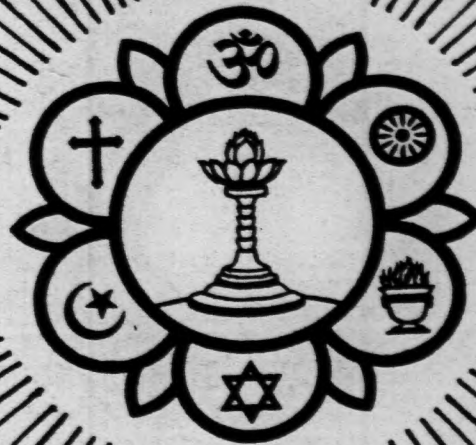


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SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

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

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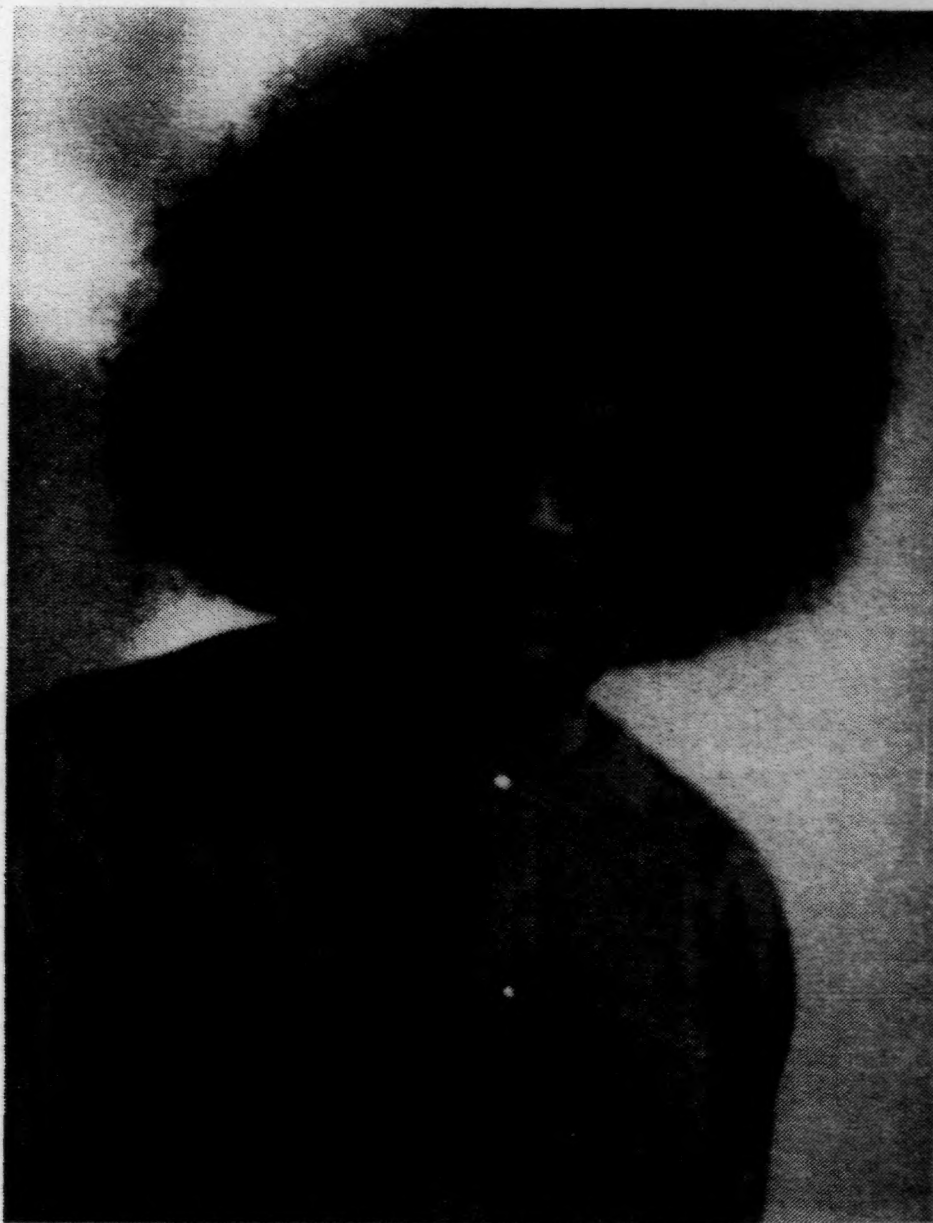
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The world (prakriti) we see around us cannot give us happiness. From moment to moment, it is changing. The experiences prakriti gives us in the waking state get obliterated in the dream state, and those of the dream stage cease when we wake up from the dream. The dream experiences are our creation, and so are the waking state experiences.

What we see is nothing but our own creation. The vision experience of the world is but a projection of our mind and the reflection of our own inner thoughts. As the thought, so the vision. The color of the glasses you wear determines the color in which things appear to you. If you wear red glasses, everything will appear red. If you wear green glasses, everything will appear green. Pure thoughts make the world appear as pure. If you view things with a loving heart, the whole world, the whole creation, will appear to you as a reflection of Love.



—Baba

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. XI, p. 99

GOD IS WITH US

Sir George Trevelyan is one of Britain's most distinguished historians, a recipient of the Alternative Nobel Prize and President of the Wrekin Trust in the United Kingdom.
—Editor of *Sathya*, published in the West Indies

I have never been to India. I have not met or seen Sai Baba. Nevertheless, I am happy to write about him. I have no doubt about what is claimed for him. This is indeed a divine manifestation.

It is to be expected—of that I am sure. The world situation demands it. The emerging vision of wholeness makes it acceptable to our understanding.

We grasp anew what the ancient wisdom always knew—that the universe is mind, a vast continuum of life, intelligence, and love poured out by the God-source. Our planet Earth is a living creature of which humanity is integrally a part. Indeed, humanity is becoming the brain and nervous system of the integral being of the earth. To quote lines from Evelyn Nolt's poem, "The Glory That Is Earth:"

"O Earth, living, breathing, thinking Earth
On the day we treasure you
As you have treasured us
Humanness is born.

"And throughout all Light
A Radiance leaps from star to star
Singing: A Son is born
HUMANITY."

In our time, we stand on the threshold of a new birth and awakening. Beyond turmoil and disaster is the cleansing which will lead into the Golden Age. Something quite new for the universe is coming from this planet, this seed for free consciousness channeling the light and love of God.

Thus, the heaven world now watches the planet with intense interest. Each human being of free choice can turn to God, attune, and receive the transforming flow of His love. This is happening, and the dark events of our time are only the shadow of the necessary cleansing. They are not the real news, though they fill 90% of what the media gives us. The real news is that God is taking over. No longer dare we exclude God from our affairs. Here is the factor wholly ignored in our politics and economics. At this time of turmoil and crisis, we must expect Him to show His hand and in some way to appear.

The holistic world-vision teaches us to see the Oneness of all life. God is the life-force everywhere. God, of course, knows everything, for He is all knowledge. The world of spirit is divine thinking, and the human mind is a droplet of this divine mind. As Swami said, "You are all God. The only difference is that I know it and you do not yet know it." Of course, God, when He so desires, can manifest in human form. Since it is hard for some to grasp the Oneness vision, we may expect Him at this time to appear. That must happen in a period like ours. The ascended Masters are the hierarchy of great human beings who have achieved full God-consciousness and can move among us in the resurrected and perfected body. But God Himself could choose to manifest for the redemption of humanity, and this appears to have happened.

You cannot and need not prove these spiritual ideas. But you can live with them and watch life in the light of them, and then inner certainty comes through the joy and glee experienced in the soul. God manifests in joy, love, and enthusiasm (the word means "possessed of a god"). We feel this flooding through our veins, despite surrounding gloom and fear. Indeed, the Satanic forces strive to bind us down to the time-scale of guilt and regret about the past and fear of the future. But God operates in the immediate ever-fleeting *now*. Learn to attune to the higher self in the *now* moment, and we will find the gateway to God. So let us rejoice in His presence in Sathya Sai Baba. The image of Him as a human being is the external picture of an absolute love and knowledge which surrounds and interpenetrates us everywhere.

