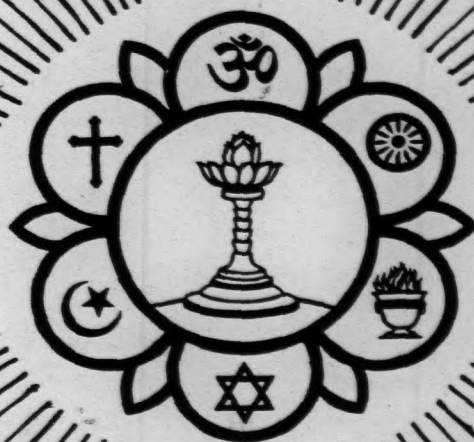




SATHYA SAI Newsletter

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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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ON GROWING OLD



Sathya Sai Baba in Kodaikanal, spring 1988.

You cannot take up the threads of spiritual discipline all of a sudden after retiring from active service. You cannot learn spiritual practices when you are physically debilitated and overwhelmed by the approach of death. How can a man think of God, his Savi-

our, when he himself is overcome by sorrow at the need to depart from this world and when all around him, his kith and kin, are weeping and wailing loud and long?

Everyone must learn the secret of happiness which consists of refusing

to shed tears for anything less than God. You have won this human body, this human life, as the reward for many lives spent in acquiring merit. You have won this chance, this unique good fortune of being able to see a holy being, to have the *darshan* of Sai. Plunging deep into the waters of this tumultuous ocean of time, you have heroically emerged from its depths with the rare pearl in your hands of Sai's grace. Do not allow it to slip from your grasp and fall into the depths again. Hold on firmly to it. Pray that you may have it forever and be filled with the joy that it confers. That is the way you can render this life fruitful....

You have endowed your children with the material instrument for life. But mere possession of the human body, however wonderful it may be, is not enough for one's peace and joy. One must know how to unravel its mysteries and how to regulate one's own impulses and hungers. This process is accomplished with the help of the teacher, and so the pupils must be instructed and encouraged to revere their teacher and to be grateful for the service rendered. Education must aim at providing the child not only a livelihood, but a life worth living. For this, the acquisition of skills in doing or reasoning is not enough. Faith in oneself and in the Divinity of oneself are absolutely essential. That is the precious treas-

ure of wisdom, stored in ancient scriptures and in the experiences of the saints and sages of all countries and faiths....

Take great care not to infect the spotlessly clean minds of children with a sense of distinction between one child and another. Impart instructions and inspiration equally to all. Select stories from the scriptures of all faiths to interest the children in the values of a good life. Speak to them of the moral heroes of all lands, the saints of all faiths, for they are all of the same stamp. No scripture enjoins violence or lays down untruth as a way of life. All religions extol truth, righteousness, peace, brotherhood, and love. All saints are embodiments of service, compassion, and renunciation.

Do not compare the various manifestations of the Divine and pronounce judgment, declaring that Rama is greater than Krishna or Siva superior to Vishnu. This line of thought is poisonous and harmful to the devout aspirant. You do not know your own self, so how dare you pronounce judgment on personalities and powers you have never experienced or understood? Rama is as unknown to you as Christ, so it is best to keep silent and revere both with equal ardor. All are manifestations of the same Divine Effulgence.

-Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume IX

THE SMILE

There are many elderly men and women living at Prasanthi Nilayam, who have made the *ashram* their home. They have earned the special grace to live out their lives in the presence of the *Avatar*. Some of them help with the *ashram* chores, such as sweeping and maintaining the grounds. Others are content to perform their ritual worship (*pujas*) and to wait to see their Lord, to have His *darshan*.

To many of them, Baba is a favored son, caring for His elderly parents. Some have known Him since He was a child in Puttaparthi. Others came to see the young Sai Baba long ago for help. Then, because of His grace and benevolence, they stayed on to live out their years in His presence. Year after year, they sit for *darshan* and watch with love as He passes. Many of them have not had an interview for twenty years.

It was June, 1983, and we were awaiting His *darshan*. It was a beautiful Puttaparthi day. The sun was hot and clouds appeared in the sky to give some protective cover. Sai came into view, radiant and loving. He paused and looked around a moment so that our hearts could absorb the joy, and then He started toward the ladies' section.

Sitting near the front was an elderly, longtime resident. She was wearing a dark gold *sari* and leaned on her stick for support. Baba passed and said in Telegu, "*Po*," (meaning "Go"). She looked around to see whom He had called. Again, He motioned. The people around her began to tell her to "Go, go." She thought they were teasing her, and she motioned with her hand for them to stop. They were insistent; even the volunteer was telling her to "Go forward." Slowly she stood up, not believing He had called her. So many years had passed. Even as she stood and Baba motioned again for her to come forward, she kept looking around. Finally, she moved toward the temple (*mandir*) with slow steps. She kept looking back to see if Sai, her Krishna, was teasing her. We had heard stories of how He used to tease these elderly residents. He would go into their rooms, check their possessions, and tell them that they had "too much luggage." Often they had only pictures of Baba, a few *saris*, and some food.

When the lady reached the veranda, she smiled. It was a beautiful smile of disbelief. It slipped out as she tried to cover it with her hand. She sat down at the very edge of the

veranda. *Mataji* motioned her forward, nearer to the door, since she was the first person called. Slowly, the elderly lady moved forward, looking at Baba for approval. He did not turn around, for He was busy giving *darshan*. Eventually others came up to join her, and they all went inside, into the interview room. We all waited, eager to see the result of Sai's love.

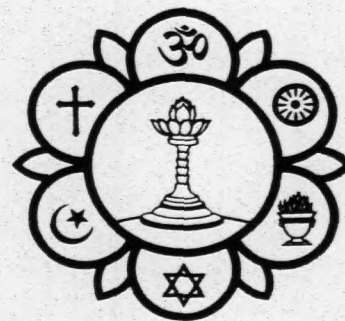
Later, when she came out, her smile was beatific. Keeping her eyes on the ground, leaning on her staff, she would take a few steps and smile broadly. She tried not to smile, and with effort, would control it, but after a few, slow steps, there it was again. It was a radiant smile, for it came straight from that place in the heart that only God knows.

The treasured packets of holy ash (*vibhuti*) were tied into the shoulder piece of her *sari*. They were held as the most precious of all gifts. But her smile was Baba's gift to us. Even as she left the area and made her way slowly up to the hill, she kept looking back and smiling.

—**Anne Sohani**
Flushing, New York

Krishna said: "If you seek the steady, genuine, pure state of bliss, you must be attached to Me. Whoever performs spiritual practices after attaching himself to Me, with a view to liberate himself from old age and senility, will know all that is to be known of action and its consequences (karma), the Indwelling Divinity (Atma), and the Eternal Absolute (Brahman). If I am worshipped in this way, the worshipper will develop equanimity and full control of the vagaries of the mind. Besides, such a person will allow his thought to dwell on Me without forgetting Me even in his last moments. In that way, he will reach Me; that is to say, he will merge with Me."

— **Sathya Sai Baba**
Geetha Vahini



Baba's symbol, the *sarva dharma* logo which represents the unity of all major religions.

THE ASPIRANT'S WAY THROUGH LIFE

In order to achieve victory while inquiring into the nature of the In-dwelling Divine (the *Atma*), one has to pass through the four stages of life (*asramas*) recognized and recommended by the scriptural texts of *sanathana dharma*. While passing through each stage, aware of the duties and responsibilities prescribed in the texts, each one learns a quantum of the knowledge that leads to *Atmic* awareness.

It is only after the childhood years that the *asramas* will have an impact. Until then, the child's routine involves gathering special knowledge about duties and responsibilities. Everyone, while alive, will experience childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age, and senescence, as stages of growth. There are also corresponding stages in the growth of wisdom.

