



# SATHYA SAI Newsletter

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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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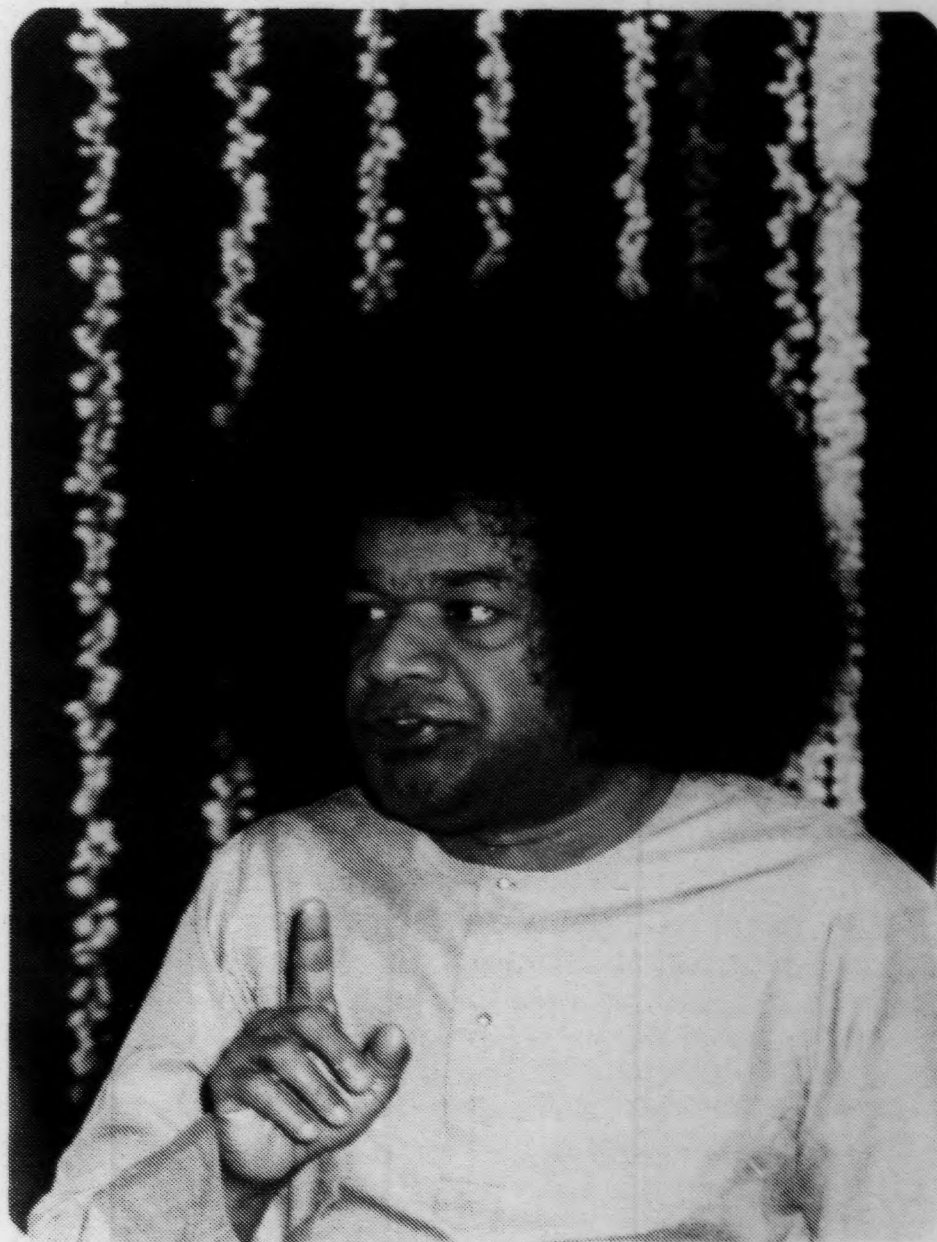
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Photographs, drawings, and literary contributions are always welcomed by the **Sathya Sai Newsletter**. We reserve the right of discrimination in selecting and editing material for publication. Send contributions to: **Sathya Sai Newsletter**, 1800 East Garvey Avenue, West Covina, California 91791.



*Nowadays people laugh at the idea of Namasmarana (repeating the Name of God) and Namasankirtana (singing the Name of God). They say, "What is in a name? It is just an assortment of sounds." My words, too, are an assortment of sounds, but when they enter your hearts, you feel contented, you feel encouraged, is it not? Words have tremendous power; they can arouse emotions and they can calm them. They direct, they infuriate, they reveal... they are potent forces that bring up great reserves of strength and wisdom. Therefore, have faith in the Name and repeat it whenever you get the chance.*



—Baba  
Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume IV, p. 184

## WHY DO WE PRAY?

The concept of prayer is probably as old as humanity itself. We all understand what "prayer" means. Most of us pray regularly—to God, to husband or wife, or to the boss—for one reason or another. The motivation for prayer is always to get something that we think we need. Some people consider praying a sign of weakness, because they have a lot of faith in their own abilities to acquire whatever they need or want.

Let us look at what prayer means. Webster's dictionary defines prayer as "a supplication to God, a religious service, entreaty, petition." Another meaning given is "communication with God." This is a profound thought: The purpose of prayer is to communicate with God.

A question may be raised: Why do we have to communicate with God? The purpose of communication, in the worldly sense, is to exchange ideas, information, etc. Now, if we are to believe that God is everywhere, that He resides in our hearts, that He is the inner motivator, then should He not already know what we want? Why do we have to ask for it?

The best answer to the question "Why do we pray?" was given by Periaval, who said: "The purpose of prayer is not to petition for benefits. Such petitioning implies either that God does not know what we want, which will militate against His omniscience, or that He waits to be asked and delights in praise, which will degrade Him to the level of ordinary man. Why then do we pray? Though omniscient, God is immanent in every creature and knows what is in the heart of every person. Yet, if what we wish to say in prayer remains unsaid, it afflicts our heart, and so prayer heals that affliction. By prayer, we do not seek to change what God ordains; in fact, we cannot do so. We go to Him to remove our impurities. We attach ourselves to Him, who has no attachments, to rid ourselves of our attachments. A devout consciousness that God exists will itself do the miracle of alchemizing us into purity of nature. We obtain spiritual charge into our frame by being in His presence."\*

When we pray sincerely, we find ourselves concentrating on the chosen form of God, trying to visualize Him. We make a heroic effort to control the mind so that it may not stray from the thought of God. We focus our thoughts on what we want from God. During this concentration, contemplation, and invocation of God to come and bless us, we have totally removed ourselves from the turmoil of the external world, and, at the same time, succeeded in controlling the turmoil of the inner world. This brief interlude in our daily life puts us in a peaceful and tranquil frame of mind, which is such a blessing when dealing with the events of the day.

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\*From *We Devotees*, by Indulal Shah



Thus, the purpose of prayer is to go and sit at the Feet of the Lord for a brief moment and bask in the love and grace that He confers. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given us for daily recitation a wonderful prayer:

“O Lord, I am born now from the womb of sleep. I am determined to carry out the task for this day as an offering to Thee, with Thee ever present before my mind’s eye. Make my thoughts, words, and deeds sacred and pure. Let me not inflict pain on anyone. Let no one inflict pain on me. Direct and guide me this day.”\*

When we think about it, our true achievement will come when, instead of a few minutes spent before the altar every morning, we spend every moment as a moment of prayer and worship. If we ever reach the stage when every place becomes an altar, every person becomes a fellow pilgrim, and every act becomes an act of worship, we will reach the state of eternal bliss. That is the goal of man; that is the teaching of every religion.

When we study the prayers of various religions, we find that the common theme in all of them is the realization of a higher principle of Godhead that confers bliss, compassion, mercy, and wisdom. The purpose of prayer, therefore, is to develop the humility and the outlook that takes us to the realization of this essential unity of all religious faiths, and to develop kinship among fellow human beings so that the world can become a place where peace, love, and understanding reign supreme.

This is indeed a noble and worthwhile thought. How do we accomplish it? The answer is given by a student in primary school at Prasanthi Nilayam, who prayed:

“Swami, give us that attitude of mind, that faith by which we can accept whatever You say, and follow it up in thought, word, and deed, because we feel that You have our interest uppermost in Your heart. Give us, Swami, that attitude.”\*

A look at the prayers from the major religions of India and the world confirms the essential unity of thought and the basis of all religions. There are many other topical prayers, such as those recited before partaking of food, during a religious ceremony, etc. The purpose and the effect of all prayers is to purify the atmosphere, counteract evil or impure impulses, and confer benediction on the ones who recite them with a sincere heart. The regular recitation of prayer reaffirms our faith in God, helps to control our ego and pride, and instills humility in our actions. There can be no better way to prepare for the spiritual pilgrimage.

—**Deepak Bhat**  
Troy, Michigan

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\*From *Who Is a Devotee of the Lord?* by Dr. M.V.K. Murthy

## CHANTING THE NAME HAS MULTIPLE BENEFITS

Several years ago, when I came across some articles suggesting that the repetition of the Name of God can work wonders to calm the mind, I quickly learned “by accident” that it has many other benefits as well. The articles stressed that there was a simple process involved that would ensure speedy success: First, select a Name that is dear to your heart or has special meaning. Second, visualize the corresponding Form, if there is one, e.g., if you are saying Lord Krishna’s Name, then picture His charming image in your mind. Third, maintain the same Image and Name rather than restlessly changing the Name and Form or substituting differing aspects of the Form. In other words, see the full body or the face instead of switching. Last, do it with gusto in times of special joy or special stress.