Let us accept this tremendous event and so look forward to any changes which open the doors to the New Age when the planet will be cleansed. Indeed, having found God, there is no place for fear.

"Look up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

—Sir George Trevelyan

Sathya, No. 6 (November 23, 1986)

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The universe is the immanence of the Lord, His form, His body. It is wrong to take the universe and its Lord as different. It is a delusion, a product of the imagination of man. Just as your image under water is not different from you, the universe which is His image produced on your ignorance is the same as He."

—Baba

Upanishad Vahini, p. 8.

LIVING SWAMI'S TEACHINGS IN OUR DAILY LIVES

What is the purpose of being a member of a Sai Center? It means that you have accepted the disciplines given by Sri Sathya Sai Baba and will live his teachings in your daily life. You will become the embodiment of those teachings. You, as a follower of Sathya Sai Baba, are a fortunate member of society because you know the Avatar in this lifetime. You have earned this special grace through many lifetimes of struggle. Don't waste this precious opportunity.

We, as Center members, take visible forms as embodiments of Sathya Sai's teachings. The teachings one chooses to embody are up to the individual. Start with one, and others will gradually become a part of your life. The two I have selected to talk about are:

1. Love the Lord with all your heart.
2. Call upon His name and trust Him.

Let your love for God develop into a real and true love. Once you feel the depth of this love, you will accept nothing less.

How do you live the teaching of "Love the Lord with all your heart" in your daily life? When you love someone with all your heart, his name is ever on your lips, his form is ever in your mind. It delights and tantalizes you. All of you remember teenage crushes. How you watched and waited for a glimpse of the loved one. How you filled your daydreams with this loved one. Now give this love, this total absorption, to your form of God. He loves you back.

How else can you live this teaching? You find that you do not turn away from the unfortunate or distressed, but bless them and participate in some service to help them. For example, most of us in the New York City area until recently have avoided the Bowery. Now we are there, performing service (seva). We prepare food and serve meals to the people there. We collect and distribute clothing to them. These same people that we once tried to avoid, we are now trying to help.

Swami once told us that we cannot change the world—that is his responsibility. But we *can* change ourselves. When we do that, one less person will try to cheat or take advantage of another. One more person will smile and make others smile; one more person will help where help is needed.

How else can you live this teaching? You find you are more patient, more tolerant. If someone tries to put you down, you laugh with them. You lighten stressful situations.

Once when our office reception area was crowded and the people were annoyed at having to wait so long, a lady who always caused commotion called out to me, "Honey, you look like you've been eating a lot of chocolate pies." "Yes," I said, and I made her unkind statement into a joke. This changed the whole mood of the situation. Laugh; be joyous. Love is joy. Swami laughs with us, and sometimes at us.

You have to become content. When you love God with all your heart, it does not matter who or where you are. Read the entry for February 13 in the *Spiritual Diary*. Swami says, "Learn to be comfortable in any place. Live in joy wherever you are. Revel in the realm of your mind. Worship there the Lord you have chosen as your goal and be free from all the effects of the natural or human environment."

Call upon His name and trust Him. To say the Lord's name was one of Baba's first instructions to us when he taught the singing of devotional songs (*bhajans*). How do you practice this in your daily life? Say His name over and as you ride to work, as you walk, as you have time between thoughts or worry. The Lord's name is powerful. Sita said Rama's name for a year while she was in captivity. Draupadi called Krishna's name when she was in distress. The Christian martyrs called the name of Jesus as they suffered in the arena. Each religion has examples of the faithful who have died, calling the Lord's name.

A member of the Brooklyn Center was on a subway platform by herself late one night. Across the tracks, a man was pacing up and down and talking to himself. The man looked up and saw her. He then climbed down onto the tracks and began walking across to her platform. "Swami," she said, "do you see what that man is doing?" The man climbed up on the platform near her and came over. After looking at her for a few moments, he said, "You look like someone who helps people. Are you?" "Yes," she said, for she was a counselor. "I thought so," he said, then turned and walked away.

The Twenty-Third Psalm states, "... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. . . ." Keep the Lord's name with you. There is no spirit, no spell, nothing more powerful than the name of the Lord, said from the heart.

Now we have the opportunity to say the name, not in pain or trial, but in joy and in love. We have earned the right to say the name in joy and peace. To paraphrase an item of Dr. Hislop's: Don't waste your time in worry or planning sensual pleasures. These waste your energy and pull you away from your goal. Your spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) is to help you rise above slavery to the senses.

Recitation of the name is ideal for the Kali age* because we are so busy. It can be done at any time and any place. Just saying the name once with real love can get

us through any situation. Professor Kasturi once told us a story. He said the Lord has 108 or 1,008 names and that the Lord does not need to hear the names, but hopes that one of them will be said with full love and devotion.

Baba has promised that the Lord will protect us. In the March, 1985, issue of *Sanathana Sarathi*, there is an article on the Bhopal tragedy. The article describes the work of Sai devotees in the area. At the end it reads, "During the crisis, Sai devotees remembered Bhagavan's assurance, 'Why fear when I am here?' The devotees residing in the affected areas did not feel disturbed by the calamity and remained in their houses, feeling fully protected under the boundless love and grace of Bhagavan."

Keep His name on your lips and let Him guide you through all situations. In the *Spiritual Diary* (January 5 entry), Baba again reminds us, "The Lord will protect in all ways and at all times those who worship Him in complete and uncontaminated devotion (*bhakti*), just like a mother protects her infants, a cow protects her calves, and the eyelids protect the eyes—effortlessly and automatically."

Love Him with all your heart and keep His name constantly on your lips.

*Kali age, the age of iron, a very difficult period, the present era.

—From a speech by **Anne Sohani**
at a meeting of the
Mid-Atlantic Region Centers



All are eager to take; a rare person is earnest about giving. The reason is absence of true love—love that transcends caste, color, creed, and fences created between man and divinity.

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

—Baba

AGE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

On the sunny morning of December 26, 1981, just minutes before we were to leave for Bangalore, Sri Sai Baba called me and my wife in for an interview. A half dozen other Western devotees—American and European—were in the room, and Baba asked if there were any questions on spiritual matters.

One of the questions had to do with seances, channeling, and psychics. A California devotee asked Baba if he gave his blessings for people to go to mediums through whom spirits are supposed to speak.

Baba said, "No . . . those are evil spirits."

"But even longtime devotees are going to these mediums, Swami." Baba said that did not matter; it was still not something devotees should concern themselves with.

Another woman asked about the "chit" method of making decisions—writing "Yes" on one sheet of paper, "No" on another, and "Wait" on the third, then having a child pick one up from an altar. Baba did not encourage this. He said to the questioner, as if to give encouragement in a deeper value, "You have me for an example. Think of the things I do and the way I do them, and follow that. Pray for guidance. Prayers arise and grace descends. . . . Your conscience is your guide. Conscience is God within. Don't follow leaders; follow your heart."

I found Baba's responses typical of his attitude to "extraordinary" and "supernatural" means of understanding. Like other great world teachers, such as the Buddha and Confucius, he directs attention more to the practical wisdom and normal everyday duties, to kindness and humility, rather than to dramatic intervention from the spirit world.

More than once, I have heard Baba speak disparagingly of hysteria and the unstable excitement and blind following associated with it, while he praises quiet sincerity, self-sufficiency, and the self-control of discipline. Baba lampoons those thrill-seekers who impulsively stampede when they hear some news or want to be first to arrive somewhere, calling them "racehorses."

Human dignity, inborn intelligence, traditional wisdom, and love expressed in kindness are the concerns of Baba's lifework, rather than psychic phenomena. He has always calmed hysteria and, through his example, shown how charming the natural modes of expressing oneself and living simply can be. I think the study of Baba's life and teachings will confirm this. Baba is not part of the occult scene, nor is he a prophet of doom.

Because Baba has come to avert catastrophe, he is the *Avatar* of the post-modern age. Paraphrasing the Christian mystic Joachim of Flore, this is the Age of the Spirit of Truth, and Baba is the embodiment of spirituality leading the way to a nobler humanity.