In the first stage of childhood, when accepted as a pupil by a *guru* (preceptor), the student is led from ignorance and innocence into the world of knowledge. After that, he or she has to serve and obey the *guru* without feeling burdened and bound. In the second stage of youth, the pupil has to share with society the means and measures for its progress and security, start earning a

living and spending income wisely, and set an example to younger children, guiding them into socially useful paths.

In the third stage of adulthood, intelligent attention has to be paid not only to one's own advancement and the advancement of the family and society, but also to the advancement of people generally. That, too, is the responsibility of the adults, and they must acquire the necessary skills. They must have wider visions of the peace and prosperity of all mankind, and try to contribute to both within the limits of their capacity and resources.

Old age is the fourth stage. By the time one reaches this stage of the journey, he or she must have discovered that the joys available in this world are trivial and fleeting, and be equipped with the higher knowledge of spiritual joy, available through delving into the inner spring of bliss through life experiences; the heart must have softened and become filled with compassion.

Elders must be engrossed in promoting the progress of all beings without distinction, and they must be eager to share the knowledge they have accumulated and to give others

the benefit of their experiences.

Thus occupations and resulting attitudes have been assigned to the various stages of human life. Alongside knowledge, a youth has to cultivate the good qualities of humility, reverence, devotion to God, and steadfast faith, to engage in good works and enjoy them for the sheer pleasure they confer. During adulthood, together with the earning of money and the improvement of society, attention must be paid to the promotion and preservation of virtues and to the observance of moral codes. Steps should be taken to improve one's righteous behavior and spiritual discipline (*sadhana*). All levels of consciousness have to be purified and then directed to holy tasks.

During middle age, besides fostering the family and society, indi-

viduals must live exemplary lives to inspire their children and to demonstrate elevating ideals worth practicing in society. No attempt should be made to sidestep the duty to society and to benefit only the family, for such behavior will fail to benefit anyone. The God principle (*Brahman*) can be realized only by purifying one's activities and utilizing those activities to serve oneself by serving all. As long as the caste into which one was born, the intellectual equipment one has gained, or even the scriptures (*Vedas*) which have been mastered are relied on, *Brahman* can never be realized.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Sathya Sai Vahini,
as quoted in

Sanathana Sarathil

August 1980, pages 169-170

ASRAMA: MORE ON THE ASPIRANT'S WAY OF LIFE

There are four stages of life (*asramas*). If you know the requirements of each, you can decide which you are to fulfill, examining your own achievement, progress, and aptitude. The four stages are those of the student (*Brahmacharya*), the householder (*grihasta*), the forest dweller or recluse (*vanaprastha*), and the renunciant (*sanyasa*).

Student Stage

Students keep their minds free from the delusion of the world. They are constantly engaged in thinking about God. They do not see or hear those things which are merely entertaining; they pursue only that which is in good taste. They do not yield to joy or grief; they keep their consciousness, intelligence, and mind

in good trim by unremitting contemplation of the formless Reality (*Brahmatatwa*).

Householder Stage

Being married and living with the spouse and children does not constitute being a householder (*grihasta*), as many people think. Without giving up the duties assigned to one's place in life, a person who has selected the householder way has to treat all with equal consideration, be aware of the rights of the elders and the obligations of the juniors, be full of sympathy and willingness to help, treat everyone with loving kindness, especially dependents, grow wiser with each new experience of the world, become acquainted with the scriptures (*sastras*), and be alert to discriminate between actions which are correct (*dharmic*) and those which are incorrect (*adharmic*).

Householders must also rise above the eight egoisms: the conceit that develops from family, wealth, character, personal beauty, youth, scholarship, place of birth, and even accomplishments in austerity. They must be conscious of the four goals: righteousness (*dharma*), prosperity (*artha*), desire (*kama*), and liberation (*moksha*), i.e., prosperity won through righteousness and desire only for liberation.

The householder will take no pride in material possessions even though

having them in large measure, will utilize a portion of the day in the service of others, will have no intention to harm any other household, will deserve the trust of his or her spouse, and have a trusted spouse, each understanding the other and having full faith in the other. Such are the ways of the true householder.

Forest Dweller Stage

The forest dweller or recluse feels that all dualities are untrue and baseless, gives up all desires, drops all attachment to the world, dislikes living in populous places, and is eager to achieve victory through prayerful repetition of a sacred text (*mantra*) or by chanting the Lord's name (*japa*). He or she leads a life of austerity, eating only uncooked food—mostly fruits and leaves—in moderation, moves in the company of sages and great teachers (*maharishis*), listens to their teachings, and proceeds unfalteringly along the path of realizing the Lord.

The recluse must have the approval of the spouse when moving out into solitude to lead a life of spiritual discipline (*sadhana*), and must also make sufficient provision for dependent children. If willing to go, however, the spouse must be taken along on the spiritual journey. They must henceforth live as brother and sister and not as husband and wife. Provided this new relationship is maintained, the reclusive life may

be lived in the home. On the other hand, if the old life is continued, just living in the forest does not constitute *vanaprastha*.

The *vanaprasthas* must not stay in the residences of married people. They must observe the vows prescribed for each season of the year. They have to brave the rain, the sun, and the cold in their season. They must be vigilant against being drawn towards physical pleasures by the fickleness of the mind. They must seek and find pleasure only in the contemplation of the Lord and in dwelling upon His glory.

Renunciant Stage

Renunciants (*sanyasins*) are above and beyond all promptings of sensual or objective pleasure. They consider contemplation of the Lord as the very breath of life, essential to existence, and they derive joy only from this contemplation. They know that wealth and kinship, affection and attachment are all momentary.

They wear the ochre robe of the mendicant; they do not live in populous places; they live on whatever little food they get; they do not decry the place where they are not given food; they do not eat twice in the same place or sleep two days in succession in the same place; they even conquer the temptation to sleep and eat. They care little for the rigors

of the seasons; they are ever joyful in the company of the Lord, whom they invoke through meditation (*dhyana*).

