



SATHYA SAI Newsletter

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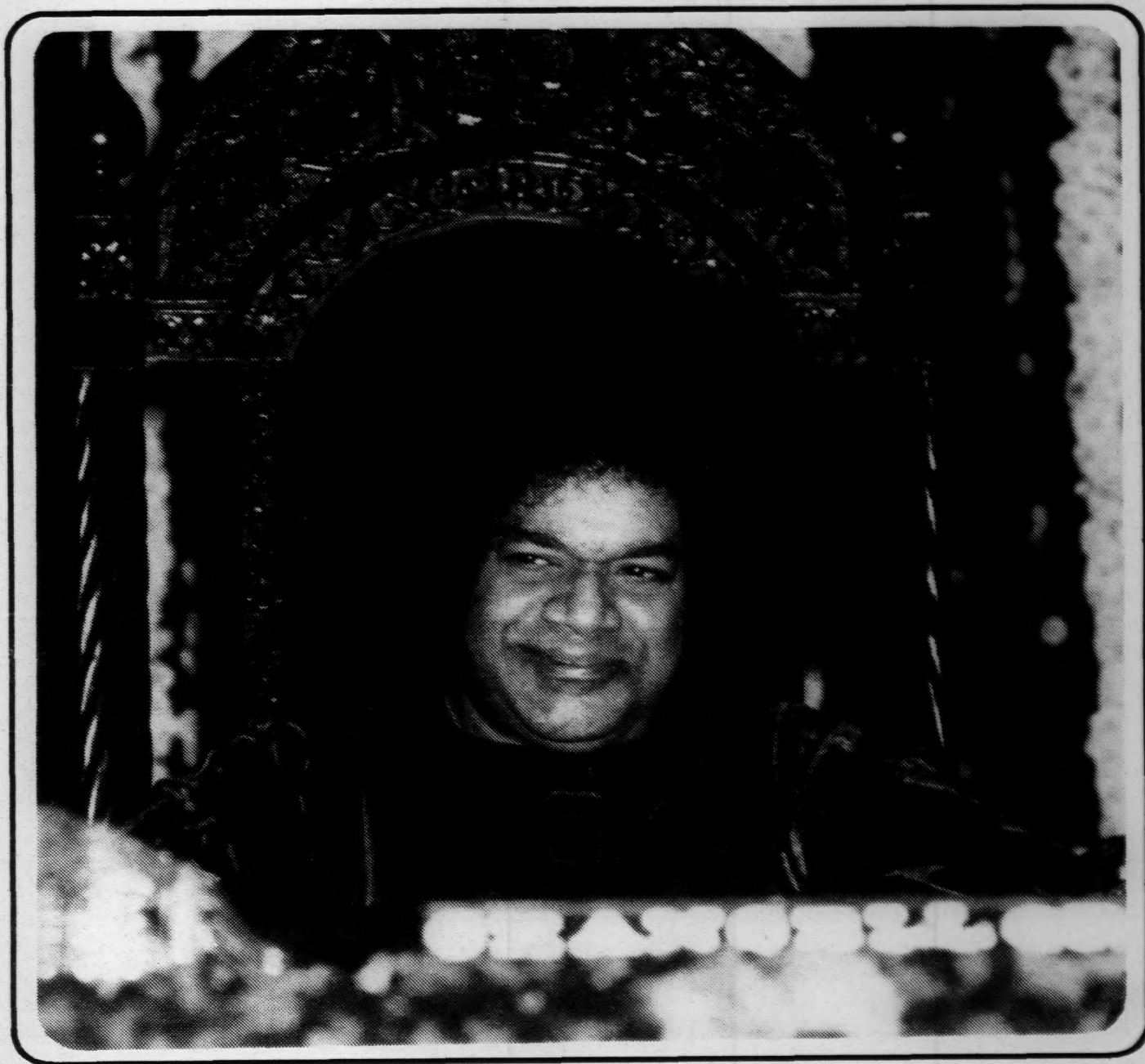
SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

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

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A servant who has love is more honorable than an emperor without love. What more can I tell you?

—Sathya Sai Baba
Dasara, October 9, 1989

GOD IS OUR FRIEND

He may be a master of all scriptures,
mythology, and *Vedanta*,

He may be an emperor who enjoys all comforts in the world
that wealth and power can give,

He may be a world renowned hero, who has always been
victorious against all enemies,

He could be a servant suffering from
utter poverty.