—**Dr. William Jackson**
Indianapolis, Indiana



THIRD-PARTY MESSAGES

Subjective messages and instructions from Sai to others: Givers of such messages are coming to notice again. Sai instructs us to reject out-of-hand “inner” messages for us received “from Sai” in dream and trance by a third party and delivered to us by that third party. Such messages are born in the imagination of the third party and are not messages from Sai to us via that third person. Sai states that he has a one-to-one relationship with each devotee, and communications are direct from him to the devotee and never to the devotee via a third party. That is, we may have a direct one-to-one vision of Sai; but otherwise, he speaks to us, writes, phones, or wires his messages to us.

—**Dr. Jack Hislop, President**
Sathya Sai Baba Council of America

THE COSMIC ILLUSION

Sathya Sai Baba has often talked about "illusion." "All that seems real around us is but illusion," he says, "and the only true reality is God—that which is unchanging." But what does this mean, and how can we begin to apply this knowledge to our daily lives?

Another word for illusion is *maya*. *Maya*, Sai Baba says, is like the cloud that shields us from the sun. The sun's rays cause water vapor to form clouds. The clouds, which are brought into being by the sun itself, shield the sun. Ash covers the embers out of which it was born. The cataract, born out of the eye's substance, clouds the vision. In the same way, Sai Baba says, the cosmic illusion, which is born out of God, shields Him.

Most of us would like to be happy and peaceful every moment of our lives, for that is our true nature. If being caught up in *maya* prevents us from being in a constant state of bliss, the challenge becomes one of how to transcend this cosmic illusion.

Sai Baba says it is because man is entangled in *maya* that *maya* has become a foe more powerful than man himself. It has become an enemy which needs to be defeated. If the enemy is strong, it is helpful—if not necessary—to seek the help of someone stronger to ensure victory. In the *Mahabharatha War*, the one hundred wicked Kaurava brothers realized that the five good Pandava brothers were stronger. So the Kauravas formed an alliance with Bhishma, Drona, and the hero Karna, all of whom were more powerful. The Pandavas sought an alliance with Lord Krishna and were victorious. Today, we have a similar need to fight and defeat the enemy, *maya*. In fact, Sai Baba says that it is the primary duty of man to wage this battle and to succeed. But the enemy is very deceptive and can take many forms. It can turn joy to grief and grief to joy. It can bring madness and relieve madness. Divinity is innate in all beings and all things; but since it manifests itself as a myriad variety around us, we have doubts and become confused. *Maya* is the supernatural power that can make good appear as bad and bad appear as good. There is only one who is more powerful than *maya*, and He is God. Thus, in order to succeed, we must turn to the One more powerful than *maya*, secure His friendship, and ask for His help.

How does one go about making friends with God? The same way we make friends in our daily lives. First, we invite them into our home. Then we do things together. Similarly, we must invite God into our hearts while we go into His heart. This twofold friendship is very strong and is called "devotion."

Sai Baba describes two types of devotion: ritual worship and devotion not toward another. The first type of devotion—ritual worship—includes following a schedule

of Sai Baba's nine points. They are meditation and prayer, devotional singing, participating in children's spiritual education, community service, attending devotional meetings, studying Sai literature, speaking softly, not speaking ill of others, and putting a ceiling on our desires. This also represents duality, since God is seen as separate from oneself. This type of devotion is necessary, however, since it strengthens the belief that God resides in all beings and helps us become more "God-conscious." The more God-conscious we become, the more spontaneous and uninterrupted this type of devotion becomes.

When we are able to realize that we are not the body, we need not continue ritual worship, says Sai Baba. We can move on to the second form of devotion, that of devotion not toward another. This type of devotion is spontaneous and uninterrupted. It does not recognize another, but sees unity in all. Sai Baba says, "A person who feels that way shall be looked after by me. All his comfort and sorrow will be handled by me." He goes on to say that today more people are part-time devotees and complain that God doesn't take care of them. Holding onto the mind keeps us part-time devotees. The mind must be surrendered completely to God. Only then will God take care of us in every way.

In the stages of the human journey, man's perception is manifold. The person with passionate perception makes a distinction between joy and sorrow, good and bad. He believes in duality at all levels. The person with dull perception does not believe in the oneness of things and recognizes only multiplicity. He is enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. The selfish man wants the possessions of others, but won't give up his own. He won't harm others, but won't assist either. He only wants to take, take, take. The egoist does not desire others' possessions, but won't give up his own. The other-centered person is motivated by the thought that all is God and all belongs to God. He assists others readily. Above all of these is the devotee who does not see another—a devotee of the Universal Self. He has pure wisdom—the vision of nonduality. The questions "Who am I?" and "Who are you?" do not enter his mind. "*Asatoma*" means "Lead me from one state of mind to another." But Swami says, "It is not a question of leading from one place to another place. You *are* that and are already there! No need to remove that ignorance. Project light upon self. Then realize you are the wisdom yourself."

The body is a composite of our thoughts and beliefs. All thoughts we have carry energy. In the law of physics, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Our thoughts result in action. Before getting a drink of water, we first had to have the thought of being thirsty. We become our thoughts. We become who we think we are. If we believe we are separate from God, we will continue to be separate. This is why Sai Baba tells us to say as often as possible, each day, "I am God. I am light. No pain or grief can affect me. I am always satisfied and content. I am truth, consciousness,

bliss." We have been so conditioned to believe God is different from us that saying we are God may at first sound untrue. However, the more it is said, the more predominant that thought becomes in the mind and the more we become that thought. As our former thoughts are not repeated, they take on less importance and, therefore, carry less and less energy.

It is only when we have single-pointed devotion, when we have secured the friendship of God, that we can begin to tackle that which is stronger than ourselves, the cosmic illusion. We must begin to remove the idea that we are separate from God and that He is strong and we are weak. We must begin to see ourselves as no different from God. This is the quantum leap man must now take. Sai Baba says that is the sole reason for man's existence on earth. He sees only the *Atma* (indwelling divinity), the real, the Truth in us. The formless has taken this form. Professor Kasturi says, "We have not ever had a phenomenon like this." Swami himself says, "I am unique, so you can't even compare me." For us to *not* do as he says is to remain being the cow without milk or the fruit without sweetness. As Swami sees us, so must we see him in everyone and everything around us.

The task appears formidable. Many feel it is next to impossible to attain this single-pointed devotion. But Swami says, "Don't despair nor feel hopeless. A cool breeze sweeps away clouds that cover the sun. A puff of breath blows away ash that covers the embers. A cataract is easily removed by the surgeon. These illusions have no strength in themselves. In fact, they are extremely weak. It is because you do not know how to conquer them that they feel strong and powerful."

"Prayer," Swami says, "is the only way to unveil this *maya*. Say 'This *maya* which is born out of You can only be removed through Your grace. Please lift this veil.'" This is how we can secure God's assistance. Then we can see the cosmic illusion as His shadow and will be able to focus attention on God and not on the shadow.

—Cathy Daub
Medford, New Jersey



PEOPLE CAN CHANGE

This is the story of Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai. He was born in Thailand but, as a young boy, was sent to London, England, where he lived for many years. When Dr. Jumsai was in school, he was a very poor student. Not only did he not do his work, but he was always fighting and getting into trouble. It seemed that all he wanted was to misbehave. Finally, the teachers, hoping to change him, put him on the boxing team. Even there he was not very nice. He was a very good boxer and could beat most of the other students. Even those who might have been better than he was would not even try to fight him. You see, he knew not only regular boxing, but Thai boxing, as well, and he didn't hesitate to use it. So everyone was afraid of him and, of course, did not like him.

He tells how one day all of this changed. It seems that one morning he began to remember the stories his father used to tell when he was very young, back in Thailand. His father used to tell him stories about people who would do kind things, stories about the right way to act, stories of love and caring about others. All these stories flooded his mind, and from that day onward he began to listen to his teachers. He stopped fighting, too. Dr. Jumsai became a good student; and, even more importantly, the teachers and students began to like him. He had many friends, not out of fear, but out of love. He grew up to be a famous scientist.