My selection for a sacred Name of God was one of Sai Baba’s Names, and I set about saying it off and on throughout the day. Some days went better than others, naturally, in the new practice. To my great surprise, several astonishing things happened:

As I was taking a walk and approached five barking dogs while repeating the Name, they all stopped barking at once!

One day while I was observing an argument between two friends, I silently chanted the Name and they both stopped, puzzled, mumbled around a bit, and changed the subject.

The *So-hum* breath can warm up the body on a cold day or cool it off.

*Namasmarana*, as the repetition is called, can also eradicate anger quickly.

In anxious moments, the emotions and mind will smooth out with this centering process.

A final welcome surprise was the joy and grace that saying the Name of God provided to me a few years ago before major surgery. To say that I was nervous is an understatement. Let’s call it terrified. But after a week of *Namasmarana*, I checked into the hospital in a light, joyful mood, thanks to Baba’s help, and talked the surgical team into letting me play *bhajans* (devotional songs) with earphones during the surgery. I was awake throughout the operation upon request. At one point, the anesthetist had to stop the surgery, lift off the earphones, and politely ask me to “please stop singing those Indian songs so loudly,” because the surgical team couldn’t hear themselves discuss the procedures! Apparently, the local anesthetic made me feel as happy as



*Namasmarana* had. In any event, I'm past my great fear of hospitals and even do service in one these days.

A recent anecdote about *Namasmarana* concerns my husband. After noting the positive results that took place after my own practice began, he decided to contemplate the selection of his own Name (for God). What on earth should it be? Om Sai Ram? Rama? Lord Sathya Sai? There are dozens of choices at the very least; it was a mystery. Then one day his Name came to him suddenly like a bolt from the ethers—but that's not all. It came with music. There were five syllables and each syllable had a different tone, so that the whole thing made a lovely little melody. Such a bonus was unexpected, but gratefully received.

Of course, we all remember the valiant attitude of Mrs. Michael Goldstein who firmly repeated "Om Sai Ram" to fend off hijackers during her family's nightmarish ordeal. Is there nothing that our beloved Lord can't achieve through His willing instruments if we stay fixed in His Name and Form, devoted to the One within all?

—**Connie Shaw**  
Littleton, Colorado



*In this Kali Yuga, Namasmarana (repeating the Name) has great importance and significance. To recite the holy Name constantly is a sign of good fortune. Namasmarana should be done all the time and in all places—in houses, streets, countryside, towns, and cities—and thus the atmosphere of the whole world will become purified. Just as water, when heated, turns into vapor, which, in turn, forms into clouds and falls as rain, which again helps in growing crops yielding grain or food, through which man gets sustenance, on account of which he gets good thoughts, so too, by constantly repeating God's Name, the atmosphere becomes purified, and this is followed by good thoughts, good conduct, and satsang or the keeping of holy company, due to all of which a sadhaka (aspirant) makes spiritual progress.*

—**Baba**  
Sai Sathya Vani, April 1968

# **DIVINE WORDS**

## **On the Relationship Between God And the Individual**

You are My treasure, even if you deny Me. I am your treasure, even if you say "No." I shall be affectionate to you and attach Myself to you. I shall take all trouble to keep My property safe in My custody—that is to say, in the custody of the Lord, by whichever Name you may be calling on Him. All the powers that I have are for you. I am just the storekeeper, keeping it ready to be given to you whenever you ask. My love shall be given even if you do not ask, for it is your right to share in it. Some complain that I do not give them this or that, but they do so because their vision is limited to the immediate future or the present, whereas I know what is in store and so I have to safeguard them from greater grief. They even blame Me and heap abuses, but I will not give them up. I am not influenced by anybody. Remember, there is no one who can change My course or affect My conduct to the slightest extent. I am the Master over all.

But let Me tell you one thing. I speak harshly and punish some persons because I have love toward them, and I am eager to correct them and make them better instruments. If they were not Mine, I would have given them up and not cared to take notice of their lapses. I have a right to chastise those whom I feel are Mine. I also know that they will still value My word and that they will feel sad at My being displeased with them. It is due to your wayward mind that I sometimes act as if I keep you at a distance. That is done to reform you more quickly. When a stretch of road is being repaired, we take a detour, and we do not use that bit of road for some time. The purpose is to let the repair work proceed more quickly so that we may use the road again.

I have come to set the world right. So I have to collect those who are ill, treat them in my "hospital," and restore them to sanity, strength, and wisdom and then send them back to their stations in life. I must intensify your devotion, reinforce your faith, and rebuild the foundations of your moral nature so that you can counter temptations with greater confidence. I have come across people who recite a prayer and believe that they are bringing the world nearer to peace with every occasion on which they pray. But peace can only be won the hard way, by eliminating violence and greed from the hearts of individuals.

**—Baba**  
Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume I, p. 183



## BABA'S PROTECTION

On Thursday, October 1, 1987, we had an earthquake in California, and Baba used the occasion to show me how He is always protecting us.

I work from 3:30 p.m. until midnight. When I came home the night before the earthquake, the weather was unusually hot—hotter, in fact, than it had been during the day. Instead of sleeping in my bed, I placed a large pillow on the living room floor, thinking it would be cooler to sleep there. I never sleep there, so that was unusual.

At 7:45 in the morning, violent shaking started. I opened my eyes and saw Baba's picture on the wall. My first thought was, "This is an earthquake." My second thought was, "What am I doing on the couch?" I was lying on the couch instead of the floor where I had fallen asleep. This was also unusual, because I cannot recall a time when I fell asleep in one place and awakened in another place without remembering getting up and moving. All this occurred to me in a split second.

Upon sitting up, I saw what had happened. The bookcase had fallen over. The top two shelves covered the spot where I had fallen asleep the night before. Only the edge of the big pillow was sticking out from underneath the bookcase. It is a heavy, wooden piece of furniture, seven feet high and four feet wide, with several shelves. There were no books on it, only framed pictures of Baba, none of which had broken.

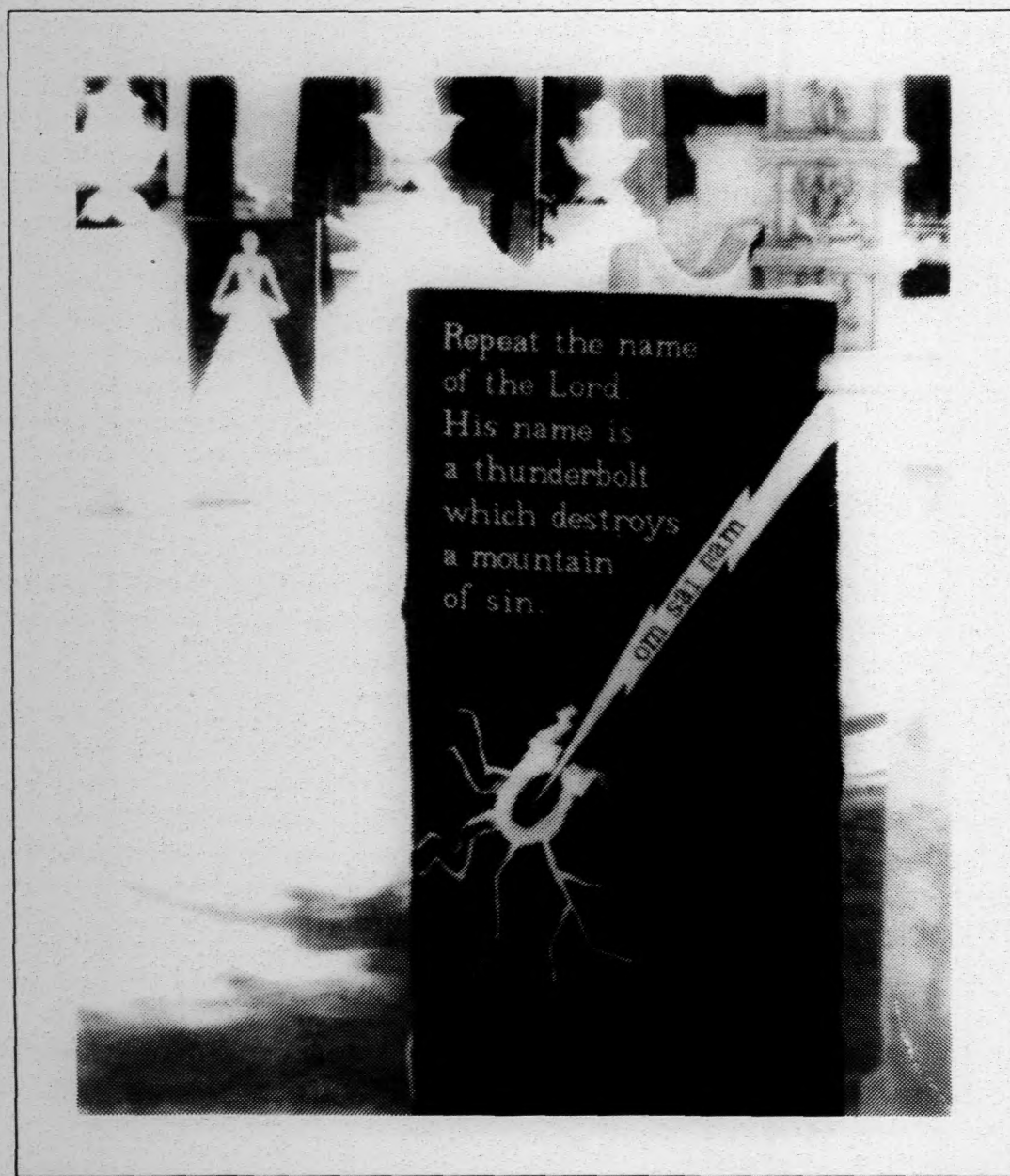
Had I still been asleep on the floor, the bookcase could have crushed me from the waist up, or maybe the edge of the shelf would have hit my head and caused a severe injury. Thus, I could have been seriously hurt, if not killed. Upon further speculation, perhaps I would have been unable to get out from under the bookcase. The phone wasn't working to call for help, and the people in the nearby apartments had already left for work. Furthermore, I live on the second floor and my door was locked, so how could a neighbor get in to help me? This certainly would have been a terrible situation.

