University Hospital in Jerusalem to do his work, and then he returned to his fields. He had no days off, but he was a thoroughly happy man. Then I found out that the man in charge of the chicken coop was the district judge, and the

son who came home for a visit, and who flew a jet in the air force, was an archaeologist and on his time off was digging at one of the ancient Biblical sites. No wasted time and no servants--that is what makes the individual self-reliant, the youth self-confident, and a nation strong.

Although we have all this higher education, many people, like the queen bee, have forgotten the most basic skills that are an essential part of the evolutionary and cultural history of the race. Everyone should know something about raising food, about animal husbandry, about cooking and preparing food and cleaning up afterward. Everyone should know something about weaving cloth, stitching his own clothes, washing, ironing, and mending his clothing. Everyone should know how to build a shelter, construct a house, make roads, lay pipes, provide electricity, do simple carpentry, drive a car, take care of his body, and how to treat it when it is sick. Everyone should know how to survive in the wild, living off edible leaves, seeds, and tubers, and how to protect himself against hostile forces of all kinds. When a man has developed some skills in these areas, he quickly becomes self-confident and unafraid. An American Indian boy would typically know several hundred herbs, which he could use to keep his body fit. He would know many sacred mantras that would keep his mind fit; also it gave him a wonderful ease and rapport with both nature and its Creator. Far from being a savage, he was closer to what we call an integrated personality.

Before I came to India, I was in an institute conducting a program which people attended from all over the world, spending several months learning the rudiments of organic farming, cooking, herbal medicine, and a hundred other skills which every human being should know, but that no one seems to know these days. When they left the program, they took these skills home with them and made them an integral part of their lives. Soon they discovered a wonderful inner strength, sweetness, and humility that they never knew was there within them. That builds the self-confidence which is the first rung on the spiritual ladder. And with it also comes a totally natural and sincere love for fellow creatures and fellow human beings, and a feeling of world community, because through their hands and hearts a profoundly intimate contact has been established with Mother Nature and all life. Swami says that knowledge should be balanced with skill and that that is the secret of a happy life. Here, in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, we have a very active self-reliance and social service program, where many of the skills I have mentioned can be learned as part of an integral program which weds higher education with useful manual skills on one side, and spiritual knowledge with practice on the other. We have only begun in this area and much more is possible, particularly in every student learning to develop his native skills to take care of himself, so that he can render the most effective service to the

community. I hope that you will take every opportunity to learn some of these manual and healing skills, because they will free you from endless trouble in the future and give so much peace of mind.

At this point, a natural question may arise: "How does the spiritual aspect come into all of this?" Let me share something that Swami told me in an interview. Before I came to live here five years ago, I would often make long visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, and repeatedly ask Swami for work to do while I was here. One time, He called me in and said, "You have been clamoring for a job. All right, I will give you an important job. From now on this body is not your body; this is Swami's body." I said, "Yes, Lord, often I feel You inside me and that this body really belongs to You." "No! No! I don't mean like that," He said. "Don't think of this as your body anymore. Think of this as Swamiji's own body, the hair, the mark on the cheek, the robe, everything. Your job is to take good care of Swamiji's own body. This is a very great blessing. Swami's body is a sacred body and I entrust it fully to you. Give it rest. Give it food. Give it clothes. Protect it. Shelter it. See that you use it to do Swamiji's work, for that is the only reason that Swami has taken this body and has come. Think like that. Let that be your work and also your sadhana. Then you will see how quickly your life will become easier and your mind will dwell on thoughts of God, on peace, on love, on beauty, on bliss, and on truth. That way your awareness will expand and you will greatly benefit in all ways. So do that from now on. Take good care of Swamiji's body. I bless you and put it fully in your care."

And, on that very same evening at darshan, when Swami was bending down to talk to someone near me on the veranda, I saw a spider enmeshed in His hair. Unhesitatingly, I just reached in with my hand, something I wouldn't dare do now, to free it from the coils of Swami's curling, twisting hair. He joked, "Be careful, it may be a scorpion." The feeling for me was totally natural, and it was just as natural to transfer that kind of loving attention to Swami's body on this side, and then on to His mind and His work and His way of being in the world. It all came very naturally. Once we reach that point of naturally identifying ourselves with the divinity inside of us, and seeing that same divine body in others also, then we can serve others, for we will be doing it with a feeling of sacredness. We will feel that we are serving the same God who is within us. Then we can also quite naturally permit others to serve us, without any feeling of superiority or separation. We can have a servant and tell him what to do, but in our hearts we know that really we are servants too. We are servants of our servant, because the body we are in is Swami's and Swami is everyone's servant. We realize that our servants are here with us to work out opportunities for expanding our spiritual consciousness and to express love in our everyday contacts. So, in our hearts, we will naturally

tend to feel love and humility and compassion in respect to Swami in that body. Swami teaches us to have that kind of respect for those who serve us.

Once, some wealthy plantation owners from Assam came to Prasanthi Nilayam for Swami's darshan, bringing their servant with them. Being told they would be called in for interview, the ladies put on all their silks and finery, and equipped themselves with fancy garlands and trays of delicacies, etc. In the process of taking care of all their fussy needs, they ran their poor servant ragged. Finally, they went off to darshan and the poor harried servant had some time for himself. Rather than resting or wandering off to the tea shops in the bazaar, he chose to also go down to darshan, standing near the Stupa behind the ladies' side. Swami called the party onto the veranda, but only took the gentlemen in. He left the ladies sitting outside. Then, after the interview, He came out, walked right by the ladies without looking at them, and stepped off the veranda, walking towards the ladies' side, and there He exited through the gate leading to the Poornachandra Auditorium. Seeing the man standing there in the distance, with his hands folded in namaskar, Swami called him over. The servant-man came and fell at Swami's feet. Very gently, Baba lifted him up, made him some vibuthi, put some on his forehead, patted his back, and talked with him for over five minutes. Then Swami came back and said to the ladies in passing, "He is a good man, a poor man, but a pure man." Here was Swami in His most wonderful role, teaching us a lesson in compassion and love. Love all, He says, including those who you are privileged to have serve you. Love them as much as you love God, as much as you love each other, and as much as you love yourself.

Love all. Love all. Love all.

Al Drucker
from a talk given to students at Prasanthi Nilayam



"Once I would have ordered bacon or sausage..., but not lately. The more I had come to believe in the indestructibility of life, the less I wanted to be part of even illusory killings. If even one pig in a million might have a chance for a contemplative lifetime instead of being skrockled up for my breakfast, it was worth swearing off meat."

excerpted from The Bridge Across Forever
by Richard Bach

CEILING ON DESIRES

In several of the articles on the Ceiling on Desires program, I have asked readers to share examples of how they have cut waste of money, food, time, and energy from their lives by putting a ceiling on their desires. The following letters were written in response to those requests:

"In the saving-of-time-and-energy category, I have an entry. I used to come home from work and watch the news, thinking that I needed to be well-informed. Now I know that the truth is not usually represented in news programs. The way it is really (not as Walter Cronkite says) is the inner truth, and I now spend that time meditating with a friend.

"Occasionally, I felt I needed to know the weather forecast, and I made this an excuse to watch local news. I have now purchased a ten-dollar radio which gives me all I need to know about the weather in five minutes.

"The same applies to reading the daily newspaper. The truth is not there either. I now glance at the headlines in a newspaper vending machine once or twice a week, and find that is more than sufficient. Why do I want to fill my mind with tragedies, murders, and international catastrophes? Baba is enough.

"I have also cut down my television time to an average of one hour a week. I did this by disconnecting the cable and selling my color television set. I knew I was capable of watching it mindlessly. I now have a nine-inch, black-and-white television, which is all I need. It does not tempt me to watch pretty pictures mindlessly, and watching now is a special event, usually for self-improvement."

Lynne Vande Bunte
Santa Clara, California

"The Ceiling on Desires program has given me freedom! There was a time when I had to wear the 'in' style. I was very fashion conscious. Then I began to see that clothes were to serve me. I was not to be a slave to someone else's idea of fashion. Now I wear clothes that are neat, clean, and very simple. I can't tell you how free this has made me feel."