I told the story of Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai's childhood to my students during an Education in Human Values (EHV) lesson. In this particular class, where eleven- and twelve-year-olds had already "tuned out," failure was the pattern and little hope was left. I hoped that this real-life story might make an impact. I pointed out that *anyone* can change! I could hear one of the young boys sitting next to me whisper under his breath, "Even me." The voice was barely audible, but the impact of the words was thunderous as they moved into my consciousness. It virtually stopped my breath and made me once again recognize the importance of, the necessity for, Education in Human Values.

The children continue to bring up Dr. Jumsai's name time and time again. One child had a dream about him. Another insisted that we write letters to him, and the class did. Yes, people can change! The following is a letter that one of the students wrote.

"Dear Dr. Jumsai,

"I found out that you were bad when you were a child; so was I. But when my teacher told us that something came to you and you became a nice person, it happened to me, too. I became nice and did not have any more arguments with the teacher or the other kids."

—Bea Flaig
Woodside, New York

“ALL WE SEE IS AN ILLUSION”

In his talk to the EHV Conference in London, March, 1985, Dr. Art-Ong Jumsai quoted another scientist as saying, “All we see is an illusion.” Dr. Jumsai posed the question to his audience: “Why is that? What do we use to see?” The group agreed that we see with our eyes through the medium of light, which is energy. Dr. Jumsai then described the energy or electromagnetic waves, which include light, as follows:

“This energy has different frequencies, from very low to very high. Light is just a small part of these frequencies. Among the frequencies higher than light, we have ultraviolet rays and X-rays and even higher ones that we cannot see. Among the lower-than-light frequencies, we have infrared, microwave, radio, shortwave, and longwave frequencies. All of these are electromagnetic waves.

“Imagine now that you are looking at your neighbor through the medium of X-ray. Instead of the handsome face you saw a moment ago, you will now see only a skeleton. What is the truth? Now look again—through the medium of radio waves this time—and you will see nothing. However, if you have a radio receiver, you can tune into many different transmissions. This means that those waves have come through the walls, the ceilings, or the floors. Therefore, when we look through radio waves, the building starts to disappear. It doesn’t really exist, as we thought it did, for now we can see right through it. We can see for a great distance using radio waves. Buildings, which have seemed to be so solid, are no longer so. What is the truth? The truth is that all we see is an illusion.”

—Excerpt from the videotape
of the **London Conference on
Education in Human Values**



One illusion is living under the impression that you are the body and that you are no more when the body dies. Another illusion is that happiness consists of accumulating wealth, comforts, knowledge, or reputation. What is happiness? It is really the state of mind which is not affected by ups and downs of life or good and bad fortune. If, by systematic effort, all activity is done as worship, then the mind will be steady and free from anxiety.

—Baba

ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE

The body I have been using for almost sixty years has, over the last decade, developed a chronic condition which causes, among other inconveniences, a breakdown of normal sleep patterns. As a result, I often find myself tossing and turning at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. after only three or four hours of sleep.

When the condition first manifested itself, I would bitterly complain that I was being denied a birthright, namely, a nice, neat package of six or eight hours of sleep "like everyone else." I would angrily demand that some entity or agency restore my former ability to sleep through the night.

About a year ago, I became seriously involved with the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I discovered that practicing *japa* (repetition of the name of the Lord) during sleepless hours had a calming effect. Sometimes it would even permit me to return to sleep. More recently, when *japa* did not bring sleep, I would reluctantly get out of bed, make a cup of herbal tea, or read from one of Baba's books until my eyelids grew heavy. Then I would curl up on the sofa and doze off, convinced I had done my best to satisfy the body's need for sleep. It didn't occur to me that perhaps my body didn't need more sleep. I was going to discover a way to get it anyway. It was my due!

Two nights ago, I again awoke after only three hours of sleep in a very agitated frame of mind. In addition to the usual sleep problem, for several weeks I had been mulling over in my mind a possible move and change in lifestyle that would bring me closer both physically and spiritually to the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Atlanta. Its members had, over the past year, become very important to and supportive of me. I was single and retired, and there was nothing to keep me from going anywhere and doing anything I chose to do. Nothing, that is, except the fact that I had, just two years earlier, finished building on five quiet, beautiful mountain acres the retirement home I had dreamed of all my adult life. Yet, I was considering selling out and moving to a crowded, pulsating metropolitan area which only recently was identified in a national survey as having the greatest per capita consumption of aspirin of any city in America. It wasn't an easy decision, and it weighed heavily on me.

All of this was, no doubt, being processed in my cranial computer as I climbed out of bed, donned a robe, and padded into the living room. It was as if something was pulling me. I went straight to the altar, lit a candle and incense, and sat down to have a talk with Baba. I reminded him of my physical discomfort and the mental upset that resulted from continued indecision about my future, and asked how I might best serve him. I indicated a lifelong interest in writing, and asked how I might turn this ability into a useful tool for his work. Hardly had the words escaped my lips when I realized

I was putting limits on my offer of service. I was imposing my will on him. I quickly retracted my words and asked guidance on how I could be of service in any method or manner whatever. I closed my eyes and sat waiting.

In less time than it takes to tell, a virtual whirlwind of ideas blew through my mind: subject matter for several articles and books, concepts that could be approached from both the religious and secular viewpoints suitable for publication in a variety of editorial markets, even the outline of a proposal for a series of radio commentaries. Mixed in with all that was a suggestion for a unique form of personal journal entry to help me with the necessary decision-making, plus two very practical ideas to ease my physical discomfort both in bed and during the day.

For the next hour or two I typed furiously, trying to commit the thoughts to paper before they were buried in the avalanche of ideas that continued to pour over me. One central theme ran through every one of the suggestions: Constant change is to be expected in the world of relative truths and human experience. To insist that things remain as they have been in the past is to deny the future. Whether the topic under consideration is a sleep pattern, diet, vocational opportunities, the aging process, or interpersonal relationships, we can postpone the inevitable only at great personal cost and inconvenience. To progress on any worthwhile path, we must be willing to renounce what is no longer practical or useful and adopt what is. In the popular idiom: "Go with the flow."

When I finally switched off the light around 5:00 a.m., my desk was covered with one-page book and article outlines and index cards with anywhere from a few words to a paragraph or two containing the germs of still more potential literary projects. I went back to bed and fell asleep immediately, secure in the thought that Baba had once more heard my call for help and responded generously.

As I recount this for the possible benefit of others who find themselves caught up in the turmoil of changing goals and values, I begin to understand what Baba meant that February morning when my friends and I sat at his lotus feet in the interview room at Prasanthi Nilayam. When he turned his attention to me, he said, among other things, "You worry too much. Don't worry. You have my blessing." In the months that have passed since I left Puttaparthi, his blessings to me have taken many forms. This most recent indication of Baba's loving attention leaves me with but one burning question: How do you say "God bless you!" to God?

—Jay Jarrett
Lakemont, Georgia

THE IDEAL FOR WOMEN

People refer to various duties, rights, and obligations, but these are not the basic *sathyadharma* (true duties); they are only means and methods of regulating the complications of living. They are not fundamental. All these moral codes and approved behavior are prompted by the need to cater to two types of creatures and two types of natures—masculine and feminine.

They connote *prakrithi* and *paramatma*, gross and subtle, inert and conscious, the all-pervading duet. All this creation came about by the interrelation of the inert and the conscious, did it not? So, too, all the various mores have emerged on account of this bifurcation. All of the ramifications and elaborations of *dharma* (righteousness, duties) are due to this: the masculine and the feminine.

Therefore, the chief *dharma* for the practical progress of the world is the moral conduct and behavior of men and women; whatever any great teacher might teach, it cannot go beyond these two distinct natures.

The *purusha dharma* (individual duties) for the male and *stridharma* (individual duties) for the female are important applications of the *sathyadharma* mentioned above. Other codes and disciplines are but accessories—tributaries—like the streams that meet the Godavari River when it is coursing forward. They are related to the various circumstances, situations, and statuses that are temporary; you have to pay attention to the main river and not the tributaries. Similarly, take the major masculine and feminine *dharma* as the chief guides of living, and do not give the minor accessory *dharma*s any decisive place in the scheme of living.