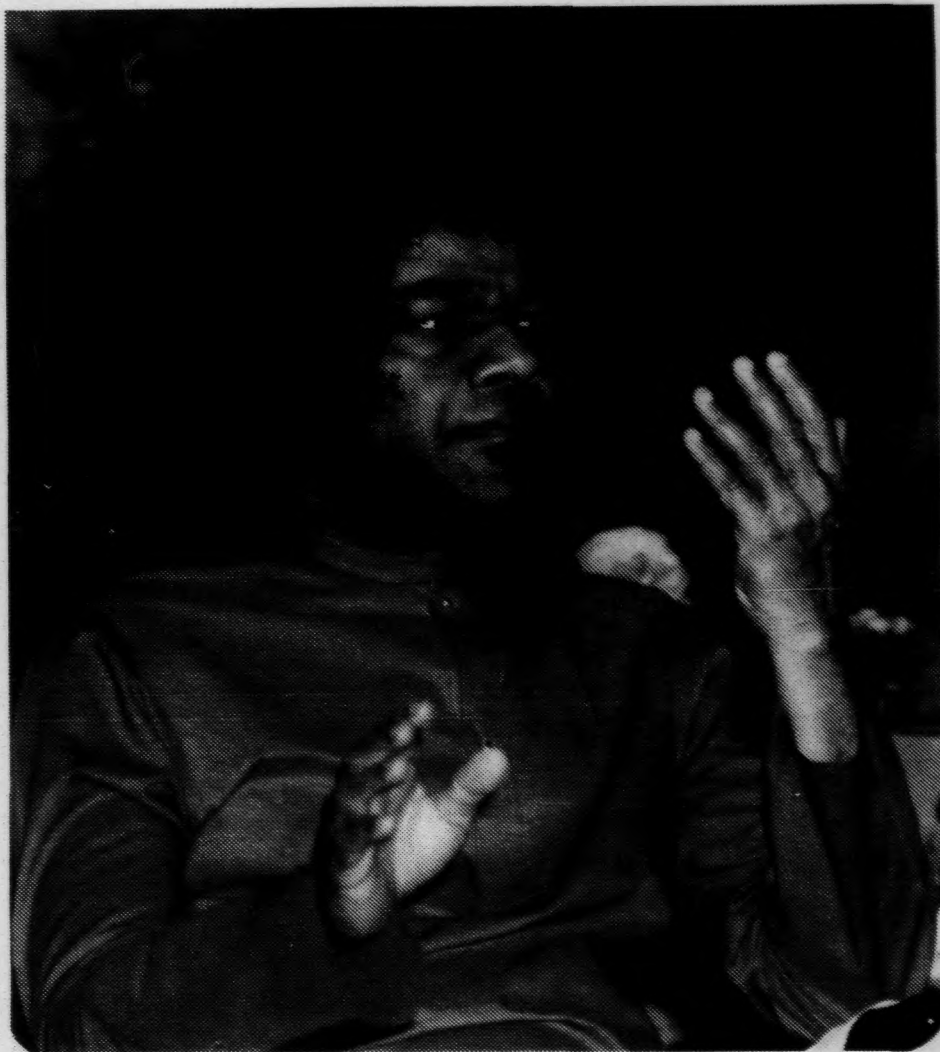
The renunciants (*avadhuthas*), like the *vanaprasthas* and the *sanyasins*, must also be free from attachment and hatred; they do not take any interest in their surroundings; whether in a forest or town, they do not care in the least. They have no relations with others. They pay no heed to past, present, or future. They move about on thorn and stone, silent, smiling to themselves, ever joyous, ever alert, seeking no comfort or shelter, seeking no place to sleep or take food, for bliss (*ananda*) is their food (*ahara*).

There are *avadhuthas* even today in the Himalayas, in silent caves, immersed in the bliss of knowing the God within (*Atmananda*). Not all can see them. Only your good fortune can bring you into their presence.

One is bound by the obligations and duties related to the body, as long as the *jivatma* (the soul in man) is not cognized. When that is discovered and known, there is no more need. One is aware of *jivatma* until the stream joins the sea, until the stream of *jivi* reaches the source from which it came, the sea of *Paramatma* (God).

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Geetha Vahini
pages 238-243

YOU SAID, "YES"



Baba listening to devotional songs.

When you said "Yes" to Me, you gave up the right to be like everyone else. That is why you draw experiences to yourself that will cleanse you of all that does not fit who you are. You will do this over and over, again and again, until I make you see that the past no longer works.

I challenge you and tempt you every day with your past, so that you may see that the past is the

ultimate delusion. When you said "Yes" to Me, you gave Me your body, your thoughts, and your actions. When they don't suit the new you, the discomfort is unbearable. It will be so **every** time until you fully realize what you are doing. Then, and only then, will you completely give up desire. This is the only way that you will learn.

Very seldom does man learn by quiet reminders. His desire is beset by pitfalls, which are placed there so that I may do My work.

It is only when you totally surrender to Me that the temptations will fade. I will never give up on you. Every time you slip, it will become harder to bear and more difficult to remedy. Finally, you will tire of your foolishness. I love you, and, though not completely aware of it, you **did** say "Yes."

—Alexis Cunningham
Laguna Beach,
California

A CRABBIT OLD WOMAN WROTE THIS

This selection first appeared when an old lady died in the geriatric ward of a hospital near Dundee, Scotland. At first it seemed as if she had left nothing of any value, but then a nurse, going through her possessions, found this poem. The quality of it so impressed the staff that they circulated it. The poem is now a classic for those who care about and care for the elderly.

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?
Are you thinking when you are looking at me:
A crabbit old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes,

Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice—"I do wish you'd try."
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.

Who, unresisting or not, lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding, the long day to fill.
Is that what you are thinking, is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse, you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I use at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters, who love one another.

A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet;
A bride soon at twenty—my heart gives a leap,
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.

At twenty-five now I have young of my own,
Who need me to build a secure, happy home;
A woman of thirty, my young now grow fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.

At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my man's beside me to see I don't mourn;
At fifty once more babies play 'round my knee.
Again we know children, my loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead,
I look at the future, I shudder with dread,
For my young are all rearing young of their own,
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.

I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel
'Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body it crumbles, grace and vigor depart.
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,
And I'm loving and living life over again.

I think of the years all too few—gone too fast,
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, nurses, open and see
Not a crabbit old woman, look closer—see ME.

—Name Unknown

The suffering one feels for other people will leave, but the compassion remains.

— Sathya Sai Baba

THE VISITOR

My seventy-six-year-old mother told me this story. When she was finished telling it, I knew it was something I wanted to share with others.

It began when my mother's eighty-five-year-old neighbor came to visit. The visitor had not been at Mother's house long when she started talking about her beliefs and feelings about heaven. She emphatically told Mother that she knew when this life was over there was nothing else, no one to answer to, nothing to atone for. Finished! Done! Of this "fact" she was certain. No God. No higher being. Nothing.

Mother sat listening, not saying much. She explained to me that her neighbor had few friends, little family, and many fears. Therefore Mom felt it was important to let her speak, to let her get it off her chest.

Continuing with little things that were bothering her, the visitor said her son had been very ill. She stated that she had "prayed for his health to be returned!" She went on to say that her prayers had been answered. Yes, the Lord had been good to her!

Mother was astonished to hear her visitor speak of prayer after openly

denying God and life after death. The guest was not aware of the contradictions in her statements. She was unaware that, in time of need, she had reached out for the hand of the very Essence that she had vigorously asserted did not exist.

Mother said to me upon finishing the story, "You see, dear, even though Estelle denied God, He was there for her. He would not be denied. It is the same for each of us. Though we may pretend God does not exist, He will be known even in the most unlikely situations. He will speak out from the depths of each soul and be heard. Though ignored and shunned, God will shine forth from each heart, serving, nourishing, and tending even those who do not recognize His voice."

-J. F. Ziegler
Gilbert, Arizona

Grow old along with me !
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in His hand.

- Robert Browning

WAIT, WAIT

"Patience is all the strength a man needs." When I first saw this sign at Sai Baba's *ashram*, I knew it was perfect for me, for I considered myself to be an impatient New Yorker.

In the three-and-a-half weeks I spent at the *ashram* on that first trip, I was forced to make some headway with this problem. I had to wait in lines at least four times a day — twice for the sight of Baba (*darshan*) and twice for meals. It was difficult at first, but I soon learned to say my chosen sacred words (*mantra*) while I was waiting.

When I returned to New York City, where everyone is in a rush, I found I was more patient when waiting in the supermarket line, for example; and I began to notice my impatience throughout the day. I tried, as Baba suggests, to W-A-T-C-H: to watch my Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character, and Heart.

Slowly I began to realize that, if we had patience, we would be in the NOW, in each moment—not looking to the past or to the future. This has been driven home to me while doing hospice work. For, when working with the elderly, I am constantly alert to their need to be slow and precise. The task at hand could be a basic one like sitting up in bed, but it cannot be rushed.

Each moment is of utmost importance to enable the patient, if possible, to feel pain-free and secure. Actually, to take it one step further, to truly be in the NOW implies no thought of whether one is patient or not, for one just IS. Only later would one think about whether one had been patient or not.