Anonymous

Service means helping others, so offering examples of how you have put Sai Baba's Ceiling on Desires program into operation in your lives can be a form of service. It costs very little; just a stamp and a small amount of time and energy to write it out and mail it. What simpler way to encourage one another to act out Baba's teachings in our lives in a practical way, as He has asked us so often in His discourses to do? Don't be shy. Baba has shown us that shyness is ego! I look forward to your contributions which can be sent to me at P.O. Box 865, Pacific Palisades, California 90272. Please mention if you wish your name omitted should your contribution be printed in the Newsletter.

Phyllis Krystal

CHILDREN'S CORNER: A GOOD DEED REWARDED

When some people are asked to do something for others, you hear them say: "I'm too busy!" or "It is none of my business!" Actually, they are usually either lazy or selfish. Here is an interesting story of how a man, who did something to help others, was well rewarded for his trouble.

Once upon a time, a king was angry with his people. They were so lazy that they would do nothing for themselves. They wanted the government to do even the most trifling jobs. The king decided to teach them a lesson. He ordered a large stone to be placed in the center of the city square.

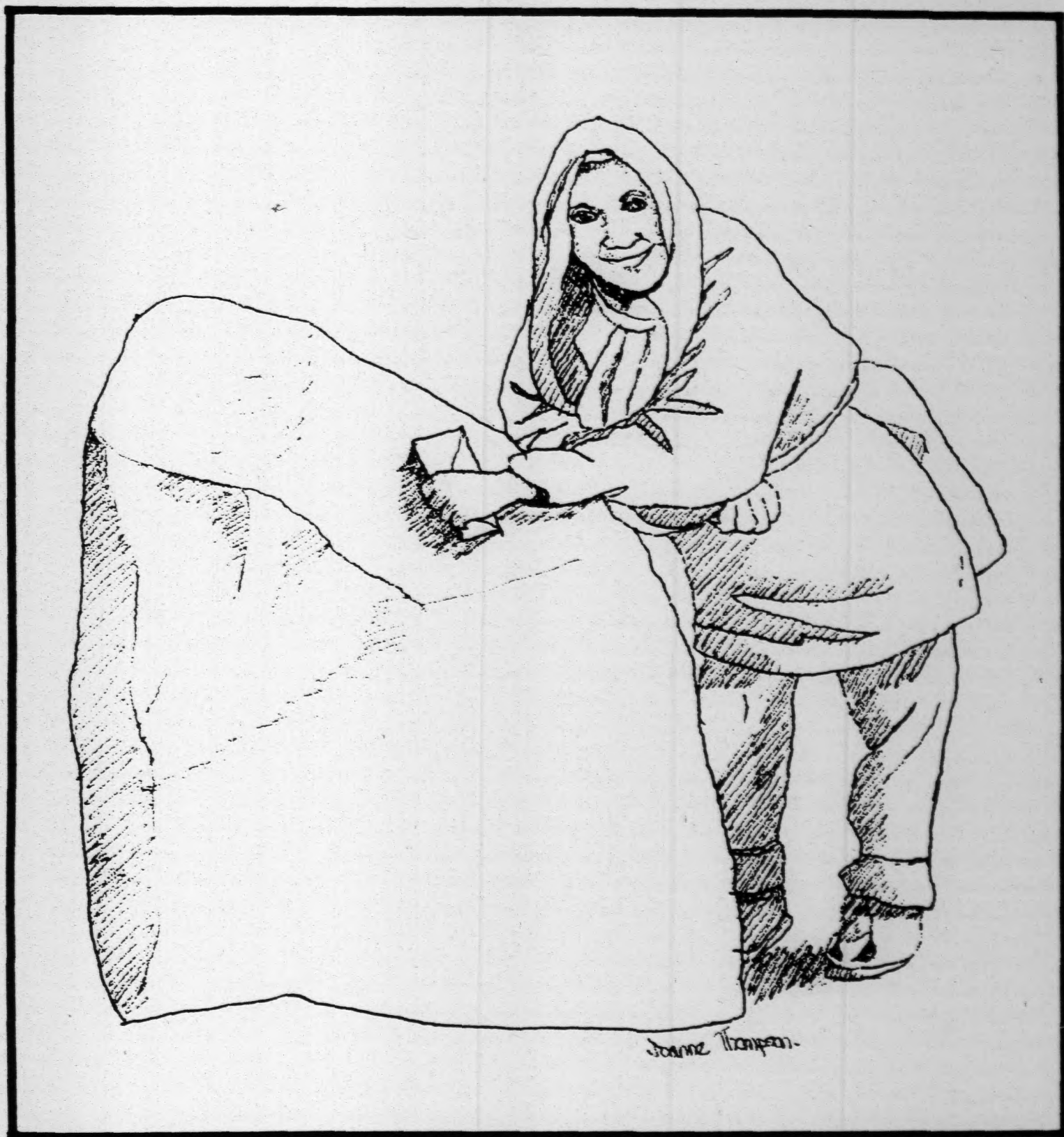
The next morning, a merchant in his carriage passed by with difficulty. His companion, a visitor from abroad, said, "Ask your coachman to get down and shift that stone." "Why should I?" replied the merchant. "That is the work of the government." Later, came a cavalry officer whose horse hurt a foot against the stone. The officer blamed the government and went on his way. A young man on foot said to himself, "I cannot soil my hands now, but on my return from school, I shall see about pushing the stone aside."

Before the student could return, a farmer saw the stone. He placed his basket of vegetables aside, and asked a passerby to help him. "I'm a schoolmaster, not a laborer," came the reply. "I work with my brain, not with my hands." So the farmer bent down alone. Using all his strength, he managed to turn the stone on its side and to roll it to a corner of the square. To his surprise, he found something lying beneath. It was a purse filled with money. On top was written: "A gift from the king to the one who moves this stone."

The farmer was delighted and told everyone of his good fortune. Others followed his example in the hope of reward. Later, the people stopped looking for rewards, because they began to enjoy helping. So, if you see a can or bottle by the side of the road, a large stone on the footpath, or a banana skin or orange rind on the sidewalk or bridge, move it out of the way. Do not wait for the street cleaner to come and remove it, for, meanwhile, someone may get hurt. In your own home, if you see a pencil or toy lying on the floor, pick it up before someone steps on it. Every year, many people are hurt as a result of falls in the home.

Of course, you do not always get a material reward for doing good deeds. But you will always have the joy of having made the world safer and tidier, and that is itself a sufficient reward.

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Quarterly
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"Along with human values we should develop in children the habit of service. Service imparts humility and humility leads to humanity. You can never get humanity without humility."

--Baba

EXAMPLES FOR SERVING

HOLY SERVICE

Some of the service activities of the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Phoenix, Arizona, are as follows:

One Saturday morning a month, we serve breakfast to 250 to 350 people at a park where the homeless can stay. The meal is provided by the Center members, who make sandwiches and furnish the funds to buy coffee, hot chocolate, and fresh fruit. Several members meet at the park at 7:30 a.m., set up, and serve.

The Bal Vikas children have a nursing home project in which they participate on the last Sunday of each month. With help from Center members, who bake cakes and buy ice cream, the children provide a birthday party for the elderly residents of San Juan Gardens. They sing "Happy Birthday" to the residents and give each one a homemade card and a plant. Then they have a sing-a-long for an hour. Everyone is encouraged to play hand instruments, and many residents dance to the music.

Every Thursday, a few of our members go to El Mirage, a small farming community west of Phoenix, to take food and clothing to the center there that assists itinerant farmworkers during their periods of unemployment. We supply approximately one-third of a ton of food a week in the form of beans, rice, flour, shortening, and tomato sauce. These three projects have been ongoing for about a year and a half.

This year we were also privileged to assist with the annual Christmas party for the children of the Mexican community at El Mirage. At least 250 youngsters talked with Santa, played by a Center member obviously born for the role, and received a gift supplied by the Center and wrapped by the Bal Vikas children. There were three candy-filled pinatas which the children tried to break, as is the custom in their native land. We sang carols during the party, several in Spanish. The people were very appreciative and tolerant of our limited knowledge of their language.