Stridharma, the feminine principle, is spoken of as the illusion imposed upon Himself by the Lord, as the energy with which He equipped Himself out of His own will. This is the *maya* (illusion), the feminine form. This is the reason why woman is considered as *Parasakthi swarupa* (the form of the goddess of energy). She is the faithful companion of man, his fortune; since she is the individual manifestation of the will of the Lord, she is mystery, wonder, the representative of the protective principle, the queen of his home, his beneficence, the illumination of the house. Women, who are the repositories of the *Sakthi swarupa* (embodiment of feminine energy), are in no way inferior; how full of fortitude, patience, and *prema* (love) is their nature. Their self-control is seldom equaled by men. They are the exemplars and leaders for men in treading the spiritual path.

Pure, selfless love is inborn in women. Women who are full of knowledge, who are cultured, who are bound by love, and who are keen on determining whether their words and deeds are in conformity with *dharma*—such women are like the goddess Lakshmi, bringing joy and good fortune to the home. That home, where the husband and the wife are bound together by holy love, where every day both are engaged in reading books that feed the soul, where the name of the Lord is sung and His glory remembered, that home is really the home of the Lord, *Vaikuntha*. The woman who is attached to her husband by means of love is indeed a flower radiating rare perfume; she is a precious gem, shedding luster in the family; a wife endowed with virtue is really a brilliant jewel.

Chastity is the ideal for womankind. By the strength derived from that virtue, they can achieve anything. Savithri was able, through that power, to win back the life of her husband; she actually fought with the lord of death. Anasuya, the wife of the sage Athri and the mother of Dattatreya, was able to transform even the Trinity into infants. Nalayani, who was devoted to her leper husband, could, by the mysterious force of her chastity, stop the sun in its course. Chastity is the crown jewel of women. That is the virtue for which she is to be most extolled. Its beneficent consequences defy description. It is the very breath of her life. By means of her chastity and the power it grants, she can save her husband from calamity. She saves herself by her virtue and wins, without doubt, even heaven through her chastity. Damayanthi burnt to ashes a hunter who attempted to molest her, by the power of her words. She bore all the travails of a lonely life in the jungle when her husband, King Nala, deserted her and she suddenly became the victim of cruel fate.

Modesty is essential for woman; it is her priceless jewel. It is against *dharma* (righteousness) for a woman to overstep the limits of modesty. Crossing the limits brings about many calamities. Why, the very glory of womanhood can be destroyed. Without modesty, woman is devoid of beauty and culture. Humility, purity of thought, manners, meekness, surrender to high ideals, sensitivity, and sweetness of temper—the peculiar of all these qualities is modesty. It is the most invaluable of all jewels for women.

The modest woman will ever keep within limits through her innate sense of propriety. She becomes automatically aware of which behavior is proper and which is improper. She will stick only to virtuous deeds and behavior. Modesty is the test of a woman's grandeur. If a woman has no modesty, she is injuring the interests of womanhood itself, besides undermining her own personality. She is like a scentless flower which the world does not cherish or honor or even approve. The absence of modesty makes life for a woman, however rich in other accomplishments, a waste and a vacuum. Modesty



lifts her to the heights of sublime holiness. The modest woman wields authority in the home and outside, in the community, as well as in the world.

Some might interrupt and ask: "But women who have swallowed all the compunctions of modesty are being honored today. They strut about with heads erect and the world honors them not a whit less." I have no need to acquaint myself with these activities of the present-day world. I do not concern myself with them. They may be receiving honors and respect of a sort, but the respect is not authorized or deserved. When honor is offered to the undeserving, it is tantamount to insult; to accept it when offered is to demean the very gift. It is not honor, but flattery that is cast on the immodest by the selfish and the greedy. It is like spittle, dirty and unpleasant.

Of course, the modest woman will not crave for honor or praise. Her attention will always be on the limits which she should not transgress. Honor and praise come to her unasked and unnoticed. The honey in the flower of the lotus does not crave for bees; it does not plead with the bees to come. Since they have tasted the sweetness, they themselves search for the flowers and rush in. They come because of the attachment between themselves and sweetness. So, too, is the relationship between a woman who knows the limits and the respect she evokes.

If a frog sits on a lotus and proclaims that fact to the world, does it mean that it knows the value or the beauty or the sweetness of that flower? Has it tasted any of these? It may flatter the lotus, but has it recognized what it contains? The honor and respect given to woman today is of this type, and it is rendered by people who do not know what to appreciate and how. They do not know the standards of judgment. They have no faith in the ultimate values; they do not respect the really good and great. How can we call that which they offer "honor" or "respect"? It can only be called, at best, "etiquette," that is all.

The principles of *Atmadharma* (divine righteousness) will not allow the term "woman" to be applied to "a woman without modesty." If respect and honor are heaped upon a person who does not follow *Atmadharma*, it is like heaping decorations on a body that has no life in it. The soul that has left the body cannot enjoy the respect shown to the corpse. So, too, if a person who is unaware of the reality, who has not experienced the purpose of the *Atma*'s (divinity within) embodiment, is crowned with fame and glory, who derives joy therefrom?

The modest woman will not stoop for such meaningless trash and tinsel; rather, she will seek self-respect, which is much more satisfying. That is the characteristic

which makes her the Lakshmi of the home. That is why the wife is referred to as Grihalakshmi (goddess of prosperity). If the wife has no such mark, the home becomes a seat of ugliness.

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
Dharma Vahini, pp. 22-26



POWER COMPLEX

Man creates and develops in himself an abounding variety of selfish habits and attitudes, and so he causes great discontent for himself. The impulse for all this comes from the power complex—the greed for accumulating authority, domination, and power—the greed for things which can never be eternal and full. In fact, it is impossible for many to attain them up to the level of satiation. Omnipotence belongs only to *Sarveswara*, the Lord of all. A person might feel elated that he has become the master of all arts, or owner of all wealth, or possessor of all knowledge, or repository of all the *Sastras* (holy Scriptures), but from whom did he acquire all these? That one must indeed be greater. He might even claim that he earned all this through his own efforts, his labor, and his toil. But surely someone gave it to him, in some form or other. This he cannot gainsay. The source from which all authority and all power originates is *Sarveswara*. Ignoring that omnipotence, deluding oneself that the little power one has acquired is one's own, is indeed selfishness, conceit, pride, and ego (*ahamkara*).

If a person is a genuine vehicle of power, he can be recognized by the characteristics of truth, kindness, love, patience, forbearance, and gratefulness. Wherever these reside, *ahamkara* cannot subsist; it has no place. Seek, therefore, to develop these.

God Is Nearer Than All Else

The effulgence of the *Atma* (indwelling divinity) is obscured by *ahamkara*. Therefore, when *ahamkara* is destroyed, all troubles end, all discontents vanish, and bliss is attained. As the sun is obscured by mist, the feeling of *ahamkara* hides eternal bliss. Even if the eyes are open, a piece of cloth or cardboard can prevent vision from functioning effectively and usefully. So, too, the screen of selfishness prevents man from seeing God, who is, in fact, nearer to him than anything else. Many an aspirant and recluse, many a *sadhaka*, has allowed all excellences won by long years of struggle and sacrifice to slip away through this attachment to the self. For power without the bliss of God-realization is a wall without a foundation. Mere scholarship is of no use at all; the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Sastras* are doctrines for living out in daily practice; without this practice, whatever the wealth of words, whatever the standard of scholarship, it is all a colossal waste. To bring the teachings of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Sastras* into one's actual life, one has to scotch the feeling of "I know," open one's eyes to the real Essence, and introspect on it. Then, one can attain bliss without fail.

—**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
Prema Vahini, pp. 16-17

CHILDREN'S CORNER:

Hide-and-Seek

How would you like to play hide-and-seek?
The best Playmate of all, I know where to find.
If it takes time to find him,
This Playmate won't mind.

My Playmate will give you
Every kind of a clue.
How difficult you make the game
Is entirely up to you.

You can look in the city,
Look out in the field,
You can look under rocks.
Anywhere that you look, the secret will yield.

This Playmate's the best,
Never tired or bored.
So look everywhere,
When you look for the Lord.