Whoever he may be, if he does not have love in his heart,
he is useless.

MANKIND'S DUTY

The man who is filled with love has great peace of mind, is pure of heart, and is unruffled by any adverse circumstances, failures, or losses. This fortitude is derived from love of the Lord, which endows him with self-confidence. Self-confidence confers beauty on mankind, and it also generates an immense, internal power. Everyone has to make an effort to develop self-confidence so that the bliss of the Self (*Atmananda*) may be experienced.

Love should be free from expectations of any return or reward. Love must be pure and selfless, that is

true love. Love which arises out of desire for something in return is not true love. Utterly selfless and motiveless love should be developed. This is the duty of man.

NO ONE KNOWS

You should not pray to God seeking this or that favor. The reason is that no one can know what immensely precious, divine, and magnificent treasures lie in the treasure house of divine grace. No one can know what God intends or desires to give to a devotee. In such a situation, by asking for trivial and petty things, man is demeaning his divine estate.

No one can understand what valuable, sacred, and divine favor God chooses to confer on a deserving devotee. Hence man should not seek, desire, or pray for some petty trifles. God's love is far more precious and desirable than anything else.

If you wish to ask for anything from God, pray to Him thus: "Oh Lord, let me have You alone." Once you have secured the Lord, you can get anything you want. That is why Meera (the saintly poetess queen of Rajasthan, who was a great devotee of Lord Krishna) sang, "Oh heart, drink the nectar of divine love." When you can have divine love, to crave for anything else is like asking for coffee grounds from the wishfulfilling tree.

DON'T FLATTER GOD

What you have to seek from God is God Himself, and not any small, worthless benefits. Even while praying to God for His grace or favors, you should not indulge in extravagant praise and flattery, such as: "Oh Lord, You are the ocean of compassion. Your mercy is boundless. You are the refuge of the distressed and the protector of the abandoned." Addressing the Lord in this manner is pestering Him. Such praise for securing favors has a commercial tinge.

Even the favors that are got through such praise are not at all proper. It

is because the ancient *rishis* (sages) and the *yogis* resorted to such praise that, even after performing penance for hundreds of years, they did not achieve their goal.

God has a special liking for the human form. It is said, "God has to be experienced in the human form," or that, "God comes in human form." It is only when God is regarded as a friend and a companion that He is pleased. By addressing Him as "My dearest friend, my beloved one," or "the indweller of my heart," you can give Him the greatest joy, and win His grace. If, however, He is described as "The one who is beyond the praise of *Brahma* (the creator) and other gods, who is not accessible to the mind and speech, whose glories are beyond description, who prevailed over Yama (the god of death), who was born as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva (this refers to Krishna), who went to the rescue of Draupadi (queen of the Pandavas)," etc. and then if you entreat Him to confer His grace on you, there will be an element of the ludicrous in the comparisons. Praise even savors of envy when you say, "Oh Lord, You have talked to others, and given them so much! Why don't You come to my aid?" That comparison seems to stem from jealousy.

It is only when God is approached as a loving friend, who has the power

to come to our aid that our desires will be fulfilled. We use words of praise toward a person whom we regard as a stranger, in order to show him respect. But we welcome an old friend with easy familiarity and intimacy.

Thyagaraja (who composed thousands of devotional songs in praise of Lord Rama) performed spiritual discipline over many years to obtain a vision of the Lord. By that discipline he established an intimate relationship with Lord Rama. Because of this, he could greet Rama with friendly familiarity, and welcome Him to his house as a companion. In one of his songs, he sang, "Rama, come to our house. Oh son of King Dasaratha, my salutations to You. I can't wait any longer. Take me close to You." [Sathya Sai Baba sang the song mellifluously.] Because of his intimacy with the Lord, Thyagaraja could address Rama in such close terms.

DASARA FESTIVAL

In the context of the *Navarathri* or *Dasara* celebrations, on the tenth or final day of the festival—when sacred offerings are placed into the fire—we must recognize the divine in this intimate manner. Reduce your desires. Do not pray for trifles. Do not go to a shrine with the intention of seeking fulfillment of some petty desires and waste your time. It is an

unfortunate sign of the *Kali* Age (the present time) that everyone goes to a temple or on a pilgrimage only to get some trivial benefits.

If you can win the Lord, then what is it that is beyond your reach? Thyagaraja declared, "Rama, if only I have Your grace, then all planets will be in the palm of my hand."