In January, the combined Tucson and Phoenix Centers held an all-day public-speaking seminar in order to learn to present Baba's teachings more effectively. During February we were privileged to host the EHV teaching seminar. Teachers from public and private schools were invited for the first time. And, in March, Phyllis Krystal conducted a workshop to help us look inward at ourselves.

Sue Byram
Phoenix, Arizona

MORE THAN JUST FOOD

The day was very warm, the sun high overhead, as we volunteers from

the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Brooklyn, New York, unloaded sandwiches and soup for the homeless people on the Bowery (which is done on a regular basis).

Soon, a bedraggled old man came to our table. "I need shoes," he said. "These things hurt my feet. Do you have any shoes today?" I saw on his feet a pair of high rubber boots; these were his shoes. How uncomfortable he must have been, especially on that hot afternoon. "Come back after the food has been given out," I said. "We have shoes in the car."

After all the sandwiches were gone, he returned and sat on the ground to try on one of the two pairs we had. Too small. Dismayed, I brought out the other pair. These should have fit him. He tried hard to get them on, but his heels were in pain from the blisters made by the boots. It was no use. His face clouded over in despair.

Then his friend, who had been watching, pulled off his own shoes. They were larger than the ones that had been donated. "Here, Pop," he said. "Try these on." And the friend took the smaller pair instead. The old man pulled on the shoes, and his sad face broke into a wide grin, as warm as the sun. Happily, I got into the car, and, as we drove away, we waved back at our smiling friend, who kept blowing kisses until we were out of sight.

Elsie Wilner

Brooklyn, New York

Reprinted from Service Opportunities

A FAMILY SERVICE PROJECT

For the past year, my family and I have been involved in a service project other devotees may find useful in their community. We live in a small town in rural Alaska. There is no Sai group here, and formal volunteer opportunities are few. We felt a strong urge to respond to Baba's call for service, but did not know what form of service we could perform.

One day, while I was pondering the question, an idea came to me in a flash. We could serve a Sunday lunch to residents in a local apartment complex for handicapped senior citizens. I immediately called the director of the center. She received the idea enthusiastically, explaining there were no homemaker or Meals on Wheels services on weekends. A Sunday lunch would help fill in the gap. The director chose four residents and later that week I met them. The following Sunday we began our lunch service.

Every other Sunday morning, I prepare a basic vegetarian meal--main dish, vegetable or salad, roll, and dessert. The residents like simple casseroles such as macaroni and cheese, lasagne, rice and vegetables. They especially enjoy fresh fruit and vegetable salads, as well as fruit

pies. While I cook, my husband cares for our children, and he is also in charge of kitchen clean-up. Immediately after the meal is done, we cover the food with foil, place it in a large box, and drive to the center. Since the center is only five minutes away, the food stays piping hot.

Our entire family participates in serving the food, although recently I have remained at home to care for our infant daughter. We bring our own serving utensils, but use the dishes and silverware in each apartment. The residents are very responsive to our two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, and she enjoys interacting with them.

When we began our service project we had no previous experience working with handicapped and elderly persons. Gradually, we learned ways we could better meet their needs. Here are some suggestions for serving meals to the handicapped and the elderly:

1. Place all food within easy reaching distance.
2. When necessary, cut food into bite-sized pieces.
3. Be careful with hot liquids. We found that soup is especially difficult for handicapped people to eat. If you do serve soup, place it in a large mug with a handle. The person can drink the broth, then eat the vegetables with a spoon.
4. Provide plenty of liquids with the meal. The people we serve usually have juice in their refrigerators. We also make them tea or coffee.
5. When serving the blind, explain what the food is and where it is located on the table.
6. After serving everyone, you may want to return to each person to make sure nothing else is needed.
7. If you notice any major problem in the apartment (i.e., no food in the refrigerator, safety hazards, etc.) report it to the facility director or appropriate social service agency. Sometimes the needs of the handicapped and elderly are overlooked, particularly on weekends.

Our service project has proven to be a worthwhile family endeavor. As with all service, the joy of the givers has more than equalled the joy of the recipients.

Cathy Shanley
Bethel, Alaska



The greatest poverty that can afflict the human spirit is the loss of a generous heart. You will know that success has slipped away from you when your passion for helping others grows cold.

Bill Doulos, Director of Union Station,
an organization which feeds the hungry, Pasadena, California

THE DIVINE DOCTOR

I breathed deeply as I reached the top of the hill on which the new Sathya Sai Baba Hospital is built. The hospital looked majestic, sitting above the village of Puttaparthi. The Avatar's Sixtieth Birthday was approaching fast. The hospital was to be cleaned and ready. New blue-and-pink-flowered curtains covered each hospital window, and there were flowered bedspreads to match. As a matter of fact, the entire ashram had received a face lift in anticipation of the coming celebration. Fresh paint adorned the buildings, making them appear new. A western canteen and paved roads added a nice touch to the grounds. But the final touch was the lights that decorated the mandir. The temple seemed castle-like, sparkling with life. Alive! Talking!

I was cleaning the hospital sinks and restrooms in each department for the Birthday. Swami was expecting many guests, and everything had to be perfect. During the previous weeks I had completely cleaned the laboratory, X-ray, acupuncture, and the male and female wards. Surgery was next. Unlocking the heavy doors that allow entrance to the operating theater, I was stunned to see a red velvet chair sitting on a patterned carpet. The legs and armrests were intricately carved in dark wood. A white handkerchief was neatly folded over one armrest. I knelt, knowing the divine Doctor belonged in that chair.

I thought of Sai Baba guiding the hands of all surgeons here and across the globe. He is present in every operating room, no matter where it is located, tenderly mending us and tending to our most miniscule needs. I felt paralyzed, kneeling there alone in the surgical theater. I couldn't move. I felt so humbled to glimpse the Almighty at work, to see how these quiet people worship God openly. How often in other countries do we openly thank our God, and dedicate our work to Him? In their daily lives, these people never forget their God.

The labor and delivery rooms were to be cleaned next. I was washing off a tray filled with many bottles of medicine. Familiar names of synthetic drugs jumped out at me--Ampicillin, Tetrex, Lomotil, Panadyl--as I washed each jar. I was flabbergasted when I came across a medicine bottle labeled "Vibhuti." I started to ponder the fact of how often I spoke of "doing," but "didn't." Talking of Sai, but somehow not quite totally living Sai. I could sense these people "lived" their feelings about Swami. They didn't forget Him under any circumstances. The bottle of vibhuti (holy ash) was a reminder for me to take my Lord with me consciously everywhere I go.

The simple routines at the hospital, the kind devotees who work there, and the sincerity of each one, were for me a breath of fresh air. The

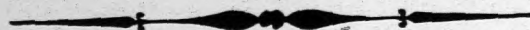
divine Doctor is ever watchful of His patients. His hands wear many gloves, not just those of a surgeon. Whatever the need, He is gloved and ready to serve. I pictured Swami everywhere, at all times, sitting in His red chair, cherishing, guiding, nourishing our very existence.

The divine Doctor, Sathya Sai Baba, is here to replace greed with sharing, hate with love, and envy with happiness for our fellow man--and to water a dying earth with hope. For this Doctor, the universe is His hospital, the earth His operating theater, and selfless love His surgical instrument. His hands are gloved in forgiveness. Putting the bottle of vibhuti back on the medicine tray, I realized the grandest of all physicians is here, making a house call.

Joy Ziegler
Mesa, Arizona



A container of vibhuti (holy ash) is on top of the middle tray.



THE WEAVER

On November 5, 1985, at 7:45 a.m., I was a bit behind schedule and found myself "carefully" hurrying. I had just purchased a tape on meditation by Eknath Easwaran, whose sweet and gentle voice reminded me so much of Professor Kasturi. The last thing I remember hearing was: "Meditation acts like armor, putting a protective shield around you all day long."

As I approached the intersection, I was slowing down for the red light when it suddenly changed to green. Feeling fortunate to save a few moments, I proceeded into the intersection and, suddenly, I saw it. I tried to swerve into another lane, but cars were everywhere. I hit my brakes too late. The lumber truck which had run the red light made a violent impact, head-on and broadside, into my car on the driver's side. It tossed my car into the next lane, where another car broadsided it from the right. I remember a protest running through my mind: "No! No! This can't happen to me. God is protecting me. No!" The next thing I remember I was looking up, out of my jigsaw-puzzle windshield which was in millions of pieces. The car was straddling the curb. My back felt broken, my head burned, and people, so many people--where was I?