Unfortunately, I have only had an occasional experience of this IS-ness. I still have to continually remind myself that whatever I am doing, be it eating, talking, working, traveling, whatever, it is all spiritual discipline (*sadhana*); it is all to achieve my ultimate goal of experiencing my own Divinity.

Another important aspect has become clear: patience is directly related to desire. The more patient, the less the desire and vice versa. And, of course, desire is directly related to ego and attachment.

Recently I became aware that patience has a much deeper meaning than I had imagined. It is more than just waiting your turn in line, waiting for someone to finish his sentence before speaking, or even doing service with care and concern.

This insight came to me when I was in a bank in New York City. A man with

a big cigar hanging from his mouth came up to me and said, "Are you in this line?"

"No, I am waiting for my friend," I said, pointing to the woman at the teller's window.

"Everything takes so long these days," he anxiously confided to me. "It gets worse all the time, don't you think?"

"I guess it's a lesson in patience," I heard myself saying. (I don't usually say things like that to strangers.)

"I don't need any lessons!" he blurted out furiously. I remained silent. After a short while he said, incredulously, "You know, if everyone had patience, what a different world it would be."

"Yes, there probably wouldn't even be any wars," I responded. With this statement, I began to see the depth in the word "patience."

When I first read the sign at the *ashram*, I knew I needed to become more patient, but I also thought patience was less important than the other five values Baba often speaks of: Truth, Right Action, Love, Peace, and Non-violence. I now realize, however, that without patience there would be no way of experiencing any of these values.

And I also see that if we had the quality of patience, we would automatically have all the rest. It is also clear that having patience implies a deep faith in God—to be able to wait and to trust that we will receive what is best for our spiritual growth. We must trust in God's perfect timing. And, most of all, we must remember that we are not the doers; we must surrender to His will.

The mastering of patience **IS** all the strength a man needs to achieve his ultimate goal. We must "Wait, wait," as Baba so often tells us at *darshan*.

—Judy Warner
New York, New York

You are fully aware of the characteristics of this Kaliyuga (a difficult era) we are passing through. You find around you injustice, irregularities, immorality, and untruth with all their devilish attributes and atrocities. But we have to march ahead in spite of all this with a quiet, tolerant, and benign attitude towards life.

— Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume IX

TEN DECADES

Let me tell you that married life, being in the householder stage of life, will not bar your way to realization. Look upon the spouse and the children as a sacred trust, and serve them in that spirit. Prepare yourself to become celibate, and practice that spiritual discipline from the age of fifty. The five senses have to be mastered by the time five decades of your life are over.

At the conclusion of six decades, you will have conquered the six foes: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and hate. When you are seventy, you must have become ready to merge with the seven sages, the seven seas, and the seven colors of the solar rays. That is to say, you must be far, far above mundane desires and ideals, and as near the point of mergence as possible by virtue of your adherence to spiritual discipline.

Eighty must see you in line with the deities that preside over the eight cardinal points, more or less divine in attributes and characteristics. Ninety takes you, or rather should take you, to the realm of the nine planets, into the realm of the supreme. When you reach the hundred mark, having lived out the ten decades, you must have mastered ten senses: the five senses of action

and the five senses of knowledge, and become wisdom incarnate, with no trace of action or desire for the consequences. You and the Absolute are One and indivisible!

—**Sathya Sai Baba**

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume VII



These are two messages from Baba as they appeared at Prasanthi Nilayam. *There is no happiness greater than contentment; and Patience is all the strength man needs.*

CAN I DO BABA'S WORK AT MY AGE ?

You **are** doing Baba's work. Whenever you act in the spirit of love and forgiveness, you are doing as He wills. When your heart is free of judgment and embraces the agony of another as your own, you do His work. When you are present and egoless in the face of another's despair, when you struggle to overcome your fear, when you put your trust in the Divine Will, you are doing Baba's work.

Doing His work is not an action separate from your everyday activities, nor is it isolated acts of altruism. It is the way you choose to exist within the very fiber of your being.

Dedicate each day to Baba. Give Him your will and your heart. Place each of your concerns in His all-powerful hands, and embrace whatever happens, be it pain or pleasure. Offer your experience of life to God, for your life **is** God. "Thy will be done" means simply that, no matter how you may resist and struggle, you will be living as one of God's expressions of Himself. Only your ego and self-will can perceive it as being anything else.

Today is the day God made. This is the day Baba has given you to express Him. All you need to remember is that you are already the image of His will. It is only when you resist His expression that you falter and identify yourself with pain.

Be at peace. Live in peace. You are an expression of all that is Divine. Accept your earthly journey as a sunbeam accepts its radiation of the light. There is nothing to do but BE.

—**Skyler Anne Freimann**
Portland, Oregon

Real wisdom consists of recognizing that man is pure bliss, bliss that continues from the past into the present and persists into the future. Escape from grief for a brief period of time or the temporary attainment of joy, these are not signs of genuine liberation.

— **Sathya Sai Baba**
Geetha Vahini

THE ANCIENT WISDOM OF ACTION

It has been shown that, among all rituals, the noblest is to uphold the sanctity of truth. It has further been said that of all the lofty ideals proclaimed through the generations, the quality of patriotism, the feeling of love for one's motherland, is far above everything else. Yet another cardinal principle handed down is that, more than your life, you should value your honor and dignity. Today, unfortunately, such lofty and noble ideals have been forsaken, and the people of this great land have been reduced to the state of a mighty elephant who does not recognize its own prowess and strength.

Two Mighty Teachings: Action and Knowledge

Embodiments of love, the primary and ultimate truth, that which does not suffer change under the influence of time and circumstance, which can face the onslaught of all calamities, has been the greatest value in India. The cultural heritage handed down to us is the ancient wisdom or eternal truth (*sanathana dharma*). This wisdom takes the form of two mighty streams of thought. The first is the concept of action. The sages of yore understood

the section of the *Vedas* which dealt with human activity and its results (*karma*), and translated this knowledge into their own experiences by involving themselves in activities that strengthened and purified their faith and devotion.

The second powerful teaching contained in the scriptures (*Puranas*) is the attainment of knowledge (*jnana*) through selfdiscipline. The sages (*rishis*) accepted this teaching and proclaimed its validity. They lived their lives without desires, with attachment only to the Indwelling Divinity (*Atma*). They purified their minds and intellects through meditation, repetition of the name of God, and contemplation of His form. Thus their understanding of the *Atma* shone fully and with splendor, and they served as examples to others.

The two great teachings of action and knowledge are well coordinated. The result of action is knowledge, the basis of knowledge is action, and complementing both is service. Man has to do what is given to him to do, and it is through action that one can cleanse one's heart and attain *Atmic* bliss. Man's primary duty is to perform action motivated by lofty aims and ambitions. But we should not give room to the feeling that the fruit is a direct

result of our action. Man is not responsible either for action or for the fruits thereof. Neither is it good to have the sense of ego that "I alone should reap the benefits of my actions." Such undue ambition is an obstacle to the cleansing of the heart and realization of the *Atma*.

Action As Worship

True sacrifice consists of letting go of undue aspirations for the fruits of your action. Action then becomes a devotional practice or *karma yoga*. The doctrine of *karma* gives you an idea as to what man's duty is and how he should go about performing this duty. This doctrine further specifies that action just for the sake of action, duty just for the sake of duty, should be transformed into a process of worship. That which you do for your own ends and for selfish reasons cannot be called true action. When you become selfless, egoless, and have no desire for the fruit of your actions, then all activity truly becomes worship.

Action dedicated to God holds the promise of a pure character and control of the senses. The elements of universal love, patience, sympathy, and compassion are the foundation of *karma yoga*. Every individual should recognize that the body has been given to us

for the sake of performing selfless service. When man fails to grasp the significance of such service and of action as worship, he is subjected to unhappiness and distress.