What a wondrous game,
But He has to be found.
Go on, look where you like,
Above or below ground.

Look here, and you'll see
What you think is a sight.
Then, no, it is there;
You can catch a glimpse of the light.

You can look, and you can look,
As long as you like,
Get frustrated and angry,
But the game is never from spite.

It's always from love,
And it's always in fun.
Though sometimes you'll think
You'll die 'fore it's done.

I know 'cause I've looked,
Everywhere I could think,
Inside and out,
Always felt on the brink.

But, as quick as it came,
Then, flash, it was gone,
Leaving me feeling
So awfully alone.

Well, my Playmate felt sorry
For so luckless a chum.
Often I've asked for grace;
Finally, He granted some.

Look, here's where I'm standing,
I'll hide in plain sight,
He said with a chuckle,
Step into the light.

It's oh so easy,
But you've made it so hard.
It's a game that we're playing
Called, "Let's find the Lord."

Everywhere you've looked,
You've found me, it's true.
But you're getting tired,
So here's what I'll do.

I'll hide in a way
Even you understand.
I'll come as Sai Baba;
I'll lend you a hand.

So here I am: Sai,
So here I am: Baba.
Think of me only
As Mother and Father.

Sai Baba, Sai Baba . . .
I'm here in plain sight,
To show you divinity,
To cure darkness with light.

Oh, I know what you're thinking:
It can't be this easy.
But trust me on this one.
Just do it to please me.

Now, the game isn't over
'Cause I'm standing here.
You still must find me,
Somewhere nearer than ne

I'll give one more hint
To make it more clear.
Where you have to look now,
Is no place to fear.



Where now you must find me
Is deep in the heart—
Not your heart alone,
Though that's a good place to start.

Sai Baba, Sai Baba,
Just call out my name.
I'll come and I'll guide you
To winning this game.

We can all win together,
And together we'll see
What you've found in your heart means
We're all really me.

—Dr. Robert T. Brook
Tucson, Arizona



“CEILING ON DESIRES” PROGRAM

During our recent visit to India in January, Baba not only gave his approval of the “Ceiling on Desires” booklet, *Suggestions for Study Groups and Individual Use of the Ceiling on Desires Program*, but inscribed the front page with his love and blessings and signature.

We stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam until Baba went to Whitefield, when we followed. During the time we were there, we were invited into his house each evening to listen to his discourses and hear talks by visiting professors and *bhajans* (holy songs) sung by the students.

On one such evening Baba spoke about money, and on a subsequent evening about food. Both were addressed primarily to the college boys but, of course, also apply to all devotees. He started by saying that both money and food in themselves are pure by nature. They simply exist.

It is only when we attach too much importance to either of them (money or food) and allow them to control us through our desires that they become harmful, for we supply them with their purpose. Everything is essentially energy, so what is important is how we use it. Like the old custom of barter, we need to determine what we will receive in exchange and how we utilize the energy we receive, whether it be food to nourish our bodies or things we buy to use in our daily lives.

In the first talk, Baba stated unequivocally that money, when correctly used, is both necessary and useful. It is only when it becomes the main motive for our actions, or is desired as a status symbol to enhance our ego or to control others, that it takes on negativity. It then gains control over a person rather than the person being in control of money and using it wisely. Baba urged the college boys to concentrate on the service they would be rendering in the world and not on the salary they would be earning. In that way, their attitude toward money would be such that they would develop no attachment to it, or craving for it, and would remain free from slavery to it and what it could buy. He again insisted that money itself is not negative. It is the effect it has on people when they become attached to it that is so often harmful.

With one of his delightful smiles, he announced that “Money is not the source of all you need or desire.” Then, pointing to himself, he continued, “God is the only source, so trust Him.” Then he added, “Use money to render service and do your duty. Then it will be used properly and not wasted.”

In the talk on food, Baba outlined again the various types of food—*sathwic* (pure, soothing), *thamasic* (causes laziness), and *rajasic* (causes too much excitement).

Then he delivered a real surprise by stating that even *sathwic* food can become *thamasic* or *rajasic* if a person hankers after it, "hanker" being the word used by the English translator.

He scolded the boys for grabbing at food at odd times during the day and craving it, which leads directly to attachment. As he said this, he went through the appropriate motions to mimic their behavior in his usual charming way and, by doing so, partially removed the sting from his scolding, revealing his love for them despite their actions. I could just see a few of the boys' faces from where I sat and was amused at their obvious discomfort as the warnings found their mark and they looked shamefaced and shifted in embarrassment.

But we are all alike, so the same message applies to each of us. It is up to us to look at ourselves as he encouraged the college boys to do, to detect habits of which they had been unconscious. Are we attached to money or food for our security and enjoyment instead of to God, Who is the source of all that we need? We also have to remember that it is not the money or food as such, but the compulsive need for them that allows them to dominate us. So the answer is not in rejecting them, but in using discrimination in making sure they are being used in the most positive ways possible.

The wonderful discovery is that, if we ask Baba to help us to follow his suggestions, he is always available to do so.

—Phyllis Krystal
Pacific Palisades, California



The clouds appear to be stuck to the sky; so, too, maya gives us an untrue picture of Brahman (the Eternal Absolute). It makes us believe that the world is real. Its impact warps our reasoning process, our sensory impressions, and our views of God, of creation, and of man. It spreads before us a diversity which tantalizes and deceives.

Maya, the untrue picture, will end! When will it end? When the objective world is ignored or set aside or denied or discovered to be emanant from the Divine, then the jiva (individual) is no more.

—Baba

AVIDYA/MAYA

The translation of a word of one language into a word of another language is fraught with danger. This is due to the fact that, though there may be a high degree of conformity, the two words have different connotations which cannot be preserved in translation. Thus, on the one hand, one is led to believe that the translation has succeeded, while, on the other, varying degrees of difference have crept in. For literary purposes, this discrepancy may not be of great harm. But in philosophy, where accuracy of expression is essential, the utmost care must be taken to prevent this alteration. A loose rendering of a philosophical term may create a serious misconception. Unnecessary and unwarranted doctrinal, as well as critical, renderings thus make their appearance, much to the detriment of the doctrine.

Of all the Indian philosophical systems, *Advaita Vedanta* has been given pre-eminence. Any system of philosophy can be correctly understood and appreciated only if it is viewed from the right perspective. Each system makes use of one or more key concepts. The key concept in *Advaita* is *avidya/maya*. In this context, *avidya* (ignorance) is the same as *maya* (principle of appearance).

So important is this concept within *Advaita* that it has been characterized as the system's cornerstone. Critics of *Advaita* portrayed *Advaita* as *mayavada* (the doctrine of illusion). Doing this, the critics have mistaken the means (*avidya*) for the end (*Brahman*), as well as misunderstood the very concept itself. *Advaita* is *Brahmavada* (the doctrine of reality) and the principle of *avidya/maya* is but the means utilized by the *Advaitin* for explaining how the nondual *Brahman* appears as many.

The common practice among translators of the West has been to translate *maya* as "illusion." This conveys the idea of an apparition, a phantom, a false appearance. However, *Advaita* holds that anything that is perceived is real. It accords reality to objects of erroneous perception, to dream objects, as well as to objects of normal perception. The question is: How real are these objects, and do they have the same measure of reality as *Brahman*, the Absolute Reality?

Advaita admits of three levels of reality, that which is apparently real, that which is empirically real, and that which is absolutely real. The unreal is that which is never experienced by any person at any time, i.e., a square circle. But rope snakes or dream lions are objects of experience, though their reality is very much restricted. They are real to the person concerned at the time they are experienced. An illusion ceases to be when it is recognized as an illusion, or a dream ceases when a person wakes up.

But the case is a little different regarding objects of normal waking experience. Their reality is not restricted to a person or a time. Dream lions and rope snakes are objects of private experience, while tables and trees are public in the sense that they are



perceived by more than one person simultaneously. Further, they exist for a longer time. The empirical world is real as long as the empirical order lasts. However, both the apparently real and the empirically real eventually suffer sublation and, thus, are called *maya* or *mithya* (neither real nor unreal). They are not real because they suffer sublation—but they are not unreal because they are perceived. Thus, they are unique, indescribable, bewildering products of *avidya/maya*.