"Excuse me, Miss, can you describe what happened?" As I looked out the crushed door which had been pried open, I tried to speak. Glass in my mouth, glass in my hair, and my head spinning, "The truck ran the red light," I said. "Were you wearing a seat belt?" came the next question. I shook my head, no. I couldn't say another word. Finally I could see who was talking to me. There were a few policemen, and next the paramedics came. Looking to the right, I saw a woman with her arms bleeding. She said, "I am a doctor. I was in the other car. Are you all right? Is there anything I can do for you?" I blurted out, "Call my husband, call my husband," who, with God's grace, happened to be home that Tuesday morning. Then I heard someone crying. I tried to focus my eyes and saw a man peering in at me, but I couldn't understand what he was saying. He kept on repeating himself until I finally understood. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, ma'am! My brakes! My brakes! I pressed down on the brakes and they were gone. I'm so sorry!" I was lifted into the ambulance. I could hardly remember what happened, but, oh my head, my back. In spite of all this, never had I experienced so much love anywhere. It was as though God had His arms wrapped around me, protecting me. I felt safe and warm.

When I woke up in the hospital, my husband was holding my hand. "Guess you're not going to work today," he said. "How did you know? How did you get here so fast?" "The police called me," he said. After more than two hours in the hospital, and many X-rays, I heard, "Well, you can go home after we stitch up your head. It's about a two-inch laceration and

you can have the stitches removed in ten days." "Ten days! But I'm going to India in seven days. Will I still be able to go? What about the stitches?" "Well, that depends on how you feel. You might be able to have the stitches taken out before you go." The hospital attendant let me go home in a yellow gown. Yellow seemed to be a theme color throughout all of this and, interestingly enough, it is a cheerful color, meaning joy to me.

Incredible as it seemed, no bones were broken. I was just badly bruised and had a relatively mild whiplash. Driving home, Bob stopped momentarily at the junkyard to ascertain what was left of our car. While I sat there, looking at our eight-year-old yellow Volvo, I was awestruck that I could even be alive. The front end was pushed up to the steering wheel, the driver's side crushed in with all the glass broken, and the right side had also caved in.

The day before we were to leave for India, I went to see the doctor--but not just any doctor. She was, in fact, the doctor from the accident. Being rather stiff herself, she seemed somewhat reserved, and I wondered if she blamed me for her involvement in the accident. As we spoke, I felt her relax. God had brought us together again to free us both from our doubts. After removing the stitches, she started through the door, then slowly turned and smiled, saying, "There will be no charge for this visit." I thanked her and felt we had not only been blessed, but had released each other in love. So much love came pouring in in the form of flowers, cards, and calls. This amazed me, as there were relatively few who knew of the accident. We especially wanted it kept quiet as Baba had asked us to accompany Elsie Cowan to the Sixtieth Birthday festival and, being the thoughtful person that she is, she would have insisted I take care of myself first. Loving the opportunity to follow Baba's request, nothing would make me miss my chance.

"Sorry! Your reservations have been cancelled." We heard, but could not believe our ears. "What do you mean our reservations have been cancelled?" we gasped. Our plane was to leave shortly, and Bob and I just looked at each other, repeating Sai's former words to us: "Don't think about the trouble, when trouble comes. **Don't** think about the trouble--think about God." Well, a golden opportunity was here to "think about God." The attendant quickly activated the computer, found the solution, and smiling, said, "No problem. In fact, I am going to give you the best seats in our business executive class." This, incidently, was a tremendous blessing for a very sore body, as there was more room to rest.

In India we arrived simultaneously at immigration with passengers from seven other 747's. Blessedly, we found ourselves near the front of the line, as our flight was scheduled to leave for Bangalore in approximately an hour. Handing our passports to the official, we were told that the

passports were not valid. Not understanding how this could be possible, Bob and I were given another opportunity to "think about God." I don't think I ever ceased repeating God's holy name. Finally, the official said quite firmly, "Not valid; entry is not possible," as he sent us through anyway. We were hurried through customs unquestioned. Upon arrival at Bangalore, an official took our luggage and personally escorted us through the terminal.

At last we were off to see Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Our group included Walt, Elsie, Roxanne, Bob, and myself. We couldn't have been happier. I wondered what awaited us at Prasanthi Nilayam and how I would assist Elsie when I couldn't move my left side. I opted to "think about God." I didn't know whether or not I could do it, but God would help. Eventually we were settled and were able to be on time for darshan. Baba came directly to my husband and asked, "How's wife?" Gratefully, Bob answered, "Thank You for saving her life in the accident." "Yes, My protection," He said and smiled sweetly.

Later, when the opportunity presented itself, I said, "Swami, thank You for saving my life." He took my hand and said, "Oh, yes! Permanent, permanent help." Before I knew what was happening, Sai gave me a forceful pat on my head, right where the laceration was, and smiled at me. I knew very well what He meant. He was telling me and showing me that "all is well."

Sometimes, when I think back on these events, I'm reminded of a favorite, anonymous poem:

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors
He works so steadily.
Oft' times He weaves in sorrow,
And I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the underside.
The dark threads are as needed
In the Weaver's skillful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.
Not 'til the loom is silent
And shuttle's ceased to fly,
Will God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

Rita Daniele
Irvine, California

ON BEING A DEVOTEE

The word "devotee," though not an Indian word, should be explained. I have used it to differentiate between those people who were already followers of Baba, and newcomers who had heard about Him, but wished to know more details before forming an opinion, or making any kind of decision or commitment. The word "devotee" means a person who is wholly devoted to someone or something, and whose life is given over entirely to the chosen person, cause, ideal, or interest.

To be a true devotee of Baba means being so deeply interested and involved with Him and His teachings, that they take first place in that person's life. Obviously, there are many different degrees of devotion and, therefore, many types of so-called devotees according to their understanding of His message. They range from those who are attracted to Him in a very superficial way, to the very few who have surrendered their lives to Him and seek His direction. The latter, Baba says, "are so few in number that they can be counted on the fingers of one of My hands!"

He, Himself, defines three kinds of devotees. First, there are those people who hear what He teaches, but put nothing into action, and so remain unchanged.

Then there are those who hear what Baba tells them to do, but take His words so literally that if He were to tell them to follow a certain path, they would follow directions without considering how to circumvent any obstacles blocking their progress. They would attempt to force their way through, or try to push the obstacle aside instead of using their common sense to find a way around it, or overcome it in some other way by intelligently applying His teaching.

The third group are those who hear His teaching and apply it in the best possible way to each situation they encounter in their lives, by adapting it to fit the case. This group tries to live Baba's teachings instead of merely hearing and thinking about them. Baba urges all would-be devotees to choose to be this last kind.

One big mistake which many people make is to expect that as soon as a person says he is a devotee of Baba, or some other teacher or system, he immediately and miraculously becomes absolutely honest, wise, unselfish, reliable, loving, and, in fact, perfect. Obviously, this is not the case at all. The necessary growth which leads to change is a slow, step-by-step, process if it is to be lasting. Therefore, it is most unjust to expect instant perfection either from others or ourselves. This warning, if taken to heart, can save future devotees from a great deal of disillusionment and bitterness. I have heard of many instances of disappointment and resentment resulting from trust mistakenly placed in a person just because he professed to

be a follower of Baba. It would appear that we must still use our native intelligence and powers of perception to judge for ourselves whether a person is likely to be trustworthy, instead of assuming that he has become pure as driven snow from the moment he met Baba.

Excerpted from Sai Baba: The Ultimate Experience
by Phyllis Krystal
pages 24-25

During the course of the next month, each Sathya Sai Baba Center and Study Group will be receiving a copy of Suggestions for Study Groups and Individual Use of the Ceiling on Desires Program, by Phyllis Krystal.