However, Baba had moved me to the couch before the earthquake. How wonderful! I was sleeping safely just two feet away from where the bookcase fell. The more I think about it, the more I appreciate how Baba saved me. Even though there was more shaking going on, I went to my bedroom and sat in front of my shrine, repeating "Om Sai Ram" and thanking Baba for what He had done.

Not only did Baba protect me, but He made a point of showing me that He *is* protecting me. If I had merely gone to sleep in my bedroom as usual, nothing would have happened, since there is nothing that could have fallen on me in that room. So Baba pulled the strings and set me up for an astounding example of His love and omnipresence.

After this experience, even though there were more aftershocks and another earthquake on Sunday morning, I wasn't afraid. Since I have personally experienced Baba's protection in such a dramatic way, I have a deeper understanding of Baba's words, "Why fear when I am here?"

—**Joe Passaretti**  
*Pasadena, California*





## SAI RAM

Just as *Aloha* is used to mean both “hello” and “goodbye,” so it is that devotees of Sathya Sai Baba greet one another and part with the words “Sai Ram.” Why is this so, and what does it mean?

To understand, we must know what Sathya Sai Baba has said about *Namasmarana*, the repetition of the Name of the Lord—any Name you choose which appeals to you. In any free moment, He says, repeat the Name silently in the mind, to the rhythm of work or walking, with a *japamala* (necklace of 108 beads), in the form of *bhajan* (devotional songs)—whatever appeals. It is purifying and uplifting to the body, mind, and spirit. It is a superb method of developing a feeling of closeness to God. So, says Baba, why use words like “hello” and “goodbye” when we could take the opportunity to use the Lord’s Name? This would remind us of Him and purify the people who are meeting.

“Sai” means Divine Mother (Baba means Father), and “Ram” means many things, the essence of which, in all meanings, is God.

Devotees all over the world use this phrase because, to them, Lord Sai is the most appealing Form of God. It is He whom we, as His devotees, wish to remember, He who is in the hearts of the friends meeting or parting with the words “Sai Ram.”

—A Devotee  
Honolulu, Hawaii

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*It is not for publicity or propaganda or for getting a name for ourselves or our institution that we do Namasmarana. It is for our own purification, improvement, and progress that we have to repeat the Name of God.*

—Baba  
Sai Sathya Vani, February 1968

*The person devoted to God knows no failure. The Name of the Lord, if taken sincerely, overcomes all obstacles. It is saturated with sweetness; it has no iota of bitterness or defeat in it. When the Savior is by your side, why doubt whether you will be saved?*

—Baba  
Sanathana Sarathi, November 1973

## WHEN TWO OR MORE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME

I have recently returned from conducting several weekend seminars on the *Cutting the Ties That Bind* work in England and one in Switzerland. Some of the devotees to whom I have described the unusual and uplifting experience we were all given during the Swiss gathering have urged me to share it with others via the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*.

The Swiss seminar was arranged by Marguerite Salzmänn of Zurich and was attended by representatives from many different countries in Europe. Marguerite told me that many people from the scattered locations had volunteered to help with the numerous organizational details involved in such an undertaking several months prior to the seminar on the second weekend in August. She spoke warmly of their wonderful cooperation and the love and harmony among them.

The setting for the weekend was an old monastery a short drive into the country outside of Zurich. It has recently been restored and modernized and is now used as a hotel, youth hostel, and conference center.

When I arrived on Friday afternoon, I was asked by some of the helpers who were setting up the hall for the meeting if I would like to have some photographs of Baba hung on the walls, since the great majority of the participants were Sai devotees. In the past, I have always been extremely careful to avoid doing anything that might be interpreted as advertising or "selling" Baba, knowing He would not approve, especially in a mixed group of people following different paths or having no belief. But as this gathering was almost exclusively composed of devotees, I was prompted to agree that it would be wonderful to have His presence so delightfully visible, so several photographs were displayed.

The usual brief introduction to the weekend took place on that Friday evening to more than fifty people—quite uneventfully. However, when I entered the hall on Saturday morning, I was greeted excitedly by one of the organizers who led me to one of the photographs and pointed to a small stream of sweet-smelling *amrit* (divine nectar) starting to trickle down from just above Baba's right eye. When one has once smelled this indescribable perfume, it is instantly recognizable. It permeated the room and continued to do so as the same phenomenon started to appear on other photographs of Baba.

At these seminars, I always display two boards illustrating two of the main symbols used in the work. One is a figure eight used to prevent control or domination and to



protect the free will of two individuals. Once, during a group interview, Baba pointed to my ring displaying a figure eight and, smiling approvingly, said, "Yes, yes. Figure eight. Also letter 'S' for Sai," apparently indicating that He respects everyone's free will and will never control or coerce anyone.

During the day, another person pointed out to me that *amrit* was trickling down the display board, illustrating the figure eight symbol in several streams, thus adding to the powerful fragrance in the hall.

The next day, Sunday, it was dark and raining, so one of the participants brought a delightful smiling photograph of Baba "to help lift the heavy atmosphere," as she expressed it. During the first break, someone noticed that a stream had started trickling down the photograph, but this time the odor was not the familiar one of *amrit*, but more like camphor.

Everyone was overjoyed at such a demonstration of Baba's presence, and an Indian devotee took several pictures of the manifestation as a permanent reminder of it.

During the fourteen years my husband and I have been with Baba, I have never experienced this kind of phenomenon and must confess that I have always been skeptical of stories about such occurrences. However, these incidents took place in a hall where all the participants were seated in chairs facing me as I sat at a table with my back to the wall on which two of the photographs and the figure eight display board were hanging while they produced the *amrit*. No one had moved from his chair, and the manifestation occurred during the session, with everyone present smelling the wonderful aroma which filled the hall.

On Saturday, I suddenly remembered that at our farewell interview with Baba in February of this year, I had, as usual, asked His blessing and help for the English seminars and mentioned that this year I had also been asked to conduct one in Switzerland. He smiled and said, "Yes, yes, I know. Swami is very happy. I will be with you."

I had also forgotten until that Sunday morning that just before flying from England to Switzerland, I had asked an English devotee to give Baba a letter from me. In it I had asked Him to help me speak slowly and clearly enough at the Swiss seminar for the attendees to understand, since they would be coming from many different countries in Europe, each with a primary language other than English.

Whenever I travel, I always carry with me one or two photographs of Baba. This time I included a small one given to me by a friend who had just returned from Puttaparthi. It shows Baba with a very intense expression as if He were looking deep into the beholder, beyond the personal to the God within. I framed it and took it with me.

It is so compelling that on the Saturday morning I had taken it to the meeting to illustrate how Baba makes contact not only with our physical forms, but with the God we all really are, as shown by His intense gaze in the photograph.

It was not until I returned home and was about to return both photographs that I had taken on the trip to their usual places in the house that I noticed, underneath the glass of this one, several small smudges or streaks which were certainly not there when I framed it. They looked more like *vibhuti* (holy ash) than *amrit*. The other photograph, which I did not take to the seminar, had nothing unusual on it.

The display board illustrating the figure eight still smells of *amrit*, and the streaks, being shiny and sticky to the touch, are clearly visible.

Why did this happen at this particular seminar with representatives of many different countries? Only Baba knows.

When we invoked His presence, as we did many times during the weekend, maybe He chose to leave His calling card in this unique way to let us know that "When two or more are gathered together in My Name, I will be in their midst."

Thank you, Baba, for this as well as for all Your other blessings.

—Phyllis Krystal  
Los Angeles, California

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***F**or devotees from all lands and all faiths, I shall make this announcement about My real nature. You can call Me by any Name, for I am Sarvadevata Swarupa; I am the One who is known by many Names, the embodiment of the glory of all Forms and Names by which man has adored God. Reference has been made to miracles. Do not attach much importance to them. They are but natural consequences of divinity. Adore, rather, my prema (love), and try to cultivate it yourself. To this Form with this Name, you will soon see the whole world offering loyal adoration.*

—Baba  
World Conference, Bombay, May 1968



## THE BAL VIKAS CHILD

In June of 1987, I had the good fortune to attend the *Bal Vikas* teachers' training in Fountain Valley, California. The day was full of uplifting and enriching experiences. Of course, the most important emphasis was that teachers and parents should be exemplars of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings.