There are those who look down upon activities designed to help the destitute, the elderly, the poor, and the helpless. This is a mistake. Actually, it is the primary duty given to everyone to perform such actions. You must realize that those things which have been given to you in the world are not for your exclusive use. The rains fall, the rivers flow, the crops grow, and the sun and moon rise. Have all these been given for the sake of one individual? Whatever you see around you in this creation is for the sake of every person, every being. We should discard the petty feelings of possession. Until we do, we will never experience peace or joy.

Achieving True Equality

Today, men commonly speak of the lofty ideal of bringing equality into society. We think about it and draw up plans for achieving it, but such plans remain on paper. When it comes to action, there is nothing to show. You say, and the term "socialism" indicates, that all the material possessions, all the luxuries and comforts of

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life, and all the wealth and money should be distributed equally. Certainly that is a lofty ideal, but it is not possible to bring it about. You may distribute such things as wealth, comforts, and luxuries equally, but can you also distribute hopes and aspirations equally? Only when there is commonality of hopes and aspirations can true equality be achieved.

For example, one person owns ten acres of land, while a second person owns two. Wanting these two to be equal, you take four acres away from the person owning ten and give it to the person owning two. It certainly pleases the one who had two acres, but does it make the owner of the ten acres happy? It is not possible to bring about equality of material possessions in this manner. When you look at material things, you must also look at the force behind them, the Supreme Being. It is only when you see the oneness in diversity that you can bring about equality.

When you fully realize that unity is the same as diversity, you can bring about equality. We have sweets of many kinds: jelly, jam, and the like—but there is only one preeminent ingredient, and that is sugar. You must recognize the sugar in all the different sweets. In the same manner, when you recognize the one Supreme Life Force present in all beings, then you can bring about equality in the true sense of the

word. Today, all who claim to be dedicated to the service of others and to bringing about ascendancy of the Divinity in mankind should be trying to bring about equality of actions and thoughts, not of material possessions.

Love, The Basis of Everything

The basis and the lifegiving essence of everything is love. Once you have lost sight of this love, you have lost the purpose of your life. The more you love, the more love will grow.

But the type of love which is only a link between one individual and another is not true love. Neither is the link between an individual and his material possessions true love. If you delve a little deeper into this, you will find that this "love" is only for the sake of one's self. It is to achieve your own selfish ends that you attempt to mask your desires by calling them "love." Only that which is selfless, pure, and sublime can truly be called love. Love can neither be taken, nor given on loan. It must be freely offered. Love is the fruit which is born of the flower of your good deeds. Only when we engage in selfless action and selfless service can we experience the essence of pure love.

Sacrifice Adds Zest To Life

Today, in the world, you witness progress in many fields: medical, scientific, political, etc. But man is unable to overcome his petty thoughts and ideas. There is a selfish motive behind whatever he does, thinks, or talks about. Man has become a puppet in the hands of his own ego. There is no unity at all; there is just a big zero. Even the things you call sacred and pure fall far short of having those ideal virtues. Unity and sacredness can be achieved only through the medium of sacrifice, not through comfort and luxury. Therefore, embark upon the task of sacrifice.

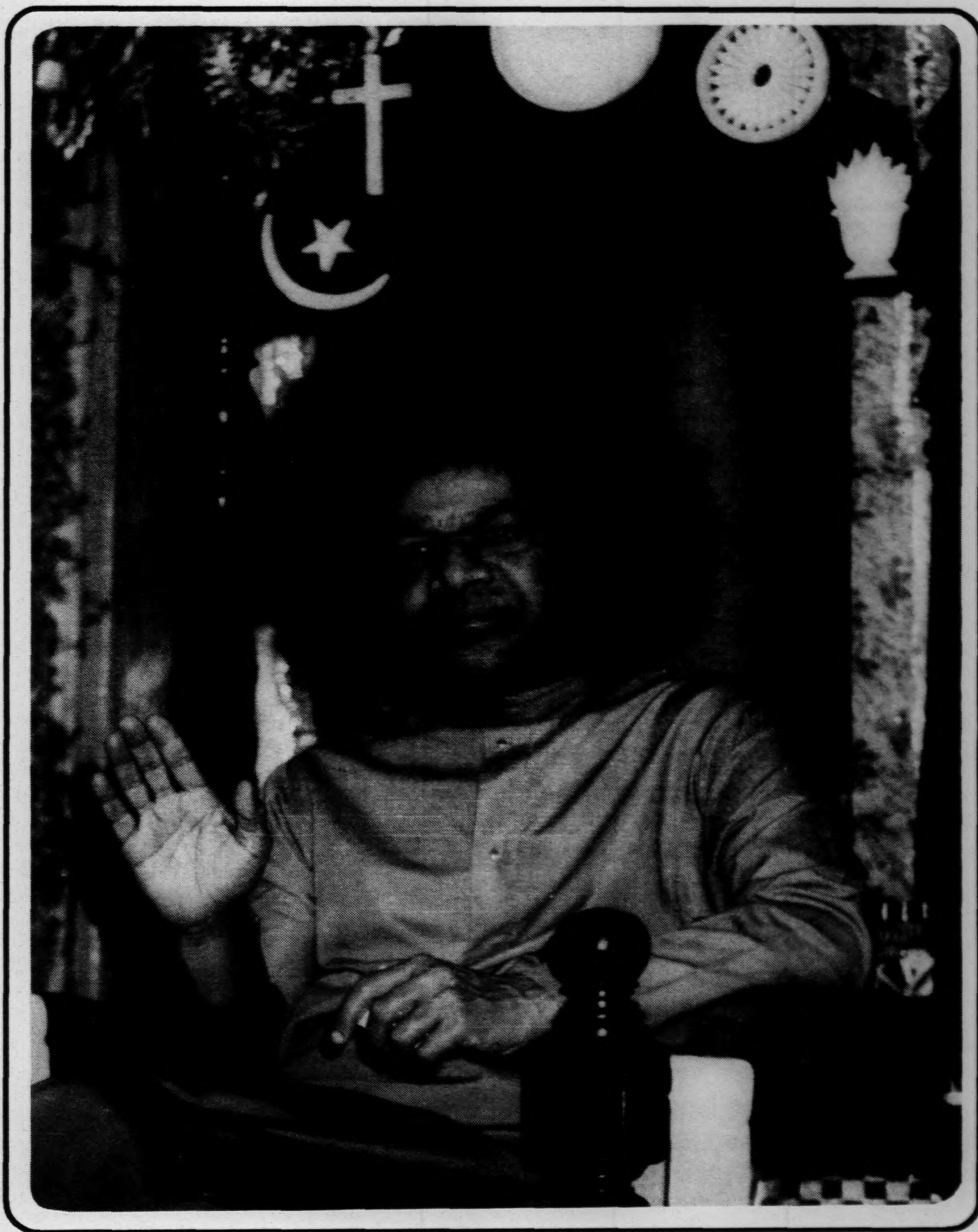
Through sacrifice you will come to know that your real nature is charity. Charity does not mean that you have given some money to an individual or an organization. The removal of all of the evil thoughts that are within you is true charity. Charity will, in turn, confer purity upon you. Once you have purity, there will be unity. And once you have unity, you can reach divinity.

Sacrifice is seldom found in today's society. A person may be called a great devotee, an aspirant for spiritual progress, or a great scientist, but, when you look for sacrifice, you do not find

much in him. We should try to make our life "tasty." Service is the salt which enhances the flavor of life. Universal love is what sustains and nourishes your life. Sacrifice gives fragrance to your life. Life should be tasty, fragrant, loving, and full of vigor and vitality. These are the four cardinal things which add meaning to life.