Dr. John Hislop



THE ULTIMATE NECTAR

O, Sai Baba
I ate everything
But still hungered for God,
I drank everything
But still thirsted for God,
I touched everything
But still wanted to feel God,
I listened to everything
But I still wanted to hear God.
And then...
You came to me in Paris
three years ago,
You came to me again
In the volcano,
You came to me most recently in the
kitchen and many other times I did not know.
I tasted your ash,
I drank your nectar,
And I was finally nourished
And I was finally satisfied.

Excerpted from The Only Diet There Is by Sondra Ray.
Published by Celestial Arts, P.O. Box 7327, Berkeley, California 94707.
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GOOD HEALTH AND GOODNESS

"Health is the essential prerequisite for success in all aspects of life, and for realizing the four ideals that should guide humans--namely, moral living, prosperity, fulfilling beneficial desires, and liberation from grief. Everywhere man seeks to live happily and peacefully, but happiness and peace are not won from worldly activities. The body that yearns to be happy and secure is subject to disease, decay, and death. However, the Dweller, the Self, within the body is not born, nor does it die. It is the Atma, God. The body is the temple of God. Hence it is the duty of man to keep the temple in good condition.

"Health is necessary for gaining this world and the next, for earning worldly and other-worldly progress, to realize the very purpose for which the Self has embodied Itself in this human form: namely, to become aware of its source, the Paramatma (Universal Soul). In order to attain this goal, the ideals of righteousness, prosperity, moral desire, and release from grief have to be practiced with the help of a sound mind in a sound body.

"What are the main causes of ill health? Millions of living beings grouped as species dwell on the earth. They sustain themselves by means of food secured from nature, as provided by nature. It is only man that is an exception. In order to cater to his palate and other senses, he changes the composition and characteristics of the things provided by nature and prepares, through the process of boiling, frying, and mixing, concoctions which have no vitality in them. Birds and beasts do not adopt such destructive methods. They eat things raw and consume the strength-giving vital essence. So they do not fall victim to the many ills that man brings on himself. Plant a boiled seed in the soil; it won't sprout. How, then, can it contribute life to the living? The vitamins and proteins that are valuable ingredients are destroyed when it is cooked to please the palate. The billions of cells in the body are so interdependent that when one is weakened or damaged, all of them suffer. There is a limit and a balance which every limb and organ have to maintain. Insufficient or improper food will endanger this balance. An occasional cough helps to strengthen the lungs and to clear them of extraneous matter, but fits of coughing are signs of positive illness.

"Eat in moderation and live long.' This is the advice handed down through the ages by the seers of the past. This advice is seldom heeded. People fill themselves with such large quantities of food that they find it hard to rise from the table. Ruining their digestive system by consuming heavy, rich foods, the affluent are proud when they host costly banquets. Those who know that physical health is the greatest treasure take great care to eat only satwic (pure, soothing) food. Uncooked food, nuts, fruits,



and sprouted seeds are the best. Use these at least at one meal, say for dinner at night. This will ensure long life. And long life is to be striven for in order that the years may be utilized for serving one's fellow beings.

"Evil thoughts cause ill health. Anxiety, fear, and tension also contribute their share. All these result from the greed to have more things, power, and fame. Greed results in sorrow and despair. Contentment can come only from a spiritual outlook. The desire for worldly goods has to be given up. One should not distinguish between 'my work' and 'work for God.' All work should be worship. Whatever the reward, it is the gift of God. It is for our lasting good. If this attitude is developed, suffering and pain can toughen us and help us to progress towards Divinity.

"It is through pain that pleasure is gained. Darkness enables us to appreciate the light. Death teaches us to love life. The diseases which torment man are many in number; of these, hatred, envy, and egoism are the worst. Even doctors cannot cure them, for most of them suffer from these. One should develop equanimity and serenity, if one desires to be free from these diseases. Do not seek to listen to vile and vicious stories. This tendency reveals a diseased mind. What is heard is imprinted, like a carbon copy, through the ear and onto the heart. One is injuring oneself through indulgence in this evil habit.

"Anger is another enemy of good health. It injects poison into the blood stream and brings about a profound transformation that damages the body. Two women, who were neighbors, turned into bitter enemies because of a dispute over a very trivial incident. The cow belonging to one of the women, while on the road, dropped its dung in front of the other woman's house. The owner of the cow ran to collect the dung, while the other woman claimed it belonged to her since it lay on her doorstep*. From words, they very nearly came to blows. Just then the other woman's baby wailed from the cradle. She rushed to feed the baby and while the child was drawing in its food, she shouted ferociously at her neighbor. Her anger poisoned the milk, harming her own child. Another cause of ill health is vice and vile conduct. People believe that a wicked person need not be a diseased person, but most diseases are based on mental causes.

"Doctors, too, have to deal with patients sweetly and softly and consider their profession as one calling for dedication to their fellow men. It is best to preserve one's health by good thoughts and good deeds. It is best to be vigilant about food habits. Coconut kernels, coconut milk, sprouted seeds, uncooked or half-cooked vegetables, and greens are good for health.

"Try earnestly to live long, without needing medical practitioners. When they give you one injection, they keep another ready to counteract its reactions. While trying to cure one disease, they may cause a dozen more. Moreover, the drugs they recommend may be spurious, since the manufacturers may be motivated by the desire to amass a fortune. Most illnesses can be cured by simple living, simple exercises, and by intelligent control of the tongue. Live long so that you can witness the career of the Avatar for years and years."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, pages 148-151

*When dried, cow dung burns easily. This excellent fuel is widely used in India.

WELCOME TO THESE NEW GROUPS

SATHYA SAI BABA CENTER OF SOUTH CENTRAL
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.....

Kaye Dunham
2350 Vista Gordo Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 665-0126

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF
CRESTWOOD (CONCORD VILLAGE), MISSOURI

Robert Bruce
25 Fawnwood Drive
Crestwood, MO 63128
(314) 894-0493

SATHYA SAI BABA STUDY GROUP OF
HELENA, MONTANA.....

Marsha Supera
P.O. Box 1037
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 442-6132

SATHYA SAI BABA CENTER OF
SCARSDALE, NEW YORK.....

Aniruddha Sharma
22 Wymor Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583
(914) 723-4196

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS OF CENTERS

The activities which are to be included in the program of a Sathya Sai Baba Center are: devotional singing, meditation (or "a few minutes of silence"), a brief talk on an aspect of the Sai teaching, including Education in Human Values for all ages, service activities, and special education for the young children of the Center members and other young children, if parents request it. As for Center business, it is best to have a separate meeting, and a public guest night should be scheduled once a month if at all possible. This is what Baba has said Centers should do.

As Sai devotees, we have two goals for our American Sai organization: to be pure instruments of Sai's will that the world shall come into a new golden age; and that our Sai Centers shall be so conducted that strangers feel welcome when they attend a Sai meeting and, thereby, have the supreme chance of their hearts catching fire with Sai's love for them. Any organizational changes are made in the light of our resolve to accomplish these goals.

Dr. John Hislop
President, Sathya Sai Baba Council of America

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR FALL SAI RETREATS

DATE, REGION, & COST	THEME & LOCATION	INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS
September 5-7 Northwest Region Adults: \$47.00 Children 6-11: \$10.00 Children under 6: free	"Annual Northern California Sai Retreat" Camp La Honda, in the Santa Cruz Mountains	Richard Karst 111 Harvard Street Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (408) 423-8623
September 5-7 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions Adults: \$40.00 Children 6-12: \$20.00 Children under 6: \$9.00	"Annual Joint Retreat of North- east and Mid- Atlantic Regions" Lincoln Farm Camp in Roscoe, New York	Anne Koletzke 400 West 43rd St. #16-N New York, NY 10036 (212) 967-7169

The Sathya Sai Baba Centers of Arizona (Phoenix and Tucson) will not hold their annual retreat this year, but will resume in 1987.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

We have long been in need of order, planning, and standards in what we print and distribute in our Sai organization. This need had become so obvious, and indeed pressing, that an ad hoc committee formed and approached me for recognition. This was most welcome, and a formal Publications Committee was recognized and confirmed. The members, in alphabetical sequence, are Robert Baskin, Richard Bayer, Bill Harvey, Hal Honig, and Sam Sandweiss. They plan to appoint a chairman for each project undertaken. Robert Baskin was appointed Chairman of the Books-to-the-Library project.