A point was brought up that had a big effect on me. Since Baba's greatest teaching is LOVE, we must *be* LOVE. The speaker was talking about letting children know from a very early age about God's love for them. We can hold a child on our laps, hug them, and ask them if they feel our love. Then, when a child responds, we can tell him or her that Baba's love is like that, only *bigger*, and that He says He loves us more than a thousand mothers!

I frequently share this with my little ones; Jyoti, age three, seems especially confident about Baba's love for her. I hope other parents will be inspired to spread Swami's love in this way. Imagine the child's fulfillment to know from the beginning that there is a God who loves them so much! Later, they can understand it is their very Self.

One day I was holding my little girl and snuggling her and feeling very loving. I asked, "Jyoti, do you feel that love?" "Yes," she said. "What does it feel like?" I wondered. Her reply was, "It feels like it has Baba in it."

Another time, Jyoti and I were having a discussion about Baba. You know, many times adults struggle with what to say to people when they ask, "Who is Sai Baba?" I asked Jyoti, "If your little friends say, 'Who's that?' when they look at Swami's picture, what will you tell them?" She replied, "I will say: 'HE'S MY FRIEND and I LOVE HIM!'"

—Mahri Kintz  
Idyllwild, California

## I'VE ALMOST FORGOTTEN

I recently heard a lovely little story told on a television program. It seems that the mother of a four-year-old child gave birth to another child. The four-year-old asked her if he might have some time alone with the baby. The mother, fearing sibling rivalry, refused the request several times. However, when the four-year-old persisted, she finally gave in, but stayed within earshot. The four-year-old leaned over the baby's crib and said with urgency in his voice, "Please, tell me what God is. I've almost forgotten."

—Joy Thomas  
From her forthcoming book  
Life Is a Game; Play It!

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### BABA

Some say He's God.

Some say He's not.

Some believe.

Some do not.

It doesn't matter who you are,  
He cares for every one of us, a lot.

He's truthful.

He's kind.

He is bliss.

He is like a dove.

He seems perfect and His number is nine.

We all wait silently in the **darshan** line.

His heart overflows with love and peace.

Oh! How I long to be like Him.

I wish that I wouldn't sin.

Though it is only human.

For some of us, it may take long.

For some of us, it may be short.

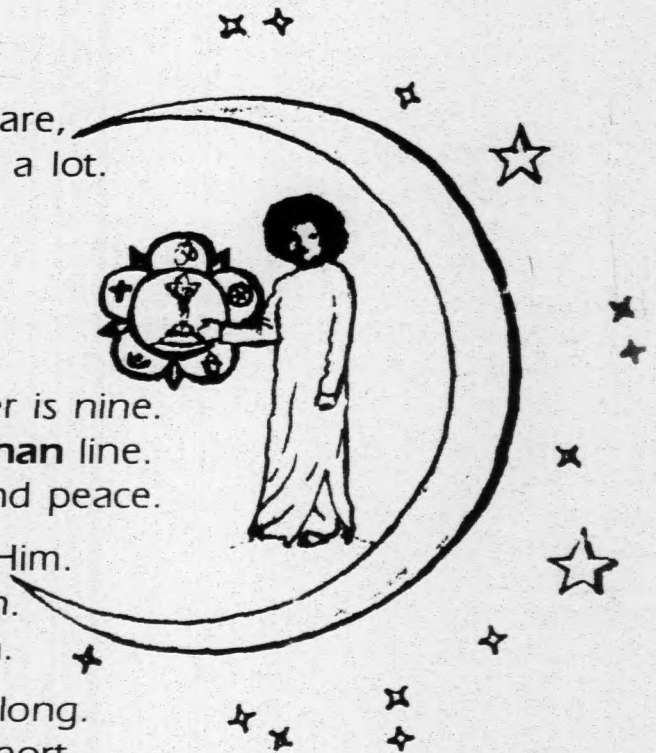
He's given us the chance,

So that we may live life

As a dance.

—**Levani Lipton**, age 13

Kailua, Hawaii



*Children must know the amazing handiwork of God, the most amazing being themselves. They can well understand that they are not merely a bundle of two hands and two feet, head, and stomach. They can picture a Force within them which directs all their acts. Through bhajan (holy songs) and through sravan (listening to stories and scriptural texts about God), these elevating truths can be instilled in them by teachers and parents.*

—**Baba**

*Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VII, p. 34*



## EHV IS 3HV

Bhagavan Baba says of the Education in Human Values program, "EHV is 3HV." He explains that the 3H stands for head, heart, and hands. The head is used to receive sensory input, categorize information, reason, remember, and formulate plans. Decisions should not be made within this realm of our beings. The heart is where the Lord resides. We communicate with the Lord through our conscience, or *buddhi*. This is the highest, noblest, and truest realm of our being. This is the reflection of God. This is where our decisions should be made. The hands implement the decisions made in the heart. They represent the physical realm of our being. When a decision is made in the heart, then we must act without procrastination. Baba says, "In Swami, there is no procrastination."

Bhagavan Baba says repeatedly, "The end of education is character." Character is the result of:

**Having sufficient discipline and discrimination** to accurately and appropriately process information from the world (HEAD).

**Having sufficient faith in God** to present this information to the conscience, or *buddhi*, without equivocation, to appeal for an answer with intensity and sincerity, to hear the pure voice of conscience, unpolluted by ego (HEART).

**Having sufficient self-confidence and courage** to faithfully and effectively implement the decisions made in the heart (HANDS).

—**Michael Goldstein, M.D.**  
*Chairman, Bal Vikas and EHV Committees*

## BAL VIKAS TEACHERS

Through search for truth and love for the Supreme, people come to Sai; and through love, they find an interest in Sai's program for children. He regards children with the Divine love of Mother, but also sees far beyond as a Father who plans and instructs for the future welfare of the child. To this end, He inspires us to work with children in the Bal Vikas program. There is no activity in this world closer to the heart of the Lord than the education of His children, the education of their character so they may mature into God-realized men and women. Bal Vikas teachers have the right to feel that they have entered an exalted and noble work. Be joyful. Be convinced you are engaged in a work that will bring good to the children and to society and happiness and fulfillment to yourselves. If your Center does not as yet have a Bal Vikas program, now is the time to start. Contact your Center President for the name of your regional Bal Vikas Director.

—**J. S. Hislop, President**  
*Sathya Sai Baba Council of America*

## AN EXPLANATION OF THE *GAYATRI MANTRA*

*The Gayatri Mantra is a prayer for the progressive upsurge of intelligence so that Truth may be grasped by the seeker. Subordinate the mind to the pure intelligence, which is but a reflection of the God within. Then, you will have the Guru of Gurus as your guide.*

—Baba

The following explanation was given by Professor N. Kasturi to some Western devotees and is based on Baba's many references to the *Gayatri* in talks and discourses:

*Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah  
Tat Savitur Varenyam  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi  
Dhiyo yo nah Prachodayat*

This is the greatest mantra of the *Vedas*, the spiritual heritage of India. It can be repeated by anyone because it doesn't refer to God in any Form or Name. It is a prayer which seeks to arouse your intellectual awareness.

*"Bhur Bhuvah Suvah"*: These are the three regions—the lower, the middle, and the upper. Call these three that make up the cosmos: *"Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah."*

*"Tat Savitur Varenyam"*: *"Varenyam"* is the supreme. *"Savitur"* is that splendor. So, the cosmos, and then the next line: the splendor that . . . the supreme splendor that shines through all those cosmic regions; *"Tat Savitur Varenyam."*

*"Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi"*: The splendor that you find in the cosmos is due to the intelligence that pervades it and permeates it, and you are appealing to that intelligence to arouse your own intelligence. You are admiring and appreciating the superintelligence so that the process will arouse your own little limited intelligence to transcend its horizon and its limits and enter into that cosmic intelligence. That's why we start with *"Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah."*

*"Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi"*: That is, not only splendor, but it is also *"Dhimahi,"* that is to say, intelligence. It is on account of the intelligence that pervades and permeates the cosmos that you have got the splendor; *"Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi."*

*"Dhiyo yo nah Prachodayat"*: *"Dhi"* is the power of discrimination, the power of analysis, as well as synthesis—and *"Prachodayat"* means to arouse, to awaken, to cleanse, and to grow. So, *"Prachodayat"*: You are praying to the splendor of the universe.



*"Dhiyo yo nah":* Let that *"Dhi"*—that is to say, the supreme intelligence, *Dhimahi* (*"Dhiyo yo nah Prachodayat"*: the second *"dhi"* is the limited intelligence that we ourselves have)—let that be aroused and awakened so that it will merge with that supreme intelligence that is found, that is, not only found, but that is the real basis and superstructure of the entire cosmos.

So this is a prayer of the limited intelligence to the Unlimited Intelligence so that we might become Wisdom itself, Truth itself, and *that* Truth is Beauty, Goodness—everything.