LOVE GOD AS A FRIEND

It is essential to please God, and win His grace by regarding Him as a friend, and not indulging in excessive praise. Supreme love is the primary means for achieving this. Love should be firm and unchanging, unaffected by the trials, tribulations, and vicissitudes of life.

The Pandavas are the supreme examples of such unwavering love. When Draupadi (the Pandava queen) was being humiliated in Duryodhana's court, when Abhimanyu (Arjuna's son) was attacked and slain by the Kauravas, when Aswathama massacred the Upapandavas (the infant children of the Pandavas), when the Pandavas performed the glorious *Rajasuya* sacrifice at the height of their power, or when they were in exile in the forest, without succumbing to the difficulties and troubles they were subjected to, they adhered firmly to

the name of Krishna (God) with unwavering faith in Him. During times of sorrow, difficulties, or joy, they relied only on Krishna's love.

Difficulties and troubles are like passing clouds which come and go. During your previous lives you have had so many different wives, husbands, sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers. Do we remember all our kith and kin with whom we were related in our previous lives? While all these relationships have changed, it is only our relationship with God that remains unchanged. We should attach ourselves to this unchanging love, and not cling to other, ever-changing relationships.

Yagnas are designed to lead you to the One who is unchanging and eternal. *Ya + gna* is *yagna* (sacrifice). *Ya* refers to the One who is the basis of the entire cosmos. *Gna* refers to the quest of discovering the One who sustains the cosmos. How is this search to be made? The *Vedas* have declared, "Permeating everything, inside and outside, is the Lord Narayana (God)." Where can you search for the Lord who is omnipresent? Why search at all?

SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

The sages performed severe penance to get to the ultimate reality. Finally they declared, "We have known the supreme *Purusha* (Being), who is effulgent like the sun, and is

beyond *tamo guna* (darkness)." This means that the Lord is beyond the darkness of ignorance. The Lord is beyond the veil of delusion. When the veil is removed, the Lord can be seen. When one is filled with *tamo guna* from head to foot, how can one experience God?

One is not prepared to make any sacrifices with a mountain of desires in his heart. A devotee offers a petty coconut to the Lord. That is not the way to pray to the Lord. That is not devotion. That is not love. To seek a favor is not prayer at all. Only a selfless person can engage in service to society. Only such a person is entitled to serve the Lord. The scriptures say, "By sacrifice alone, one attains immortality."

The first prerequisite is the spirit of sacrifice. This can be developed only through love. The person filled with love is ready to make any sacrifice. A person without love will not be willing to make any sacrifice. If you want to have God as your intimate friend, you should try to recognize the nature of divinity. God does not dwell in any particular place. You are God. When you get rid of the body-consciousness, you will realize your divinity.

THOU ART THAT

In the waking state, you have various kinds of experiences relating to

the phenomenal world. All the experiences are through the nineteen physical agencies—the five organs of action (*karmendriyas*), the five senses of perception (*jnanendriyas*), the five life-breaths (*panchapranas*), and the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*), the will (*chitta*), and the ego (*ahamkaara*). It is only when all these nineteen agencies are present that you can enjoy the experiences of the physical world in the waking state. Then the *Atma*, or the divine principle, is conscious in the waking state. That is the one who confers joy and stands out as an ideal to the world as the embodiment of Being, Awareness, and Bliss (*Sat, Chit, Ananda*).

When you go on to the sleeping state, you have dreams. Even in the dream state the nineteen bodily agencies are present, but in a subtle form. From where have dreams arisen? They are created by the dreamer himself, and he is also the one who is experiencing them. The divine principle in the dream state is called *Tejasvudu* (the Effulgent One) or *Hiranyagarbha* (the Golden Womb One). These appellations mean that both are the One which contains all within Itself.

The third state is *Sushupti* (the deep sleep state). What is it that is experienced in deep sleep? Forgetting oneself, in an unconscious condition, one is experiencing bliss. In

that state only *Prajna* (constant integrated awareness) exists. This state of awareness is equated with *Brahman* (unchanging Eternal Truth). The divine principle that is aware in this state is called *Prajna*.

The *Viswa* present in the waking state, the *Tejasvudu* present in the dream state, and the *Prajna* present in the deep sleep state, all these three are one only. When the states of consciousness are dispensed with we have only one experiencer present. When we remove these three different states, then you realize thou art That, or *Tat, twam asi*.