Dr. John Hislop

THE BOOKS-TO-THE-LIBRARY PROJECT

The Books-to-the-Library project should be viewed as a continuing education service project. The first two books selected for donation to libraries are Sai Baba, The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist and My Baba and I. Each is being provided by Birth Day Publishing Co. at publisher's cost and will

be in soft-bound copies, with a hard vinyl cover available. Additional books will be selected for placement by the Publications Committee later in the year. Plans are also under way for the publication of a special English edition on the life and teachings of Sai Baba, which we hope to make available for donation to libraries.

A major responsibility of the Publications Committee is to coordinate the placement of books in public and college libraries, and lending libraries of other appropriate facilities, such as prisons, hospitals, and convalescent homes. Robert Baskin is assigned the responsibility for overseeing this project on behalf of the Publications Committee. Any responses concerning the Books-to-the-Library project should be directed to him at 537 Del Oro Drive, Ojai, CA 93023.

DATES TO REMEMBER IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1986

July 20 Handicapped Day. Consult local Center for details.

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.

September 21 Blood Donation. Consult local Center for details.

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 8 Akhanda Bhajans. 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, November 9, at the same time.

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

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

December 27 The first day of **Hanukkah**, an eight-day Jewish holiday.

SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES

There will be two Sathya Sai Education in Human Values workshops for public school teachers, for which they will receive credit.

On **July 12**, the Department of Education of Hawaii is sponsoring an EHV workshop in Honolulu.

On **September 20**, the Department of Education of Nevada is sponsoring an EHV workshop in Reno.

Dr. Michael Goldstein assures us that there is more to come.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

An in-depth study of Baba's writings and discourses will reveal His constant attention to and care for His readers and listeners, whichever stage of development they may be experiencing. It is important to understand that these levels do not serve as a classification of persons but as ways of understanding their thoughts and behavior.

The first level is an amoral stage which occurs before the development of discrimination. There may be areas in which, for one reason or another, our discrimination has not yet been cultivated. Perhaps a particular behavior is so commonplace in our culture or our family that we have never questioned it. An example is the giving or taking of bribes. The widespread practice of bribery and its detrimental effects on the individual and society is increasing. By spotlighting this behavior as His sixth guiding principle, Baba raises it to the level of choice, guaranteeing that it will never again lurk in mental darkness below the realm of discrimination. For all who are aware of Sai's principles, bribery is now a matter of conscience, even if it had been thoughtlessly accepted previously.

After a particular behavior becomes a matter of conscience, we must then make a choice between right and wrong, good and evil, productive and unproductive, or moral and immoral. Baba frequently offers guidance at this level, not hesitating to say which behaviors are good and which are not. In the area of food, for example, He has repeatedly stressed that the purpose of eating is to nourish the body, not to delight the tongue. Since most of our eating behaviors become habits below the level of discrimination, Baba strives to raise them to the level of conscience by such statements as: "Consider food only as medicine for the body." Contrast this statement with those constantly exhibited in the media, statements and pictures designed to misguide and confuse our thinking so that we will continue to buy products which contain little or no nourishment.

Baba addresses the thought which does not discriminate when He says,



"Don't take food wherever you find it." He has given a number of discourses which focus our attention on the healthful and unhealthful properties of food, guiding us into the ability to make finer and finer discriminations in our selections. He not only points out which foods are life-giving and energy-producing, but He also emphasizes the proper motivation for partaking of these foods. He has recently given three excellent reasons for making wise food choices:

- (1) In order to be able to do our own work,
- (2) In order to serve others, and
- (3) In order to live longer and watch the unfolding career of the Avatar.

Notice that Baba's reasons for making better food choices do not identify us as the body. They merely relate to the usefulness of the body as our instrument. This is the discrimination He continually urges: to identify ourselves as omnipresent God, not as the separate body-mind ego-self.

In order to reach the goal of God-realization, we must transcend the level on which we see opposites, and move into a level of higher consciousness. At this level, all is God and His infinite manifestation. Even the emotions and appetites which we have striven so long to overcome, are now revealed to have been "merely impulses helping us to attain the presence of God." Whatever is, is the gift of God, and everything works together to help us maintain awareness of Being.

Let us become wise students of our glorious Master by assessing our own level of attainment and by carefully noting which level of thought or behavior He is addressing. By being tuned in to Baba, we will enhance our ability to follow those teachings which are given to us.

Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California

YUGADI DISCOURSE

April 10, 1986

Yugadi is the beginning of a new era. In some parts of India, Yugadi is recognized as New Year's Day. For further explanation, refer to Summer Roses on the Blue Mountains, by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, pages 86 and 87.
--Editor

"God dwells and shines splendidly in the world. Similarly, the world lives in God. If there is no God, there is no world at all. The friendship and the relationship between God and the world is mutual and eternal.

"Embodiments of divine love! The true significance and purpose of a human being is to remember that it is the mind which is responsible for joys and sorrows, and to conduct himself in such a way that he does not harm himself by the consequences of his own actions. One has to recognize that a mind which is free from crookedness will not have any worries at all. It is the mind which is responsible for all the joy and sorrow which man experiences. It is also responsible for the development of likes and dislikes, and for everything which man undertakes and accomplishes in the world. As long as man has the aspect of duality, and the feeling that he is separate and that the world is separate, he cannot escape from sorrow and joy. It is this feeling of duality which is the basis for the lack of compassion that says 'whatever might happen to the world, I shall be happy.' It is because of dualism in the mind of man that he develops likes and dislikes. Man has to build for himself, in his own mind, a feeling of oneness which transcends dualism.

DIVINITY IS MAN'S BASIC NATURE

"Every man has to realize by experience that it is Divinity which exists in every atom and every particle. The dirt which has accumulated and solidified in the mind of man cannot be removed by the chanting of mantras or by undertaking any other type of penance. That kind of purity can be brought about only by the process of cleansing the inner self. For this cleansing process, there is no need for scholarship, cleverness, or intelligence. The correct sadhana (spiritual discipline) would be to undertake activity as a total offering to God and to do it with a sense of selflessness and total dedication.

"The reflection of the moon which is seen in a cup of oil cannot easily be removed. Suppose you heat the cup of oil--that would not make the moon go away. You have to recognize that the image occurs because of the presence of oil in the vessel. As long as the oil is there, you will definitely get the image of the moon. If you were to beat on a snake mound, would you be able to kill the snake? If you were to punish the

body, would you be able to control your sense desires? If you were to just give up your food, would you be able to become an Atma jnani (realized soul)? Without knowing who you are, how will you be able to get the feeling or the experience of truth? In the very first instance, one has to inquire who he is, what principle he constitutes. What is his goal? He has to recognize his own chief component. Once a person acknowledges his inner Divinity, everything becomes easy for him.

"Without that immanent Divinity, there is no object to the world which you experience. One has to recognize Divinity in oneself. Divinity cannot appreciate itself without the person recognizing that he constitutes Divinity. Does a tree know the sweetness of the juice of a fruit? Will a creeper enjoy the essence of a flower, or a book the useful information that it contains? A person who practices the pravriti path (external activity); will he be able to understand the nivriti path (dedication, renunciation) at all? In the same way, when one wants to understand oneself, one has to make use of oneself as the very basis of all that is.

"Unfortunately, not realizing this particular fact, man calls himself either a devotee, a thyagi (renunciant), or a yogi. It is easy for anyone to say that he is a devotee of Rama, of Krishna, of Sai. But, through experience and practice only, it is rather difficult to reach the lotus feet. For this purpose, man has to understand the subtle which he embodies. He has to make an effort to recognize the fact that he transcends the body, the mind, and the senses, and that he is basically Divinity itself. As long as man identifies himself with the body, with the mind and senses, and leads life accordingly, he will not be able to recognize his own basic truth. Once a person recognizes this basic subtle truth, he need not necessarily be a scholar in order to continue the journey. As long as food is cooking, there is a need for fuel. Once it is ready, there is no need for fuel at all.