—Professor N. Kasturi



*Repeat the Gayatri. It is the most universal and the most effective prayer. It has three parts: (1) Contemplation of the glory of the light that illumines the upper, middle, and lower worlds. (2) Picturization of the infinite grace that flows ever from that light. (3) Prayer for full and final liberation, through the awakening of innate intelligence that pervades the Universe as light. All can use this prayer and benefit from it.*

—Baba

Excerpted from a bulletin  
from the SAI Foundation

*The chanting or singing of the Name (smarana or sankirtan) should be continuous, constant, and unceasing. The mind should be always tuned in to the thought of God—whatever we may be doing—even when we are engaged and engrossed in our worldly life and activities.*

—Baba

*Sai Sathya Vani*, July 1967

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A cassette tape of the Gayatri Mantra can be purchased from the Sathya Sai Book Center of America or the SAI Foundation. The addresses are on pages 35 and 36.

## IS THE NAME MORE POTENT THAN THE FORM?

The Lord and His Name are both one, but the sweetness of the Name may sometimes not be found in the Form. When the name of the flower, "the rose," is remembered, its fragrance, its tender petals, and its deep color all spring to memory; its thorns and the trouble one has undergone to get the flower are all forgotten. Instead, if its origin and previous story are considered, and if the plant, its leaves, and its branches are taken into account, the flower, which is the most important, the most beautiful, and the most attractive, is likely to be forgotten and only the plant is discussed. See this from another angle. As soon as the name "mango fruit" is mentioned, one is reminded of an incomparable sweetness. Instead, if an actual mango is held in the hand, the question first arises in the mind whether it is sweet or sour; then we are engaged in distinguishing the skin, the fiber, the juice, the nut, the rind, the seed, etc. When the name alone is repeated, these things do not matter. Only the sweetness is brought to the memory. Such is the difference between the Lord's Form and the Lord's Name. There is the pure essence of sweetness in the Name. In the case of the Form, there is the chance of dread mixed with respect, and sometimes even attributes causing fear show themselves. Again, note another reason why the Name of the Lord is to be craved for even more than the Form. It is by means of the riches of Name that the article, "the *Rupa* (Form) of the Lord," is to be earned. Riches are needed to secure any article in the world. With the riches, articles are gotten; so it follows that the riches are superior to the articles gotten by them, doesn't it? With riches, one can get any article any time. So, too, if riches called *Nama* (the Name) are steadily accumulated, the Lord can be realized through the path of *dhyana* (meditation) easily and without difficulty.

—Baba

## THERE IS NO RESTRICTION OF TIME OR PLACE

There was a merchant who was exhorted by his teacher to repeat the Name of the Lord. He pleaded that he had no time to sit and repeat it; the shop took up all his time and energy. He had to go out a little way from the village every morning to answer the call of nature, spending about half an hour for this. So the *guru* asked him to use this time for the daily *smarana*. Hanuman, the great *Ramabhaktha* (devotee of Rama), was passing through the sky when he saw the merchant defecating and heard him repeat "Ram, Ram. . ." while so engaged. Hanuman was incensed at his impertinence; he was desecrating the Name. So he gave a hard blow to the face of the merchant and continued on his journey to Ayodhya.



When he reached the Divine Presence and looked at the splendor-filled face of Rama, he noticed the red, swollen handprint upon His cheek. Hanuman was shocked, and his grief was too deep for words. Rama told him, "Hanuman! Do not ask Me the name of the person who dealt this blow. I always anticipate the moment of calamity for My *bhakthas* (devotees), and I intercede in time to save them. That poor merchant who was repeating My Name when you were coming here—could he withstand the terrible onslaught of your angry fist? The fellow would have collapsed on the spot. So I intercepted the blow and received it on My own cheek, My dear Hanuman!"

—**Baba**

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume V, p. 224



# THE IDEAL FOR WOMEN

## Part IV

Women should strive to achieve the knowledge of the soul and live every moment in the consciousness of being only the *Atman* (indwelling Divinity); they must always evince a desire to become one with the Divine Consciousness. The home where a woman strives for such goals and where the husband and wife lead their lives in the shade of great ideals, where they, together, sing the glory of the Name of the Lord and spend themselves in good deeds, where truth, peace, and love reign, where regular reading is done of holy books, where the senses are under control, and where there is equal treatment for all creation—prompted by the knowledge of the basic unity of all creation—such a home is certainly heaven on earth.

A wife with such a nature is a wife worth the name. She must have real love toward her husband; then only can she be called homemaker, or *grihini*. Then only is she her husband's companion in the pilgrimage toward God (*dharmapatni*), an instrument (*bhaarya*) for right action (*dharma*), for prosperity won through righteousness (*artha*), for the fulfillment of the desire for liberation. She who knows the mind of her husband and speaks softly and sweetly is his real friend. Why, sometimes, when a wife has to point out the path of *dharma* to her husband, she even takes on the role of a father! And when her husband is lying ill, she is the mother.

A woman must accord first place to the service of her husband; that is true worship for her. Her prayers and worship (*pūja*) can wait. Without serving her husband, she cannot attain bliss in worship or meditation.

As a matter of fact, the Lord must be welcomed as represented by the husband, and all service rendered to him must be elevated to the level of worship; that is the path of genuine duty. If every act is done as if it is for the sake of the indwelling Divinity (*Atma*) and its merger with Universal Soul (*Paramatma*), then activity becomes dedicated to the Lord. All such acts save; they do not bind.

It does not matter how bad or low the husband is; the wife must, through love, bring him round and correct him and help him gain the blessings of the Lord. It is not correct to feel that her progress alone matters and that she has no concern in his improvement or uplift. In fact, she must feel that her husband's welfare, her husband's joy, her husband's wishes, and her husband's salvation are the panacea for her also. Such a woman will receive the grace of the Lord automatically, without special effort. It will be showered upon her. The Lord will always be by her side and be kind to her in all ways. By her virtue, she will ensure the salvation of her husband.

—Baba

Adapted from Dharma Vahini, pp. 27-29



## DATES TO REMEMBER IN 1988

**February 16, Mahashivarathri**, is observed during the new moon and symbolizes the renaissance and rededication of spiritual life.

**March 8**, Baba began the process of revealing His true identity on this day in 1940.

**March 26, Sri Rama Navami**, the day to honor the birth of the Avatar Rama.

**May 6, Easwaramma Day**, to pay homage to the memory of the Mother of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

**May 23**, Baba proclaimed, "I am Sai Baba." The year was 1940.

**July 17, Handicapped Day**, for all Sai devotees in the United States and to remind them that the less fortunate need a helping hand all year round.

**July 29, Guru Poornima**, a day set aside for the adoration of the *guru*, or spiritual preceptor.

**September 3, Sri Krishna Jayanti**, gives recognition of the birth of the Avatar Krishna.

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

**October 11, Dasara**, the beginning of the festival which is dedicated to the Divine Mother in her various aspects.

**October 20, Vijaya Dasami or Dasara**, the last day of the *Dasara* festival, celebrating the triumph of good over evil.

**October 20**, Baba told his family, "I don't belong to you—My devotees are calling Me; I have My work." His mission had begun that day in 1940.

**November 9, Deepavali or Diwali**, the Festival of Lights, commemorating the victory of righteousness over wicked forces.

**November, Akhanda Bhajan**, a continuous twenty-four hours of devotional singing dedicated to world peace and done in Centers around the world. It begins on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. The exact weekend will be published at a later date.

**November, Silver Anniversary Celebration**, will take place around the time of Baba's Birthday. More information will be published as it becomes available.

**November 23, The Sixty-Third Birthday** of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

**December 14, Hannukah**, the Jewish holy days, proclaiming victory over the oppressor, begin.

**December 25, Christmas**, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

*Hindus, Muslims, and Christians might differ in some aspects, especially customs, but they are all one in the glorification of the Name of the Godhead. All of them take the Name of the one Lord, though the language through which the Name is expressed is different. Each one recites, repeats, and remembers the Name as formed in his own tongue. Each one turns the rosary appropriate to his religion.*

—Baba

*Nam Mahima, by the Seva Organizations*

## SAI'S GRACE FOR GRACIE

Does Sri Sathya Sai Baba work in wondrous ways? This is the story of His love and compassion as it was showered on Gracie (known to her friends as Corby) Thompson, one of His devotees. Gracie, at the age of 72, wanted Swami's *darshan* (the blessing of seeing a holy being) once again after a lapse of several years. She had just endured a year of hardship caring for her husband before his death. Last-moment arrangements were made to join an American group making a pilgrimage to the Divine Presence, where she would attend the *Dasara* Festival. On the day of departure, she and her friend Lilian Pike almost missed the flight. One could see immediately that Gracie was quite ill and already exhausted.

Upon arrival in Madras, India, her luggage had been lost. She had no other possessions with her; but when the group exchanged their traveler's checks for *rupees*, Gracie had hundred-dollar bills.

After a good night's rest in Bangalore, Gracie arrived in borrowed clothes at the Abode of Peace (Prasanthi Nilayam), looking forward to *darshan*. One could sense her equanimity, for once she caught sight of her Lord she rarely complained, although her ankles were swollen and she was very short of breath.