The point to be made is that the English word “illusion” as a translation for *maya* does not adequately describe the concept as it is employed in the philosophy of *Advaita*.

—John Grimes
Madras, India

To Baba:

Each dawn my heart advances apologies to Thee
For each night my soul knows where I failed,
Although You were watching me.

—Hanna Hamilton
Desert Hot Springs, California

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EHV on the Move

The Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Foundation will present a Sathya Sai EHV teacher-training workshop that will be co-sponsored by private schools in Del Ray Beach, Florida, and Miami, Florida on August 25-26.

Sai devotees who are qualified teachers may attend these workshops. Please write to the Sathya Sai EHV Foundation, 3070 Roycove, Covina, California 91724.

—**Dr. Michael Goldstein**, Chairman
Sathya Sai EHV Foundation

Entering Sleep

Enter the Sleep State on Wings of Prayer. Baba advises: "And when you enter the portals of sleep at night, pray, 'O Lord, the tasks of this day, the burden of which I placed on You this morning, are over. It was You who made me walk, and talk, and think, and act. I therefore place at Your Feet all my thoughts, words, and deeds. My task is done; receive me; I am coming back to You.'"

The Organization

You should know that Baba said something that is of extreme importance to each of us. He said, "Developing the Organization is a great *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). . . . It is the home for ideals and the delight derived while realizing them."

Each of us may keep in mind that our work in the Sai Organization is a great *sadhana*, called so by Baba himself. Regardless of inevitable human error in our Regions and in our Centers, let us continue to devote maximum energy to our assignments in Baba's Organization.

—*Selections from Council Bulletins by*
Dr. Jack Hislop, President
Sathya Sai Baba Council of America



Do not fret against rules and regulations which the Organization imposes on you; they are laid down for your own good. Regulation is of the very essence of creation. The oceans observe their limits; winds and fire respect limits and bounds.

—Baba

SAI RETREATS

Date and Region	Cost	Theme
Memorial Day weekend: May 22-25 • • • Southern California/ Hawaii Region	Adults in cabins: \$49.95 Adults in tents & RV's: \$34.95 Children under 15: Half-price Children under 3: Free	"Fill the World with Love"
Memorial Day weekend: May 22-25 • • • Central Region	Adults 18 and over: \$54.00 Teens 12-18: \$47.50 Children 3-11: \$37.50 Children under 3: Free	"Tenth Central Region Sai Conference"
June 28 - July 3 5 Days • • • Northwest Region	Adults, dormitory: \$120.00 Children, dormitory: \$45.00 Five nights, 14 meals	"Five-Day Northwestern Region Conference"
Labor Day weekend: September 4-7 • • • Southwest Region	Full session: \$60.00 One day with meals: \$17.00	"Land of Enchantment" —Silent Retreat
September 11-13 • • • Northwest Region	Cost not established	"Back to basics, intense devotion to our Lord, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Enlightenment through His Love."
September 11-13 • • • Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions	Cost not established	"Annual Joint Retreat of Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions"

FOR 1987

Location	Information and Reservations
Camp Colby, in the Angeles Forest, near Los Angeles, California	Surendra Patel 18212 Leaf Circle Huntington Beach, California 92648 (714) 847-0043
Camp Wyman, Eureka, near St. Louis, Missouri	Atul Rajpara 8116 Laclede Station Road St. Louis, Missouri 63123 (314) 842-1828
Evergreen State College at Olympia, Washington , near Seattle	Gayle Alden Star Route, Box 4 Addy, Washington 99101 (509) 935-6353
Jemez Bodhi, Mandala, Jemez Springs, located between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico	Barbara Verde P.O. Box 2903 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504 (505) 983-7029
Camp La Honda, in the Santa Cruz Mountains, between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, California	Tim Dolan 596 Highland Avenue Penngrove, California 94951 (707) 795-7861
Lincolnfarm Camp, Roscoe, New York , near New York City	Hugh and Judy Brecher 396 Paul Court West Hempstead, New York 11552 (516) 483-7385

MAYAA AND MAYA

The fundamental ignorance called *maya* plays many tricks on you. It makes you believe the rope to be a snake, and you shiver and run away. It makes you imagine a lake of water where there are only the hot sands of the desert, and you run toward it with your dry tongue, hoping to allay your thirst. You call it *mayaa* (through me, for me), identifying yourselves with it as if it were real and beneficial. The moment you realize it is *maya* (unreal), it ceases to bother you.

The dog will stop barking at its own reflection in the stream when it knows that it is not another dog, but is only itself. All are reflections, and so whom are we to hate and whom are we to prefer? What is the attitude of the wise? Give up attachments; give up entanglements. *Thyaga* (renunciation) alone can grant freedom, say the *Vedas*. Renounce the idea of your being separate; see in all beings yourself, and yourself in all beings. That is the highest renunciation, the renunciation of the sense of ego which makes you cling to this temporary habitation, this bundle of bone and flesh, this shell with a name and form. Spiritual exercise consists of two things: contemplation of God and discovery of one's own innate nature or reality.

The genuineness of fire is "to burn"; of water, "to wet"; of stone, "to be heavy." The genuineness of man consists in the yearning "to know." This attribute came into man from the moment he put on this body and appeared on the stage to play the present role, enjoying and suffering as a result of that belief. Just as you get cured of the bite you get from a snake in your dream as soon as you wake up, so, too, when you awake from *maya* and become yourself, fear and grief will disappear. When an actor weeps or laughs on the stage, he watches his own weeping or laughing and tries to make it more realistic and effective. So, too, be the witness of your activities and thoughts; stand back from them without attachment or disgust.

Science asks the questions: "What?" and "How?" and seeks to get the answers from the objective world of name and form—the world one can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell—the world one can categorize through reason. But the science of Spirit asks the question: "Why?" And it discovers that *maya* is the answer to the question. Ice and steam are but water, though they appear different in every way; diamond is but carbon; jewelry is but gold; pots are but clay. Look into the truth and you see the One behind the manifold. *Brahman* alone is the One; all else is the superimposition of name and form upon its *sat-chit-ananda* (being-awareness-bliss) essence.

If you fill the consciousness with the thought of the One, it will get saturated in *ananda* (bliss). If you fill it with the ideas of the many, it will get befouled by hate and partiality, prejudice, and envy. The world is the creation of your mind; if you go into a deep sleep, it is negated. That is why sleep is said to be a form of *samadhi* (when the *dhee* or intellect becomes *sama* or balanced—merged in equanimity). Arjuna said, "Lord, Your

maya is difficult to overcome." *Maya* is His *leela*, His sport. So take refuge in Him. He and He alone can save you from the machinations of His creation.

You need not run away to a cave in the Himalayas for this *sadhana*; you can be where you are, carrying out whatever duties life has cast on you. Only feel in your heart that He is the doer; He is the enjoyer; He is the power behind the eye. The *Atma* (the divine) is the cell in this flashlight, wherein the eye is the bulb; the intellect, the switch.

When you go to a petty officer with very little authority, you bend your head low and kowtow in fear, or approach him in awe and reverence, afraid that he will reprimand you for your failings and defects. When you approach God, the source of all authority, whose edict runs over the entire universe, how humble, honest, and sincere you should be in reverence, awe, and purity. Remember, God is your guardian when you sleep, when you are helpless—even when you have forgotten or neglected or discarded Him. He has no need for the things you offer or promise to offer. He is ever content, ever blissful, ever full, ever free. Do your duty to yourself. That is enough offering for Him.

If you do not care to spend your time promoting love among men, do not wake up at 4:30 a.m. You can wake up an hour later. That will save others an hour of bother. If you are eager to fill time with good works, rise at 4:00; there is no harm. If you cannot desist from gossiping about others, sleep a little longer. While with groups engaged in *nagarasankirtan* (early morning singing), if you must discuss with your friends or relatives the menu for the day, or the ill treatment that your mothers-in-law are meting out, do not join the *sankirtan* round. Keep away and bless the others who are more eager and sincere. When the *puja* with 108 or 1,008 names is progressing, do not be satisfied when the sound falls on the ear. Try to grasp the meanings, too, so that you can ruminate over the glory that each name connotes.