"A small fish in a flooded river will swim about happily and free from fear. What is the real cause for this joyful life in such a dangerous river? The reason is that it knows how to swim. That is what gives it so much strength and makes its life happy. On the other hand, even a very huge animal, like an elephant, will be washed away if it enters a flooded river, because it does not know how to swim. What we have to understand is the basic difference between the small fish and the large elephant. Why is one happy and the other washed away? Because one knows the art of swimming, which is essential for traveling in a flooded river. If a small particle of sugar is mixed with sand, an ant is able to identify it, separate it from the sand, and eat it. But other types of animals, not knowing how to distinguish sugar from sand, will not be able to enjoy it.

"In the same way, whatever scholarship man has achieved, whatever

scriptures and Vedas he has studied, all will be wasted unless he recognizes what his basic nature is, what his basic principle is, what principle he constitutes, and what his goal is. Whatever type of education and skills that you learn, be it the Vedas or other scriptures, they will only give you the theoretical aspect of the life one has to live. But they will not be able to give you the experience or take you to it. All the scriptures and books, education and skills, can only indicate the direction of the path. It is the pilgrim, the traveler, who has to tread the path. Only if you walk towards the goal, will you be able to reach it. By merely looking at the guidepost while you sit, you will not be able to achieve the goal. By merely reading or listening, you will not be able to do it. Only by spiritual practice, along with right action, will you be able to achieve the objective. You must create history, not merely read history.

"If a person is immersed in water up to his neck, he is still able to communicate. But if a person is drowned, he will not be able to utter a word. In the same way, if we are completely immersed in Divinity and the experience of Divinity, we will not be able to describe Divinity. The summarized substance of all this is: if you take to describing Divinity, its principle, etc., it only means that you have not yet reached the fullness of It. A person who has enjoyed and experienced the sweet nectar of the experience of Divinity will not be able to describe it at all. The most important thing to remember is that we have to make an effort to control the tendencies of our mind.

"One will not be able to reach a state of stillness, silence, and freedom from worry until one is free from thoughts. One has to make an effort and perform spiritual exercises (sadhana) to achieve equanimity in the duality of joy and sorrow, profit and loss, and other such opposites. The principle is that equanimity may be described as equality. This equality may be described as advaitha, or nondualism. It proves the oneness of the entire creation. This is the experience of wisdom. Wisdom is synonymous with advaitha. In every person, in every thing, and in all creatures, we must make an effort to recognize Divinity. We have to recognize that, whatever daily experiences we may have in terms of trials, tribulations, difficulties, and problems, the mind is responsible.

"However many ages pass by, whatever changes occur in the world, unless you transform your mind, the rest will be mere illusion. The capacity which can make the mind forget itself, the capacity which can give such deep joy to the heart, is basically Divinity itself. We have to recognize this. Such Divinity cannot be seen through your eyes, nor heard through your ears. You will not be able to experience it through your mind. You will be able to see and listen to it through your heart. That is the premathathwam, or the principle of Love.

THE WHEEL OF TIME

We have to make an effort to experience the principle of Love in every moment, everywhere, all the time. For the natural, worldly life, there are rules and regulations which are very important. Without these rules and regulations, we would not be able to live a life of morality or to develop integrity. The sages (rishis) in ancient days, through experience, discovered this principle. In the Mahabharata, while giving the history of the servant, Udanka, an explanation about the years has been given. Udanka, obeying the command of his master, went to a particular place to undertake some specific work. Two people were seen weaving a cloth with two colors of thread, black and white. Very close by was a wheel with twelve spokes and six people continuously turning the wheel. Udanka thought: 'Who are these people?' Immediately he remembered the slokas of the Vedas. The two persons were Vidhi and Vidhata. Without them, there was no meaning for the wheel. Two people had undertaken the weaving, using black threads to represent the night and white threads, the day. The twelve spokes represented the twelve months in a year. The twelve months, which are the wheel of time, were being rotated by the seasons. We have to recognize that without the days and nights, there cannot be months in a year. Without the months, there cannot be seasons, and without seasons, the world would not be able to function at all. Udanka came to the conclusion that the entire scene represented the wheel of time, which is indispensable to the protection and welfare of the world.

"The next question is: 'Why should this particular period of time (Yugadi) occur in the month of April?' In the kingdom of Rome, before Christianity came into existence, the calendar year commenced with April. In Roman mythology, the first god was Janus. The Romans believed this particular god had two faces, and this entity was considered as their own God. The two faces represented one looking to the present and another looking into the future. In the history of India, two aspects of time have been recognized. Just as you have two sides to a coin, one is the form of the world and the other is the nature of the world. The very nature of time is to have two aspects, one of form and one of nature. These two aspects combine to form the year Akshaya. Thus Akshaya, in fact, is a point of convergence of both kshaya and Akshaya, and stands for Atmaswarupa, the permanent, eternal Entity. Kshaya represents the jivaswarupa, the individual soul which undergoes change, whereas Akshaya stands for a combination of God and the individual. In other words, it is a combination of the permanent, unchanging Entity and the individual subject to change.

"As human beings consist of both permanent aspects and changing aspects, we have to make an effort to find out what this permanent aspect is. Whatever country or calendar you choose, there is some significance and inner meaning attached to the months and years. The names given to

the months in India, or in any other country, have inner significance and are associated with other names. In the names of 'January, February, March,' etc., there are associations with the names of gods, names of certain kings, and names of numbers. August is the name of a Roman emperor. But there was another aspect: during his life, he achieved all his victories in the month of August. So the eighth month of the Roman calendar has the name of that king. In the same way, the numbers which are used in our country of Bharat (India), as well as in the Roman and Latin countries, have a close relationship. In the name of September, the number seven is inherent. October has the number eight in it. The number nine, for another example, is associated with the month of November. The countries, the times, and the circumstances may be different, but inner meanings remain the same.

ORDER IN THE WORLD

"Bhairagya Sastry has said that the earth has only one moon, but that it is reflected in many images. The sun is one, but its reflection in a number of ponds will be as many as there are ponds. When the light of the sun falls on a tree, you can see the shape of the leaves and branches because of the shadow resulting from the sunlight. The effect of light may be seen in the shade, but, without the impact of light, there would be no shade at all. There is a mutual relationship between shade and light, and it is based on light. In our understanding there is a difference between the object and its image, but in the eyes of God there is no such difference.

"When you see the shadow of a particular object, it is possible only because there is light. There cannot be any shadow without light. We have to recognize the fact that joy and sorrow both emanate from one and the same source, and that source is the mind. The mind causes joys and sorrows, just as light gives shadow to an object. In life it is impossible to have only good things or only bad things. This is described as jagath. The word 'jagath' conveys the true meaning of what the world is. 'Ja' stands for birth and 'gath' stands for change. In terms of astronomy, we recognize today as a Thursday and the first day in the month of Kshetra. For every year there will be nine masters. Out of these nine, four will be good and noble and take up leadership. The first one is the king, the second is the minister, the third is Brahaspati, and the fourth one is the moon.

"These four are important for the welfare, peace, and prosperity of the world. The king spends his entire time contemplating various acts which are for the welfare of the people. The king will always be helpful to his people, but if the minister is not cooperating properly, there will be difficulties. This year the minister will be cooperating with the king. The third is Brahaspati; he is the master for the gods. Brahaspati also is favorably disposed. Astrologers have stated that when the king, the

minister, and Brahaspati are favorably disposed towards the citizens, fear and conflicts will not arise. The fourth is the moon. In the Vedas it has been established that there is a mutual relationship between the mind and the moon. The Vedas have proved that this relationship is one of the object to its own image. As the moon is also favorably disposed this year, one can rest assured that there will be few problems, and there will be peace of mind for all people.

RIGHT ACTION BRINGS PEACE

"Man, essentially, is based upon his own mind. Mind refers to a conglomeration of thoughts; it is the process of thinking. These thoughts are inextricably associated with our daily needs. If our daily conduct is along the right line, then the mind will be at peace. If man is not leading the life which he ought to, it means that his thinking is not quite right. When you refer to a man, you basically refer to his behavior, his conduct. If we make an effort to conduct ourselves in a proper way, there is no doubt that we will have peace, prosperity, and happiness in life. People who preach about dharma are innumerable, but people who put it into practice are few. The number of those preaching about dharma (right behavior) is increasing, but the number practicing it is declining. We have to recognize that today's need is for the practice of dharma to bring about prosperity and peace in the entire world. It is better to practice one thing than to talk about a hundred.