When you sit down to a meal, if there is no salt in the food, you leave it on your plate. This food could be digested in about two hours, but if it is not tasty, you do not care to eat it. What can be said, then, about an insipid life that goes on for sixty, seventy, or eighty years? A life lived this long should be full of flavor.

What is it that makes life genuinely zestful? Is it strength or an accumulation of things? No! Our primary aim should be to acquire good character. Without character, life is a living death. We must not aspire to buildings, position, factories, or industries, but to character. In order to achieve this worthy goal, we must try to spend a fraction of our time in service.



Sathya Sai Baba in His chair which displays the symbols of the major religions of the world.

Transform Work Into Worship

We should not feel that we are living just because there is a heartbeat. Only when we perform worthy actions can we say that we are alive. An inert machine will rust. If this is the fate of an inert machine, what about this body which has in it the spark of life? Every day we must resolve to perform service. Whatever we have to do must be looked upon as something divine and noble. Only then will work be transformed into worship.

With this lofty ideal before you, your body, thoughts, and actions become pure. This body has been given to you for the sake of others; it has not been given just for the sake of continuously loading and unloading. Maturation and healthy growth take place through service. A flower may one day become a fruit, or it may not. A green fruit may ripen, or it may not. But, once a fruit has ripened, it has to fall to the ground. In the same manner, the body has to collapse someday. Before it collapses and decays, we should recognize its purpose and broaden our vision to encompass all whom we now call "others."

The Greatest Is Love

Truth, Right Action, Love, Peace, and Nonviolence are vital for every being. Among these, the noblest and greatest is love. Therefore, cultivate and develop the ideal of love in your hearts. Fill your hearts with love. Fill your lives with love. These are goals worthy of your aspirations.

Embodiments of love, when we embark on a journey, we are told that the plane is due at seven o'clock; or, if we want to travel by bus, we know that the bus will leave at five o'clock; or we may be going by train and know that we have to be at the station by two o'clock. Once we know the scheduled time, we arrange to be present and are naturally disappointed if the carrier is late. We become disheartened and dejected and begin expressing anger toward the train, the bus, or the plane. We don't stop there, but we blame the crew and ticketsellers and expand our anger to include the officials too. When we succumb to anger in regard to such common things as a train or a bus, how will we be able to remain loving in other areas of this life?

The body, which is full of life and vitality, often is not being used for the

purpose which was intended. What can you say about that? This life is one of sacredness, and, of all life forms, the body of a human being is the most difficult to get. If we don't tread the path of love while we have this body, we are wasting the precious opportunity that life gives us.

In order that we might live a good life, we should try to make love its very essence. Those people who claim to be educated, the intellectuals, are causing more harm to the country today than the illiterates. We speak of education, but education does not mean just an acquaintance with books. Familiarity with books may be necessary for a few years, but book knowledge can become an addiction. The scholar goes on reading and accumulating knowledge and, in the process, loses sight of his own inner knowing. He may continue to accumulate knowledge then, without understanding his own nature. In the pursuit of knowledge, he engages in discussions, arguments, and debates, but he doesn't grasp the whole truth, the ultimate truth. The foolish man assumes the arrogant feeling that, through his education, through his studies, he has mastered a great many things. What a mistake! That is only the reflection of his own ego. As long as he has this ego, he cannot achieve anything except dispute, agitation, and lack of peace.

Curb Desires And Find Peace

What we should look for is peace, but where can we get it? Not in the world outside nor in material possessions. Peace is only to be found in the heart. Recognize, when you say, "I want peace," what these three words mean. The "I" stands for ego, "want" stands for desire. When ego and desire are removed, that which is left is "peace." Today man is carried into the sky by his thoughts; there is no limit to his aspirations. Thus he is subjected to despair and despondency. Despair is in proportion to desires, so by curbing our desires, we lessen our feelings of hopelessness.

Because this journey of life is a long, winding one, we must try to reduce our baggage step by step. You may have seen these words in the railway compartments: "Less baggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure." On this journey of life our desires are our baggage. The fewer our desires, the greater our comfort, and, without desire, life can be a pleasure.

In Vedantic parlance, this reduction of desire has been called detachment (*vairagya*). Detachment does not mean that you leave your family and material

things behind to retire to the forest. What it really means is to perform your tasks and duties and uphold the duty and dignity (*dharma*) of the family. But, at the same time, try to curb your desires. Certainly, you have a right to look for the materials which are necessary for what you have to do. It is only when your desires become excessive that you have despair.

We should not do harm to others. Within your limitations, do good to everyone. This should be our aim in life. This is what has been given to us by the great sage and saint Vyasa, as the quintessence of all the scriptures: "Help ever, hurt never." Our love should be such that it gives us strength. It is this spirit of love that has to be nurtured, not a "split" of love but a "spirit" of love.

When love grows in strength day by day, it will ultimately blossom forth as service. We should look upon society this way: we are for the sake of society, and society is for the sake of all. Through the ideal of service, try to do some good to others around you. This same ideal has also been given to us by Buddha. It is through such service that you will progress from action and its consequences (*karma*), to righteous action or duty (*dharma*), on to understanding of the great secret (*marma*) that God is the only Actor, and finally to the realization of Reality (*Brahma*).

Proper Use of the Intellect

One's own individual nature should be understood through the process of the intellect. What's the point of having an intellect if we do not know how to use it?

Well, you say that you are clever and have intelligence, but you do not know how to use your intelligence. Is that being intelligent? You must try to develop your intellect and use it to benefit society. This does not mean merely drawing up plans. No, it means to serve others with detachment. Make your intellect useful for the sake of the society around you.

Today, man is subjected to grief because of two things: he is becoming more and more clever, but he is not using the faculty of intelligence in the proper way. Because he is excessively intelligent, he is not able to understand the simplest truths. So what happens is that, in order to attain the truth which is difficult to grasp, he ignores the truth which is easy to understand.

So what is the proper use of intelligence? Is it merely to look at the shortcomings of others? No, it should not be so. Once a person entertains critical thoughts, he loses sight of his

own nature. A creeping plant can wind itself around a tree, thus shielding the tree from view. In the same manner, bad qualities can surround someone and shield his true nature from view. So, to remove these bad thoughts and qualities, you must do service. Do not disparage service; it is not a petty thing. To think that it is, only reveals your own pettiness. Service is a vital step to the realization of your true nature. Sanctify your life by bringing help and solace to others.

Three Steps to Self-Realization

Man's life is not like a drop of oil floating on the surface of water. You must become one with others. You must travel from the state of "I" to the state of "we." Then, from the state of "we," travel to the state of "He." This is the journey we understand through this ancient culture of ours: from dualism (dvaita), we travel to qualified nondualism (vishista advaita), and then on to nondualism (advaita) which reveals the ultimate nature of Reality.

This lesson is contained in all religions. In the early stages of His ministry, Jesus very often said, "I am the messenger of God." And, at a later

stage, He said, "I am the son of God." Ultimately He said, "I and My Father are One." These three statements represent dualism, qualified nondualism, and nondualism or unity. These same stages are also expressed in the statements: "I am in the light", "The light is in me," and "I am the light." Every religion, every school of thought, every doctrine, teaches these three stages of spiritual development. Today, we say that we know the three levels. But merely knowing them is not enough. From a state of being simply conscious, such as that present in all life forms, you must travel to conscience, or being conscious with discrimination. From conscience, you must go on to a higher consciousness. This is another way of describing the same three steps. Consciousness is the lifegiving force present at all times. From this vital force you have derived the ability to discriminate between selfish and unselfish thoughts and behavior, developing what we term "conscience." It is when we fail to follow the conscience that our lives become so selfish and so full of suffering. However, it does not have to be so.