On September 28, she accidentally fell outside of the Poornachandra Auditorium. She was taken to Sai's hospital, where X-rays showed a complete fracture of the right wrist. A taxi was arranged for a trip to Bangalore, where the bones would be set. Gracie was admitted to St. Martha's Hospital. During the early hours of September 29, she died with her devoted friend Lilian reminding her to be in Sai's light. The cause of death was renal failure.

Gracie's American dollars were easily used for her expenses, and there wasn't even any excess baggage! How exquisite is the Lord's timing. Our beloved Sai sent word to have the body cremated in Bangalore and to bring the ashes back to be placed in the dry bed of the Chitravati River.

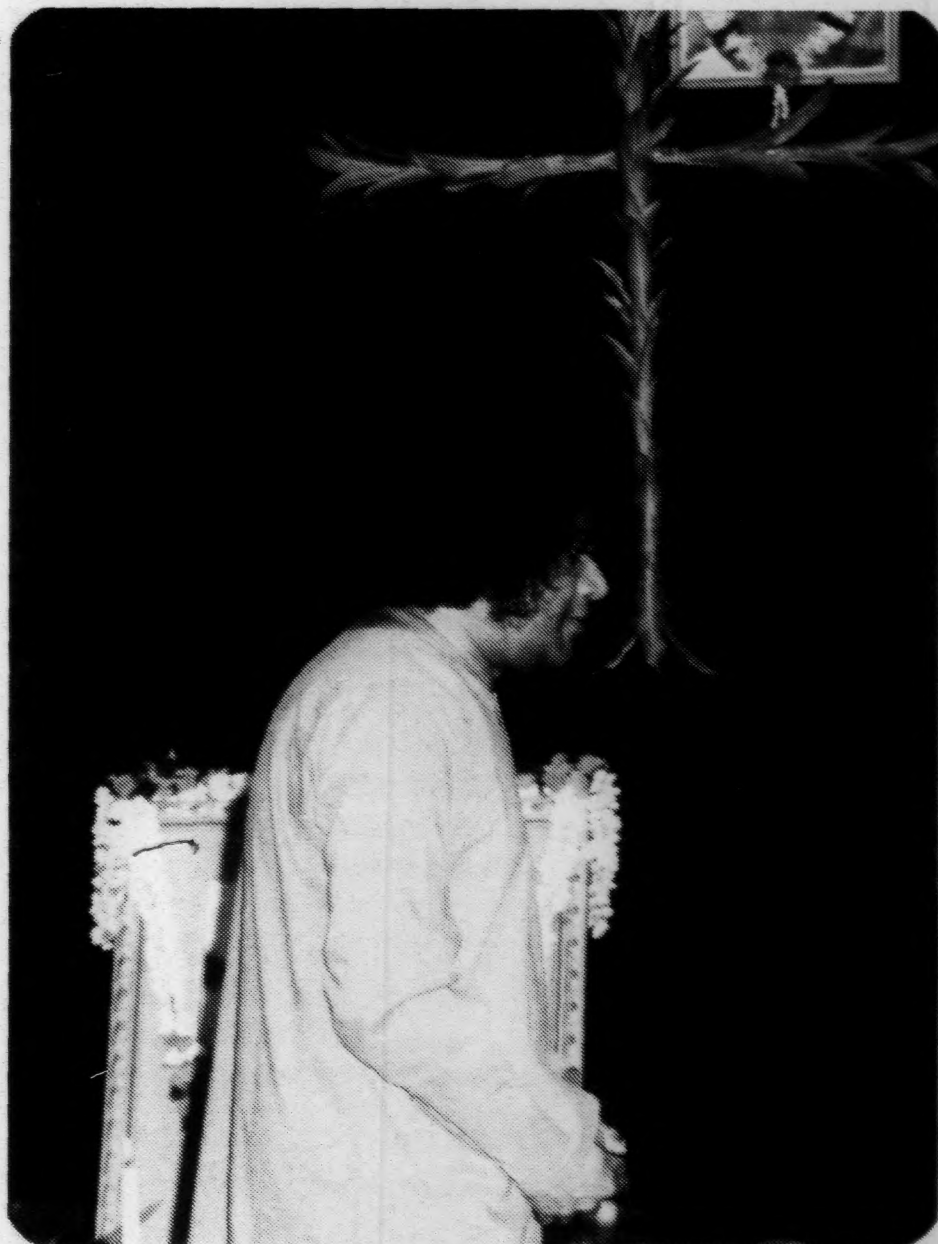
On September 30, these orders were carried out, and all were amazed that it had been exactly nine days since Gracie had entered India. On October 1, all twenty members of the American group and friends walked from the Ganesha Gate to the Chitravati River, singing *bhajans* and reciting the Gayatri Mantra with assistance from brothers of the Sathya Sai Seva Dal Service Organization.

A few days later, during an American group interview, the question was asked, "Swami, what happens to the soul after death?" Sai replied, "Life and death are the same. Don't worry about it—it is God's work."



Gracie Thompson's ashes were placed in the bed of the sacred Chitravati River where our beloved Sai had played as a child. From the site, one can see the Wish-Fulfilling Tree. Could it be that this was Gracie Thompson's last wish?

—**Don Heath**  
*Prasanthi Nilayam*



## **“A COMPASSIONATE HEART IS THE ALTAR OF GOD”**

**—Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

What began as a service performed by one of our members for the Child Protection Office in a nearby police station has become an activity in which many of our members participate. We make safe, washable toys for children who, due to family tragedy, must be held at the police station or placed in a temporary care facility. The following letter was written by one of the Child Protection Officers:

“I must tell you of the happiness your bunny babies have brought to some of our little people. Our first customer was a one-year-old boy who had been kidnapped in Washington and was found here in Southern California. He was quite unhappy until I brought out a bunny. Then his face lit up. He held it, kissed it, and would not let go of it for a minute. We sent it with him when he was turned over to a shelter.

“Another customer was a four-year-old abused girl who called hers ‘my precious bunny.’ The next was an eleven-year-old girl who had been abused by her parents. She wanted to know everything about the person who had made the bunny. When I told her, she said, ‘What nice ladies!’”

A Sai Baba devotee from Orange County, hearing about the frogs and bunnies we have been making, requested a supply of animals for the physically abused children who are recovering from their injuries at the Orangewood Home for Children. Our members redoubled their efforts and produced a boxful of the handmade toys in record time. They were first offered up to Baba as our worship of Him. As with all of our service projects, we maintain awareness that He is the Doer, we are His instruments, and those we serve are cared for, watched over, loved, and protected by Him. We are so grateful when He uses us to disseminate His love.

**—The Sathya Sai Baba Center  
of Cherry Valley, California**

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***F**aith in God is the bedrock on which one's life should be built. All the scriptures one may read, all the rituals one may practice, the mastery of the Upanishads or the Gita, will be of no avail if there is no deep faith in God. The rituals will be mere physical or intellectual exercises only. They may even strengthen the delusions regarding the body-mind complex.*

**—Baba**



## GURU POORNIMA DISCOURSE

### “GOD AND YOU ARE ONE”

Embodiments of the Divine *Atma*! “The Lord Himself (*Narayana*) pervades the entire cosmos inside and outside,” says the *Upanishad*. Where will you find the one who is all-pervasive? In the world, everything is permeated by the Divine Will (*Iswara*); and, such being the case, it is futile and meaningless to claim “this is mine” and “that is not mine.” What is the way to find that which is all-pervading? Is it possible to attain God by spiritual practices (*sadhana*) or good deeds? No, it is not possible to realize God by spiritual practices, rituals, devotional singing, meditation, or good deeds. No one can attain God by such means. All these are only aids for achieving purity of mind and heart. This truth has been stated clearly by Sri Krishna in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, in verse 53: “Neither by the *Vedas*, nor by austerities, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifices can I be seen in the Form in which you [Arjuna] have seen Me.” What, then, is the purpose of these *sadhanas* which are being performed by earnest and knowledgeable aspirants? All spiritual practices are intended to help man get rid of the veil of attachment and hatred in which he is enveloped. The purpose of all spiritual discipline is to help man realize his true nature.

### *Sat-Chit-Ananda*

Man is the embodiment of *sat-chit-ananda* (being-awareness-bliss). *Sat* is that unchanging state which is unaffected by time (past, present, and future). *Chit* is the capacity of Awareness which enables one to know the outer and inner truth about everything. *Ananda* is a state of unalloyed bliss which is pure and permanent. When *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda* appear as different and distinct aspects, how are they to be experienced as one whole? Although they appear to be three, their unity can be illustrated by an example. The flame of a lamp has three features: heat, light, and the red color. Although these three features are distinct, the flame is one. How is *sat-chit-ananda* to be experienced? Is it possible to experience the Infinite through the infinitesimal? You may doubt whether such a thing can be done, but you should not succumb to such doubts.

On the surface of the vast ocean, there are an endless number of waves produced by the action of wind on the water. The water in the ocean has qualities of coolness, transparency, and wetness. Every wave arising from the ocean has these qualities. Likewise, every individual being who has emerged from the infinite *sat-chit-ananda* has the three aspects of the Divine. There is no need to succumb to the apparent contrast between the Infinite and the finite. All things are permeated by the Divinity that characterizes *sat-chit-ananda*.