"We are wasting our lives, without understanding the basic truth. We may master the rituals and the external, but not gain the inner significance. These are blind approaches, and we have to make an effort to recognize the correct path. Whatever task we undertake, we first have to make an effort to find out what the inner significance is, what its use is for others. One small example: we have resolved to go to a temple, break a coconut, and offer it to God. One should not be content with oneself by merely having broken a coconut, without realizing whether it is a good coconut or a spoiled one. What is the inner significance of this coconut? The external fiber represents the thamo guna (dull, inactive, and without discrimination); the shell which covers the tender inner core represents the rajo guna (the feverish activity that desires results); and the pure, tender coconut which sticks to this shell represents the satwa guna (calm, quiet aspect of the primal energy). We have to recognize, remember, and develop the feeling that we have to offer to God a pure heart. How should we offer this heart to God? What is the proper way of doing it? While offering the coconut, without removing the fiber, however much you may beat it, you will not be able to break it. That means that you have to remove the attributes which are without discrimination (thamo guna) before the shell of feverish activity which desires results (rajo guna) can be broken.

"The attachments, likes, and dislikes which the rago guna (the shell) also represents must be broken. Only then can this pure, tender, tasty coconut be offered to God. Before you buy a coconut, you need to know its purpose. When the inner significance is understood, then, with a full heart and with correct understanding, you can offer the coconut, as if you were offering your own pure heart to God. Some people think it is nice to sit in a sacred temple, thinking that it is a divine and sacred act. But merely sitting there is of no use. Sacred thoughts should fill our hearts when we fill a seat in a sacred temple. You have to sit in the temple and let God sit in your heart. Placing your physical body in a temple, while sending your heart to the bazaar, will not achieve your purpose.

"The third thing is the chanting of mantras. Your chanting will come to fruition only when you understand the meaning of what you are chanting. Chanting mantras without understanding the meaning, and breaking a coconut which is not pure, are both mistakes. Whatever small act we perform, we should understand the need for purity in thoughts and acts. Otherwise, it is useless. Whatever problems, difficulties, trials, and tribulations you may face, your love for God and your concentration on Him should not be disturbed.

"There may be thunder and lightning which blinds your vision. There may be darkness which engulfs the entire world. There may be a downpour, but in the midst of such a frightening environment, a chakora bird seeks rain dropping directly from the clouds, unmindful of all that goes on around. This bird has plenty of water in the rivers, in the wells, and in the tanks, but is not prepared to accept the water from any of these sources. It ceaselessly and continuously aspires for the pure drop of water from the clouds. Whatever comforts, joy, pleasures, whatever material advantages you may have, you should not take note of them. Direct your mind only to God, concentrate on and aspire only for Him, unmindful of any trial or tribulation coming your way.

WORLD PEACE IS OUR PEACE

"Man's desires are rather peculiar. As a small example, people come and say, 'Swami, I want peace of mind.' You can imagine what an extraordinarily selfish desire this is. It means: 'Whatever might happen to the world, I am not concerned about that. I want peace.' These kinds of thoughts are very selfish. You have to find out how you can really find peace of mind when your environment, your surroundings, and the society in which you live are full of turmoil. If the society and the family in which you live don't have any peace and joy, how can you be peaceful and happy? Your peace of mind depends upon the peace of the family, the society, and the world at large. Only then will you have peace of mind.

"You have a number of desires, but you do not know how to fulfill them.

Man has to realize that, even to love himself, he also has to love others. Only a person who loves others is capable of loving himself. Without loving others, he will not be able to love himself.

"If you want to achieve a particular thing, it is essential to take all aspects comprehensively. Suppose you wish to dig a well by the side of a dirty pond. If you undertake it, the dirty water of the pond may contaminate the well. In Bombay or in Madras near the seashore, if you dig a well, you will get salty water. How will you be able to achieve peace with such salty, dirty, or undesirable atmosphere all around you? If you want peace of mind, there is a need for you to create a happy and peaceful atmosphere around you. The inner meaning is that we have to develop the feeling that world peace is 'my peace.' That is why the ancient Indian tradition is to pray for the welfare of the entire world and not merely for any individual. Only by making an effort for peace in the world will you find peace for yourself. The correct proof of our faith in God is that we always aspire for the peace of the world, for its prosperity, its good, and its welfare. Only then will you be able to get your own personal peace, joy, happiness, and prosperity. If a person wants to give peace to the world, he should first live as a true human being.

"A person who praises demonic people is himself demonic. Therefore, we have to make an effort, and through contemplation of God and the repeating of His name, there will be prosperity and peace in the world. We also have to inquire into what is important and to what we should give priority. This has to be clear. If you forget the basis and the foundation, and concentrate only on the manifestation, on the external aspect only, you will not be able to achieve the goal.

"Can there be a chariot without wheels? Can there be a crop without water and fertilizer? Only when you have fertilizer and water can you raise a crop. Only when you have an axle and wheels can you have a chariot. In the same way, unless you have faith and love, you cannot call yourself a human being. Just as two wings are important for a bird, just as two wheels are important for a chariot, faith and love are indispensable for a human being.

"Joys, sorrows, trials, and tribulations are all incidentals that no one can help. You have to take all these with an equal mind. That is why, at this particular time (Yugadi), we take sweet jaggery sugar mixed with neem flower, which is bitter. We have to resolve that we will take all things that come to us with equalmindedness. Be it gain or loss, happiness or sorrow, all these dualities should be accepted and taken with an equal mind. This is the resolution to be made for the new year. The ancient ones experienced opposites, just as we do, but they set an example for the entire world by their equanimity. The ideals set up by the ancient



people have not been properly understood by us. All the traditions and practices of these ancient ones are very sacred, as they are the example for us. We will have to practice these ideals and, through practice, set an example for the entire world.

A TIME OF JOY AND PROSPERITY

"At this sacred time (Yugadi), the year called Akshaya is commencing, and we will not be experiencing any difficulties during the latter part of this particular year. The first two months will be terrible. The summer

will be very severe, and there will be fire accidents. But from the third month onward, there will be a foundation for peace. According to astrological predictions, there will be various political problems in the world. There will be tremendous changes, but all these changes are ultimately for the good. These kinds of radical changes will not occur only in our country, but throughout the entire world. Everyone has to pray 'Loka samasthaa sukhino bhavanthu' for the welfare and peace of the entire world. There are two small things which are to be carefully noted in this context. However carefully we use words and speak softly and sweetly, however carefully we conduct ourselves, still there will be some misunderstandings and anger. Friends may become enemies. We have to be extremely careful in our choice of words. Even if you cut down a big tree, it may sprout again. But, if you hurt a heart, or break it, it is very difficult to mend it again. If metal is broken into pieces, it can be made whole again by using the proper process. But if the mind is broken, it is very difficult to mend it. Therefore, in this particular year, we have to be extremely careful, and make our words sweet, soft, tender, helpful, and unhurting.

Compared to the previous years, Sraaktakshi and Krodhana, this year will give great joy and prosperity to the world. The Krodhana year has already passed, but a part of it has projected itself into the next year. As a small example, if you switch off a fan that is rotating very rapidly, it will not stop at once, but will continue to rotate for a while. The influence and impact of Sraaktakshi and Krodhana will still be felt during Akshaya for a while. Therefore, during the first two months, we will have to be a little careful. Once these two months have passed, there will be the full influence of Akshaya and a lot of peace and happiness. If we can develop peace and happiness in our own hearts, we need not be afraid of whatever year may come.

"You have to fill your heart and your entire system with the feeling of akshaya and develop and contribute to the prosperity and peace of the world. Everyone should pray for the welfare of the world without sparing any effort. We have to move from the narrow and selfish sense of 'mine' to the broad sphere of 'ours'. We have to believe that our own welfare is entirely based on the welfare of the world. Whenever you have a little time, repeat the name of the Lord. Continually repeat the name of the Lord."

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Assistant Editor: Joy Thomas

Associate Editors: Vidya Alekal, Sonia Libby, and Diane Wells
Editorial Advisors: Jack Hislop, Michael Goldstein, and Richard Bayer
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