Let's broaden our vision and let our thoughts and actions be pure. True spirituality does not consist of performing rituals; it means recognizing God as present in all men, that is, the *Atmatatwa*. We have some under-

standing of the body, the thoughts, the mind, the senses, and so on, but it is the soul or *Atma* which is the very basis of things. We should try to realize this *Atma*. Right from the moment you arise until the moment you go to bed, you continue to speak of "my car, my family, my house, my job," and so on. But you never ask the question: "Who am I?" You may say, "This is my body, but I am not the body; this is my mind, but I am not the mind; this is my intellect, but I am not the intellect; this is my heart, but I am not the heart." This is a thought process which will lead you to Self-realization. To borrow

a phrase from Vedanta, this is called "not this, not this," or "*nethi, nethi*." Though you may not immediately be able to answer the question "Who am I?" when you begin to discover what you are **not**, you are taking a step toward understanding your true nature.

—Sathya Sai Baba
*A Divine Message given at
The Academy of Music
Bangalore, India
December 11, 1985*

God's Ageless Children

When you feel you are forgotten,
The Father is always near.
And if the world no longer cares,
To Him you still are dear.

God cherished you when you were babes
And far beyond that time,
As you began your appointed cycle
Of an endless, living rhyme.

Remember this, you pilgrims,
To God you still are young,
Just as when He breathed the word
And our lives were all begun.

—Hanna Hamilton
Desert Hot Springs, California

BLANKETS IN THE RAIN

It was unusually cold last winter in the greater Los Angeles area. To help our homeless brothers and sisters cope with this cold, the Sathya Sai Baba Center of Glendale, California, collected and distributed socks, jackets, and blankets to those in need. To ensure that only the truly needy were served, a few Sai devotees drove around the streets of the Mission District in downtown Los Angeles after 11:00 p.m., to distribute warm clothing to those actually sleeping on sidewalks, in alleys, or in the doorways of buildings. These unfortunates included both the young and the elderly.

The outpouring of love and gratitude that we received from these less-fortunate brethren made the effort totally worthwhile.

At every step of the way in these projects, Baba's love and grace are unmistakably present. The following illustrates this in no uncertain terms.

It was a wet and windy day in mid-February when a couple of us went to a temple on the west side to obtain a load of new blankets in an open Toyota pickup truck. We had distributed four hundred blankets the previous week, and this second time around we were told to load as many as would fit

on the truck. We were able to load twenty-two boxes in a stack that towered above the cab. Since it was raining heavily, we covered the boxes with two large plastic sheets and secured the stack with nylon cord.

In just a few minutes on the road, the plastic sheet was ripped to shreds by the strong wind. We were forced to pull over and remove it before getting on to the San Diego freeway. As we headed north through the Sepulveda pass, the rain came down in torrents. It was so bad that the windshield wipers were totally ineffective, and we were forced to slow down to a crawl. It continued to rain heavily during the fifty minutes that it took us to get to the Center in Glendale.

As we got down to unload the truck, we were expecting to see crumbling cardboard boxes and soggy blankets. Instead, to our utter amazement, we found the boxes to be bone-dry! To top it all, we could not find a single drop of water in the open bed of the truck.

Addendum To The Blanket Project

One night, while handing out blankets to a group of homeless on the

streets of Los Angeles after 10:00 p.m., the police came by and asked what was going on. "We are just giving blankets to those in need," it was explained. The police responded, "Stay right here and we will send you some more people who are in need." And in the next few minutes dozens of people showed up, all brought there by the two policemen who caught the urge to serve others.

The blankets came in sturdy cardboard boxes—eight to a box. One

especially cold night, several of the homeless people asked, "Could we please have the empty boxes?" "Of course," we responded, and then out of curiosity asked what they wanted them for. "We'll put our feet in them while we are sleeping, to keep the cold wind off." Since that trip, we always ask, "Can anyone use an empty box?" and we always get takers.

—Nosh Vadoli
Service Coordinator
Sathya Sai Baba Center
Glendale, California



Sai Baba in a moment of Sai-lence.

THE CHALLENGE OF RAISING CHILDREN WITH VALUES: GRANDPARENTS CAN HELP

Two Sai devotees who, as one of their service projects, took up prayer for all hungry, lost, and abused children, included a grandson in their prayers. He was rebelling against his family and had run away from home. At the time of his parents' divorce, when he was five years of age, he had gone to live with his mother. His relationship with his mother never seemed to satisfy his need for love, and when he was in high school he ran away from her several times. She tried very hard to help him, driving 240 miles each week to take him for counseling, and doing everything that she could to help him find contentment.

Finally, however, when the rift between mother and son seemed irreconcilable, an arrangement was made for the boy to go live with his father in another state. He enrolled in school and also worked in his father's business. His father paid him well, but he squandered the money and was only a mediocre student. When he was found to be failing at school, he was placed in a work-study program. His unwillingness to either work or study, however, soon caused him to be dropped from that program also. He tried various kinds of jobs but did not stay with any

of them for more than a few days. When he got into trouble with the juvenile authorities, he moved away from his father to room with a friend. The friend soon lost patience with him and asked him to leave, and he became a homeless, jobless wanderer, living on the street.

His parents heard nothing from him for three or four months. Then, one night, he called his father in a state of despair, saying that he had no place to stay, that the weather was very cold, and that he wanted to come home. His father, hoping to engender some responsibility in the lad, told him that he might come back to live with him, but that he would have to get a job and pay a small amount for his room and board. The boy returned to his father's home, but the situation was no better. He still could not keep a job and, as soon as the weather was warmer, he again disappeared. No one in the family heard from him for months. The parents had reached the limits of their ability to help.

However, the boy's paternal grandparents were Sai devotees who had devoted their lives to service. They made it a part of their daily spiritual

practice to feel love for all of the children who are experiencing a sense of separation from their true Mother-Father. It occurred to them that since no amount of counseling or punishment had helped their grandson, the least they could do was to send love to him each day as they sat in silence. This they did, beginning by feeling Baba's love in their own hearts for the boy, his parents, the school, the juvenile authorities, and all who had attempted, unsuccessfully, to intervene in the situation. All sense of judgment, blame, and failure dissolved in the light of love, and many times they were able to be aware of Baba's pure aura of love surrounding and including not only their grandson but all beings everywhere.

Within a matter of days, another series of events began. The boy's maternal grandfather appeared unexpectedly. He visited the boy's father. In the course of their deliberations, he told the father that if he could find the boy he would take him back to live with him. They had little hope of finding him, since there was not even a clue as to his whereabouts. But the following day the boy called his father. He was told of his grandfather's offer, and seemed quite pleased to accept.

Even as this is being written, the young man who had appeared to be lost, rebellious, depressed, and desperately at odds with his entire family is

living in peace with his grandfather. He is working with his stepfather on his mother's ranch and is developing a sense of responsibility and an understanding of his own worth. The family members have been freed from their sense of failure and disappointment. His paternal grandparents feel that nonjudgmental love was the missing ingredient in all the previous efforts to help the boy. When pure love was added, a right solution was inevitable. In their view, the practice of nonjudgmental, unconditional love for everyone concerned opened the way for God's grace to be expressed.

—A devotee

*As told to Cathy Daub
Editor of The Challenge of
Raising Children With Values*

The wild fury and frenzied cries of many unfortunates cooled down considerably when they received kind words and mild soothings from the Mother [Easwaramma, mother of Sathya Sai], for the basic cause of their malady was denial of love.