When you hear that your son and his wife had a baby boy, you feel immensely happy; but if you do not know the meaning of what he says—if it is just a jumble of sound for you—how can you derive the intended joy? Then, share in the *bhajans* (devotional singing), too. That will keep you always in the higher regions of divine ecstasy where you will be cool and calm. The higher you go, the cooler is the atmosphere. The lower you go, the hotter it is. So keep yourself up by means of *dhyana* (meditation) and *japam* (repetition of the name). Learn a lesson from Americans and other foreigners. They have no background in the culture, music, theology, philosophy, or metaphysics of this country. Their faith and steadiness have made them master the culture, the music, and the words. They sing the *bhajans* with the same or even greater gusto and enthusiasm than many of you, in a style that was quite strange and unfamiliar to them a few months or weeks ago.

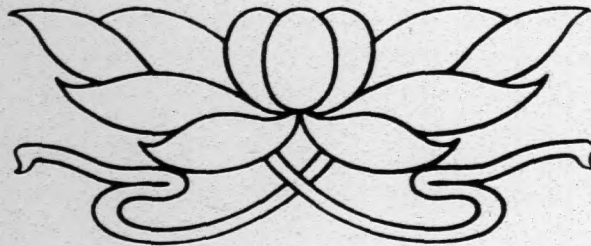
—Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. VII, pp. 298-301

MORE ON MAYA

The redoubtable armies of maya (illusion) are roaming all over this world. The soldiers are passion, lust, greed, etc. Pride, disbelief, and so on, are the commanding officers. But the same maya is the slave of Rama (God). She (Maya) is “unreal”; but, yet, unless you have the grace of Rama, you cannot escape from capture and bondage. The grace flowing from the corner of His eye alone can liberate you from her grip. Maya possesses all movable and immovable things in the universe; no one can be free from her hold. She imitates the earthly glory of the Lord; and, like a skilled actress, she enacts her role with lust and greed, while others are the supporting cast. Rama, however, as the embodiment and the personification of the deep blue that characterizes the sea and the sky, the phenomenon that has no birth, as the Paramatma (Universal Soul), has no trace of maya in Him.

—Baba

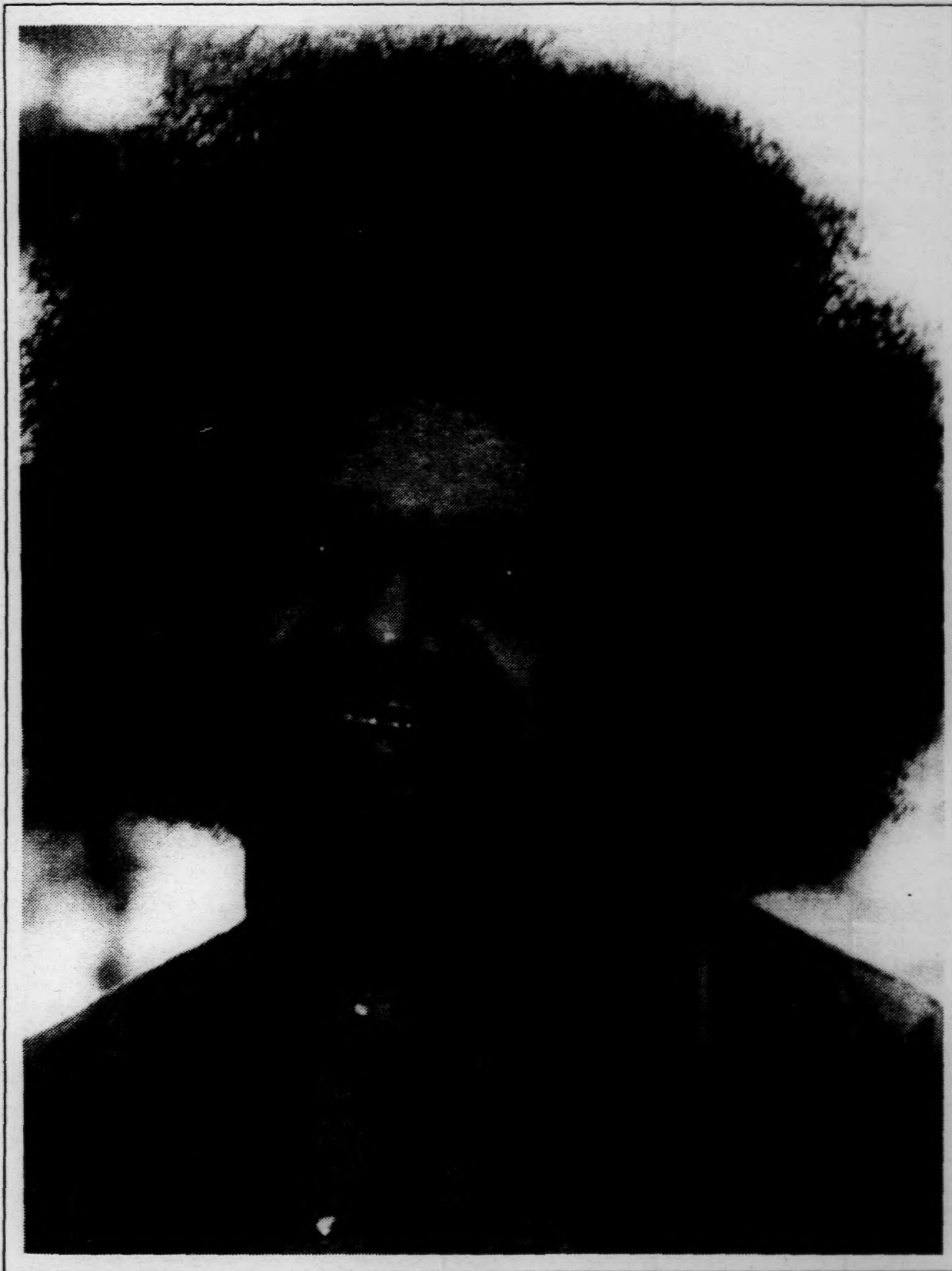
Rama Katha Rasavahini, p. 486



There is One, not two. If one sees a second, then maya is in operation. Maya is harmless to the devotees of God. That same maya, so dangerous to the person who does not believe in God, protects the devotee from all harm. The cat carries the kitten in its mouth—and the kitten is unharmed. But a rat is killed by the cat. It is the same mouth in both cases. Maya brings trouble, yet it is the same maya that tenderly protects the devotee of God. The devotee may do work for God and pay no attention to the powers of maya. God protects His devotees. His devotees are near and dear to God, and He carries them safely through life.

—Baba

from Conversations, by J. Hislop, pp. 60-61



THE TRANSFORMED THOUGHT

God did not make man in His image, nor man make God in his image. God wishes to play hide-and-seek; and since He is not the only One, but the One with no second (*advaita*), He became the many, charged with the urge to seek. God wished for a play, and so He became the playwright, the director, the stagehands, the actors, and the audience. As the *Gita* announces, "He is the grain and the fire, the cook and the meal, the consumer and the digester, the strength and the activity." This wish created the "I-sense," limited the cosmic consciousness into a God whom the fragments seek to rejoin. The multiplicity of fractions into which the "I" sparked off, in which God is revealed as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda* (being, awareness, and bliss) is the *maya* that confronts man. The absolute is the pre-cosmic God; God is the absolute from the cosmic point of view.

What an overwhelming lure is woven by *maya*. *Maya* has hidden the absolute under a lid of gold, the *Vedas* say. It has transformed the absolute into a marvelous relativity. "This is seen as a marvel; this is spoken of as a marvel; this is listened to as a marvel. . . ." proclaims the *Gita*. So we are tempted to approach, admire, and applaud. Einstein, in a delicious jingle, reflects the reaction of all who are involved with *maya*: "A thought that sometimes makes me hazy; am I, or are the others, crazy?"

—N. Kasturi
Prashanti



UNIVERSE

The whole universe
is in my heart, like
a flower petal
that swirls and spins in the wind.

—James R. Todd, Jr.
Novato, California

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