This Divinity (*daivatwam*) has also been described as “*samashti*.” “*Samashti*” means the entire creation (*prakriti*) which can be seen by the external eyes. This entire creation (*prakriti*) is full of *sat-chit-ananda*. *Prakriti* is pure consciousness (*suddha chaitanya*). Without pure consciousness, there can be no creation (*prakriti*). The energy that is present in every object in creation is derived from the Divine (*sat-chit-ananda*). The correct meaning of Divinity is a combination of *prakriti* and *sat-chit-ananda*. In modern parlance, this may be stated as: God = matter + being.

## Four Obstacles

Recognition of this basic unity calls for earnest and continuous striving. In the pursuit of this fundamental quest, four major obstacles have to be overcome. They are: (1) **Sense of weakness.** The impediment that arises out of the feeling that one is too weak and powerless to seek the Divine. As long as this sense of weakness remains, man cannot understand his true nature. (2) **Self-conceit.** When one feels that he knows everything and is unwilling to learn from elders, he becomes unfit for undertaking the spiritual quest. (3) **Illogical reasoning and false arguments.** They give farfetched interpretations to the pronouncements of sages and engage themselves in meaningless controversies. (4) **Ignorance of one's inner Reality and a refusal to make the effort to understand it.** Ignorance arises out of a feeling of arrogance that one knows everything and has no need to learn from others. The cause of this arrogance is *maya* (delusion). *Maya* is present when one sees the unreal as Real and the Real as unreal. This is the basic characteristic of ignorance. Such persons view the world as a physical phenomenon. But those who have attained the inner vision see the cosmos as the manifestation of the Lord of the cosmos (*Jagadeeswara*). The cosmos is the vesture of the Divine. Scientists admit that matter is composed of energy. Without energy, nothing can exist in the cosmos. Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu represent the two opposing views regarding the cosmos. Hiranyakasipu viewed a pillar as only a column of matter, whereas Prahlada saw in it the immanence of the Lord Himself (*Narayana*).

Today we have an ever-growing number of people who are unaware of the nature of Divinity. No special spiritual practices are required to experience Divinity. Nor are all the religious rites performed by man done for the sake of God. Everything man does is for his own sake. God must not be viewed as a separate entity. When one realizes his own nature and rids himself of impurities such as attachment and hatred, he shines in his own true Self. Hence, spiritual practices are only intended to eliminate the impurities in a person.

## The Power of *Maya*

In every man there is the combination of the deluding principle and the Divine principle. Without the deluding principle, the Divine cannot be experienced. Without the





Divine, the power of *maya* (delusion) cannot manifest. On the surface of the vast ocean, countless waves are seen. There must be a force that causes these waves. It is the combination of the power of the wind and the water of the ocean that produces the waves. Without the force of wind, there can be no waves. This wind can be compared to *maya*. The water in the ocean can be compared to the infinite form of *sat-chit-ananda*. The individual souls (*jivathatwas*) are the waves of the ocean. So, for the individual soul, *maya* is the primary factor. All the waves are only images, but not the object itself. The images will remain only as long as there is the mirror of *maya*. When the mirror is removed, the image disappears and only the object remains. Our body is like a mirror. As long as the body consciousness is there, the notion of separate individuality will persist like the image in a mirror. When the mirror of body consciousness

is removed, the image (individual consciousness) will also go. Only the permanent entity, the object which is Divinity, will remain.

The entire world is full of *maya*. This entire creation is a play, but not a pain. To recognize the illusory character of the world does not mean giving up all actions or family ties. Actions should be done in a spirit of detachment. "No renunciation of action, but renunciation *in* action." That means that actions which have to be performed as obligatory duties should be done properly.

Actions purify mind. Mind is responsible for both good actions and bad actions. So the main *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) one has to perform is purification of the mind. This is the purpose of actions done in the proper spirit. Once the outer veil is removed, the true nature of man is revealed.

## Sixteen and Five

Today is *Guru Poornima* Day, the day of the full moon dedicated to the worship of the *guru* (spiritual preceptor). On this day, the moon shines effulgently with all its sixteen aspects (*kalas*). On your part, you have to shed sixteen aspects that are undesirable in man. These sixteen are as follows: eight types of pride (pride of physical strength,

birth, scholarship, wealth, penance, beauty, youth, and power), six kinds of enemies (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and envy), and the overaction (*rajo*) and inaction (*thamo*) *gunas*. It is only when these sixteen evil traits are eliminated that man will achieve fullness. These evil traits are preventing man from realizing his essential Divinity. There are five sorrows (*klesas*) which prevent man from realizing his true nature. These are: (1) A lack of true knowledge (*avidya*) which causes a man to feel weak. (2) Attachment to worldly concerns (*abhinava*) which makes a man forget his real destiny. He allows the mind to dominate him. As a result, he is subject to sorrow and depression. (3) The trouble that arises out of excessive greed (*asthitha*). When desires are not fulfilled, there is distress. When they are fulfilled, self-conceit (*ahamkara*) grows. In this process, genuine human qualities wither away. (4) The distress caused by the insatiable desire for property, vehicles, wealth, etc. (*raga klesa*). (5) The feeling of bitterness that arises when one does not get what one seeks from others (*dwesha klesa*). In due course, he becomes a low and pitiable creature. The scriptures have declared that among birds the crow is the meanest, among animals the donkey is the meanest, and among men the one who indulges in slander is most despicable. The crow is mean because it does not relish good food and prefers only rotten things. The donkey carries only dirty clothes and is always dirty. The slanderer has a foul tongue and is the meanest among human beings.

## The Greatest Sin

The greatest sin man commits is to forget his Divinity and, failing to recognize his true nature, consider himself as a distinct individual and fill his mind with desires and hatred. We should not look upon human existence as something pitiful, weak, or powerless. Man is the embodiment of the Divine. He is *sat-chit-ananda*. The Divine in him is always radiating light and bliss. But, because of the barrier of bad thoughts, he is unable to experience this bliss.

The Divine is not something different or separate from oneself. Although one is identical with the Divine, the dark cloaks of attachment (*raga*) and hatred (*dwesha*) envelop Divine Essence and prevent one from recognizing one's Inner Reality. The only truth man has to discover is the truth about himself. All the *sadhanas* that are practiced are intended to remove the veil that conceals this Reality in man. But all *sadhanas* or inquiries that may be carried on for any length of time will be of no avail if the mind is not pure.

## Sai Words and Sai Path

All the scriptures you study diligently will reveal that the Sai path is the truth. Exploring the purport of all the *Vedas*, you will find the true path in Sai's words. All the sciences



and scriptures will testify to the truth of Sai's words. Chanting the *Gayatri* full-throatedly will prove the truth of Sai's message.\*

Of what avail is all your striving if the mind remains polluted? It is only when the mind is cleansed that one can develop the proper vision. That is why in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna said: "You should not surrender to Me, but surrender to yourself." In our daily prayers, we say, "You are the mother, You are the father, You are the *guru*, and You are the friend." Who is this "You"? Instead of saying, "You are mother, father, *guru*, and friend," it is enough if you say, "You are I." You have to attain the stage when you can say: "You (God) are I." This is the essence of all religions. This is the basis of all scriptures, and this is the goal proclaimed by all the *Vedas*.

## **You Are a Fragment of Divinity**

Recognize that God and you are one. There will then be no need to describe God as father, mother, *guru*, and the like and confound oneself. We should strive to reduce the bondages created by such relationships as mother, father, etc. We should aim at realizing the basic unity that underlies and sustains everything. That is the significance of the statement: "He is the one Indweller in all beings."

How meaningful are such expressions as "my people" and "your people"? How long can these relationships last? They are all momentary. The only relationship that lasts forever and does not change is the association with the *Atma* (indwelling Divinity). Instead of rejoicing in this permanent association, man hankers after relationships based on the impermanent body. Despite all their knowledge and study, people are groping in the dark chamber of *maya*. As long as you live in this darkness, you are bound to get hurt. Until you get out of this darkness and seek the light, you will be enveloped in sorrow.

"The Eternal resides in every being in the world as a fragment of Me," says the Lord in the *Gita*. We have to develop the faith that it is the same Lord who dwells in all beings as a spark of the Divine. You are not the body. You are not even a separate spirit. You are not the five elements. You are a fragment of the Divine. This is the great truth that everyone has to realize fully. Without achieving this conviction, there is no benefit from years of performing any *sadhana* or worship. Once this conviction is obtained, the vision of the Divine is experienced automatically.

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\*For an explanation of the *Gayatri Mantra*, turn to page 16.

The nation today needs to develop a sense of unity. Narrow loyalties such as linguistic fanaticism, provincialism, caste loyalties, and sectarianism have grown to such an extent that they have totally driven out devotion to the Divine. You are forgetting the true nature of the *Atma*. You should develop attachment to the *Atma*. This *Atma* is One and is existing in everyone. Realization is not something you attain by spiritual practice. I have told you many times: "If you want to visualize your heart, you have to remove the outer garments covering your body. You have three layers. First, the outer heavy coat; second, a thick shirt; and, underneath that, a thin undershirt. The heavy outer coat can be compared to *tamo guna*. The thick shirt can be compared to *rajo guna*. The thin undershirt can be compared to *satwa guna*. Covered with these three coats, how can you realize your true nature? Remove all three and transcend the *gunas*. Then you will realize your real nature, which is *sat-chit-ananda*.