—Professor N. Kasturi

Easwaramma: The Chosen Mother

Please send us your experiences of the challenges of teaching or raising children with values. Mail them to the Sathya Sai Newsletter, c/o Cathy Daub, 1800 East Garvey Avenue, West Covina, California 91791

CHILDREN'S CORNER: Gratitude

One night a sparrow could not find her nest. Since it was dark, the little bird hid in a bush. She was so tired that she soon fell asleep.

During the night, a clap of thunder awoke the bird. The sudden noise made her move and a tiny thorn went into her foot. It hurt her so much! She had to take it out, but how could she do it in the dark? The poor little bird began to cry pitifully.



A firefly, who was nearby, heard her and came with his little lamp. The light of the firefly isn't very bright, but it gave enough light for the bird to see where the thorn was. After pecking at it, the bird soon took out the thorn.

Oh, the bird was very, very grateful. She wanted to do something in return. A storm was coming up and the firefly would surely get wet. So the sparrow made a small house of leaves for the firefly and herself. And there they remained until the sky became bright again.

Do you see that the little sparrow did not do as some do? She did not forget the good that was done for her. She remembered that kindness should always be repaid by kindness.

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Quarterly



SAI CONFERENCES

DATE & REGION	COST	THEME
Labor Day Weekend September 1-4 Southwest Region	Adults each \$65 Less for camping out Sorry, No Children	Let Your Actions, Thoughts, and Words Be One. A Silent Retreat
September 29 - October 1 Pacific Region-North	Cost Not Established	Unity, Purity, and Divinity With Love
October 27-29 Pacific Region-South	Adults in Cabins:\$60 Adults in Tents:\$30.50 Children 3-9: \$23.50 Maximum/Family:\$150	Love: The Key to Human Unity

Man is endowed with life, not as a means of building bungalows, acquiring estates, accumulating wealth, adding progeny, earning titles, or climbing the social ladder. His greatness is not dependent on these things. The primary success of life lies in winning permanent bliss, permanent escape from grief and agitation.

— Sathya Sai Baba
Geetha Vahini

RETREATS FOR 1989

LOCATION	INFORMATION/RESERVATIONS
Jemez Bodhi Mandala Jemez Springs, near Albuquerque, New Mexico	Connie Dillon 720 Acequia Madre, #1 Santa Fe, N.M. 87501 (505) 982-1583
Camp La Honda, in the Santa Cruz Mountains, between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, California	Kathy Townsend 4082 Isola Drive Fremont, CA 94555 (415) 471-5359
Camp Cedar Glen, northeast of San Diego near Julian, California Elevation is 4500 Feet	Jim and Connie Fox 2737 Fairfield Street San Diego, CA 92110 (619) 276-1356

Those who have the inner urge to achieve the higher wisdom which confers liberation have to reflect upon and investigate the phenomenon of death. Death should arouse no fear. It should not be regarded as inauspicious. You should not run away from the problem, imagining that death happens only to others, and that it will not happen to you. Neither should you postpone reflections on death, judging that it is now inappropriate and unproductive. For inquiry into death is really inquiry into one's own Reality. This truth has to be recognized.

- Sathya Sai Baba
Sanathana Sarathi, April 1989

LIFE IS A DREAM

Each human being is equipped with a return ticket at birth. Holding it in your grasp, you earn and spend, rise and fall, sing and dance, weep and laugh, forgetting the end of the journey. But, though you forget, the wagon of life moves toward the cemetery, which is its terminus. No glory accrues to you if you are tied helplessly to the wheel of birth and death. Your glory and greatness consists in disentangling yourself from that revolving wheel.

Before death nips life and thrusts you on to another birth, you must, by means of spiritual discipline, learn the mystery of the Indwelling Divinity or *Atma*. When death comes, you must be glad to meet it, knowing that there will be no more birth or death for you, since you have come for the last time. You weep when you are

born; you should not weep when you die. You must die triumphant over death. Otherwise, you live only to consume food and are a burden upon the earth. You seek to escape pain and grief, but they are inescapable.

Life is like a dream. In the dream, you experience joy and grief; but when you realize that both joy and grief are unreal, when you awake into the consciousness of the *Atma*, you will no longer have the thrill of joy or the despondency of pain. You will not have fear of death or anxiety about the future.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Sathya Sai Speaks,
Volume VIII



Both joy and grief are unreal.

A NEW ERA:

SATHYA SAI BOOK CENTER OF AMERICA

It may seem to many devotees who have access to the Book Center that the passing of Walter Neubauer, the late manager and president of the Board of Trustees of the Sathya Sai Baba Society, signaled an explosion of change in Book Center operations and policies.

The fact is that most of the changes taking place now were decided upon last year by Walter Neubauer and the other trustees to streamline the Book Center's operations. However, Baba had cautioned Walter in March of 1988, after Elsie Cowan passed away, not to make any major changes for one year. It is ironic that Walter passed away in February, 1989, almost one year after Elsie Cowan.

Many of the decisions made last year have now been implemented, such as installation of a new telephone system and addition of new copy and postage machines. A new computer is being installed and will allow the Book Center to handle orders with greater efficiency and will improve inventory and accounting systems.

After Walter Neubauer passed away, Baba sent Robert Bozzani, a member of the Sathya Sai Baba Council of the U.S.A., a telegram requesting that Bob meet with the remaining trustees to discuss the future of the Book Center.

To show goodwill and to promote harmony among all of the Sai organizations, the trustees selected Robert Bozzani to serve as the president of

the Board of Trustees of the Sathya Sai Baba Society of America.

Then in March, 1989, Sai Baba sent Indulal Shah from India as a representative of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Central Trust, to meet with the Book Center volunteers. A reception was held at the Book Center for Mr. Shah on March 25, at which time he spoke to all of the volunteers and gave them a message of love and encouragement from Baba.

On April 29, the annual volunteers' luncheon was held. Dr. John S. Hislop, Central Coordinator of World Region I for the U.S.A., and his wife, Victoria, were in attendance. Dr. Hislop added to the enjoyment and education of the group by sharing some personal memories of his and Victoria's roles as observers in the death and resurrection of Walter Cowan, and of the part they played with Walter and Elsie Cowan as co-founders of the Sathya Sai Baba Society of America. It was also at this special event that Walter Neubauer was remembered and honored by the new president.

The new era for the Book Center has already proven to be a time of joy and great productivity. As the Book Center becomes busier than ever, it is obvious that Sai consciousness is expanding around the world.

— *Mary Keane and Elaine Matthews*
Co-Managers
Sathya Sai Book Center of America

SAI BOOKS, TAPES AND OTHER ITEMS

SATHYA SAI BOOK CENTER OF AMERICA

305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92680, USA

(714) 669-0522

NEW BOOKS

Life is a Game, Play It! by Joy Thomas. The author relates her experiences with Sathya Sai Baba in terms of the lessons He has taught her. Some of the chapter titles are: "Where Did You Come From?" "What Is Your Name?" "Where Is Your Husband?" and "I Am Prepared to Give You Whatever You Want."

322 pages

\$7.95

Sai Baba And You: Practical Spirituality by Mark and Barbara Gardener. The publisher, Wisdom Works Press, states that "In this guide, the authors have presented suggestions that they, and others, have found useful for visitors to Sai Baba. The time spent in Baba's presence is a gift beyond price. Every moment can be used to transform one's life into the joyful experience it was meant to be."

127 pages

\$6.95

AGELESS BOOKS

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volumes I through XI. The eleven volumes are a collection of discourses given by Sathya Sai Baba and translated by the late Professor N. Kasturi. The books are a valuable compilation of the teachings of Sai Baba. Each is printed in soft cover and they range in price from \$3.25 to \$4.95. Contact the Book Center for details.

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