You have been listening to my discourses for years. If you are content merely to listen, it is a sheer waste of time. You have to ruminate over what you have heard and try to put the teachings into practice. Listening to spiritual truth (*sravanam*), turning it over in the mind (*mananam*), and putting into practice what has been learned (*nidhidhyaasanam*) are the three stages in the spiritual journey. Repeating parrot-like what one has heard has not even the merit of enjoying the sweetness of the words. Going about claiming to be devotees, few care to find out what true devotion is. *Bhajans* (devotional songs) and *japas* (repeating the Name) and performance of *yagas* and *yajnas* (sacrificial rituals) are not the real marks of devotion. They are merely exercises in washing away one's impurities. All the nine kinds of worship: (1) Listening to the glories of God (*shravanam*); (2) devotional singing (*kirtanam*); (3) repeating God's name (*japa*); (4) worshipping His Feet (*pada swvanam*); (5) offering salutations to God (*vandanam*); (6) ritualistic worship (*archanam*); (7) serving God (*dasyam*); (8) friendship (*sneham*); and, (9) self-surrender (*atmanivedanam*) are also designed to achieve purity of mind and heart. But purity should find expression in action just as clothes that have been washed should be worn. Without purity in action, the real nature of the Self cannot be recognized.

## Become Truly Human

Merely being endowed with the human form does not make man really human. The evolution from the animal to the human has taken millennia. The world is peopled today by billions of human beings. But how many of them display genuine human qualities? Man is still going through the birth pangs of real humanness. Only when human qualities are manifest can man claim to be truly human. In that humanness, there is Divinity. It will wear the mantle of truth. It will be the embodiment of righteousness (*dharma*), love (*prema*), and peace (*shanti*). It is only when men display these



qualities that they can be regarded as human. It would be sufficient if mankind were able to achieve at least this level of humanness.

Today we are celebrating *Guru Poornima*. The day is usually observed as an occasion for offering worship to the *guru*. There are eight different types of *gurus* who impart spiritual instruction of different kinds (*Bodha guru*, *Veda guru*, *Nishiddha guru*, *Janya guru*, *Suchaka guru*, *Vachaka guru*, *Karana guru*, and *Vihita guru*). Among these, the really important *guru* is *Vihita guru*, the preceptor who removes the doubts in the minds of the disciples and reveals to them the process of Self-discovery and Self-realization. The *guru* should destroy the darkness of ignorance of one's Reality and illumine the mind of the disciple. The illumination must result in the perception of the One Reality that is beyond Name and Form and attributes.

## Oneness in *Vibhuti*

Swami often gives to devotees the sacred ash (*vibhuti* or *bhasma*). Many persons smear their foreheads with this ash. What is the inner significance of this ash? When any object that has a name and form is completely burned, it is reduced to ashes. The name and form are gone. All things are one and the same in the final state as ashes. When *vibhuti* is given, Swami wants the recipient to understand this basic oneness (*advaitam*). The devotee should get rid of his egoism arising from the feeling of separateness (*ahamkara*) and sense of "mine" and "thine" (*mamakara*). These two are based on name and form; when they are destroyed, the underlying unity of the Divine can be realized.

People constantly talk about *Advaita*, nondualism, but spend their time dwelling in duality. One must practice what one preaches or professes. Today there are not many *gurus* who live up to their beliefs or teachings. Their actions belie their words. No purpose is served by going in search of *gurus*. There is a *guru* in each of us. It is the *Atma* principle. It is the Eternal Witness functioning as conscience in everyone. With this conscience as guide, let all actions be done.

There are three types of free will which prompt men to action: *swechcha*, *parechcha*, and *ayichcha*. "*Swechcha*" is the kind of prompting in which one decides to follow a particular course of action and is prepared for the consequences, for better or worse. "*Parechcha*" is the situation in which one is encouraged or prompted by others to undertake actions whose consequences have to be borne by him. "*Ayichcha*" is the state in which every action is regarded as the will of the Divine and the consequences, whether gain or loss, pleasure or pain, are regarded as gifts from God. Real freedom consists in submitting to the will of the Divine and not acting according to one's caprices or fancies. What is the freedom that people want? Is it to behave like dogs with no

self-restraint? Is it to descend to the level of the subhuman species? Is it to flee from one's Divine nature and indulge in demoniacal acts? What kind of freedom is this?

## **The Battle Lies Within**

In this context, I shall tell you the inner meaning of the different *yugas* (ages): *Treta Yuga*, *Dwapara Yuga*, and the present *Kali Yuga*.

In the *Treta Yuga*, the Divine elements were in one world and the demoniacal elements were in the other. At the time of the Rama Avatar, the Divine elements were in Ayodhya and Kishkinda and the demonic forces were in Dandakaranya. The two elements were in separate regions. Rama waged war against the *rakshasas* (evildoers) in Dandakaranya and protected the *rishis* (sages). This is the inner meaning of the Rama Avatar in *Treta Yuga*.

In the *Dwapara Yuga*, the Divine and demonic elements—namely, the Pandavas and the Kauravas—were in the same kingdom. In such a situation, Krishna gave His army to the Kauravas and, without wielding any weapon Himself, gave His support to the Pandavas in the great battle of Kurukshetra. He used others as His instruments.

But today, these Divine and demonic forces are battling in each human being. This is the mark of the *Kali* age. In the *Treta Yuga*, Rama fought the battle in person. In the *Dwapara Yuga*, Krishna played the role of a witness, using others as His instruments. He did not engage in the battle Himself. In the *Kali Yuga*, because the two opposing forces are inside each individual, the Lord plays the role of witness and conscience. Man has to use the power of discrimination given to him to fight the evil forces within him. He has to foster the Divine elements in him by his own efforts and by listening to the voice of his conscience. The freedom to choose has been given to man for this purpose. This freedom is to be used to discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil, and to foster Divine qualities. Instead, man is cultivating demonic qualities and forgetting the Divine qualities. This is the unique feature of the *Kali* age. In this age, each individual has to fight against the demonic forces himself and vanquish them. When this is accomplished, man's inherent Divine nature will manifest itself of its own accord.

## **Go Beyond Name and Form**

Embodiments of Love! Realize that no special *sadhana* is needed to experience the Divine in you. You must rid yourself of impure thoughts and actions. Sanctify every action you do and make it a *sadhana*. All *sadhanas* will cleanse the mind, but cannot



create Divinity. Divinity is not something that can be created. The Divine is not a created object. It is self-effulgent and present in everyone.

Here is an illustration to indicate the relationship between the Divine and the individual: On a hill, there is a big boulder. A sculptor sits on the boulder and sculpts out of it an idol of Krishna. The pieces of rock chiseled out of the boulder in making the idol are cast away. The Krishna idol is duly installed in a temple for worship. No one bothers about the pieces of stone left on the hill. But mutely they proclaim the truth: "*Thath Thwam Asi*"—"We are the same as the idol that you worship in the temple." The stone idol of Krishna and the broken pieces on the hill have come out of the same rock. They were one at the beginning. Later, one part became an idol and other parts will be used for building or other purposes. But they are all from the same rock! This basic truth has to be understood. Whether you worship it in one form, or walk over it in another form, or use it for building a house, it is all the same substance. Even though different parts of the big boulder are used for different purposes, they are all still parts of the same rock. The basic nature of all of the pieces is stone like the idol of Krishna.

Likewise, everything is basically Divine. It has the three Divine elements derived from *sat-chit-ananda*, the qualities of *asthi* (existence), *bhaati* (luminosity), and *priyam* (utility). These three are common to every object in creation. When form and name are given to them, each acquires five qualities. The universe, which is called *Prapancha*, has this five-fold characteristic. If name and form are removed, only Divinity will remain. We cannot change the appearance of the universe; but by a change in our vision, its Divinity can be recognized. Go beyond name and form and attain higher vision.

Turn your vision toward the Divine—toward the eternal, unchanging, effulgent, and pure *sat-chit-ananda*. See the Divine in everything. Realize that there is only one Divinity immanent in all things. Do not waste your life immersed in dualism. What is it you have gained from all the discourses you have listened to (or read)? If you have not progressed in the slightest extent from the state of duality, you have gained nothing from your experience. At least from now on, try to go forward toward a higher consciousness. Proceed from dualism (*Dvaita*) to *Visishtadvaita* (qualified Monism) and reach the stage of Unity, *Advaitic* Consciousness, or Monism. Do not be content to stay where you are. Having performed *sadhana*, read the scriptures, met saintly men, and listened to (or read) the discourses, you should realize the fruits of spiritual experience.

—Sri Sathya Sai Baba  
July 11, 1987



*I have now to tell you the meaning of BABA. BABA is B, A, B, A. The first "B" stands for Being; "A" stands for Awareness; the third letter, "B", stands for Bliss; the fourth letter, "A", is for Atma. The first "B" (Being) is Sat; the next letter, "A" (Awareness), is Chit; the third letter, "B" (Bliss), is Ananda; and the last letter, the fourth letter, is Atma. That means: SAT-CHIT-ANANDA is ATMA (the indwelling Divine).*

**—Baba**

World Conference, Bombay, May 1968



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