YEARN FOR GOD NATURALLY

Every person has this divine principle in him. There is no need to search for the divine elsewhere. He is everywhere, omnipresent. His hands, feet, His eyes, head, face, ears are everywhere. He is allpervading. Forgetting one's inherent divinity, and being oblivious to the fact that He is the substratum of everything, man is searching for the divine in the external world. Even in this search, the primary requisite is pure, selfless love.

Chant the name of the Lord with that love. The human form is very dear to God. That is the reason why *Avatars* (divine incarnations) come

in human form. You can experience the vision of God by following the path of *karma* (prescribed actions). The Lord has declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "You are qualified only to perform actions." Another scriptural text says, "Only through the body can you pursue *dharma* (righteousness)," and "All living beings are bound by *karma* in this world." The Divine is being worshipped as a decorated idol or image, with an artificial form. The Lord should be experienced in His natural form, in a natural way. All the ornamentations the devotee resorts

to do not please God. It may please the hearts of the devotees, but God's heart is not moved by this. Only through love can God's heart be moved and softened. The devotee has that power. Without resorting to extravagant adulation of God, not seeking petty favors from God, yearn for God alone, and you will get everything. Therefore chant the name of the Lord, and endeavor to make God your intimate friend and companion.

—**Sathya Sai Baba**
Dasara, October 9, 1989
Prasanthi Nilayam



What you have to seek from God is God Himself, and not any small worthless benefits. Even while praying to God . . . you should not indulge in extravagant praise and flattery

WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE ?

O Lord, lead me to Thee
I know not the way
Please light up my life
I beseech Thee, I pray

I'm weary of this travel
That goes round and round
In an endless revolution
That can't get off the ground

They say it's Evolution
A phenomenal progression
But, for me, it's confusion
And an eternal regression

You said, in ages past
"Fight the battles of Life
Remember Me, go on,
I'm with you in all strife"

Did you also not declare,
"I am the Sacred Fire
That resides in every being
I am the Great Purifier?"

Then, where are You, my Lord?
Why do You hide from me?
You said if I take a step
You'll take ten towards me

Standing in this desert
I'm searching for Oasis
I smell the jasmine fragrance
Floating on the breeze

I know, Lord, You're here
I can feel Your presence
My inner voice awakens
The dormant divine essence

I'd stumbled, I'd fallen
I'd well-nigh forgotten
The savior who declared
"I'm the son of God begotten"

I hear You now, My Lord
I hear You loud and clear
Oh, such soothing words!
"Why fear when I am here?"

—Deepak Bhat, Troy, Michigan

Love for God, fear of sin, where are these? You should pray and love the divinity immanent in everyone. Whomsoever you hate, you hate the divine. If everyone is made happy, God is made happy. Hate is sin.

—Sathya Sai Baba, February 15, 1988

THE ISAAC/HARD ROCK STORY

I meet Isaac in India, of all places. He and two friends—an American living in France and a fellow from Tennessee—are trying to charter a plane from Bangalore to Allahabad. Chartering a plane in India is undreamed of. Either people don't have the money for it or, if they do, they don't care to get there that fast.

But Isaac has the money for it. Despite longish hair and smiling blue eyes that communicate a sort of graduate hippie, he's a seasoned executive, accustomed to international travel. And he doesn't have to worry about paying for the plane ride. He has just completed the sale of his nineteen-year-old business for about a hundred and seven million dollars (yeah, that's \$107 with six zeroes behind it!).

Maybe that's not very big money to Unilever or General Motors, but to a forty-year-old businessman from the Southern U.S. it's ample proof that following your heart pays off.

Isaac was raised in a rich family in the 1960s South. His home town was ninety percent black. Like all Southern cities, it was rigidly, ironhandedly segregated. You couldn't make a dent in it. And it deeply offended this sensitive teen-

ager who was already following his heart as an outspoken advocate for human fairness which—in those days in the States—meant he was close to the civil rights movement.

"Then," he says in his quiet, sincere way, "the law passed and they took down the signs, which made a big impression on me. Talk about symbolism! Those signs were powerful emblems of classism, constant, blatant reminders, everpresent signals to the majority of the people in the city that they weren't as good as others! Then, swoosh, the signs are gone! And all of a sudden people are more human—I mean everybody, not just blacks—we're all better off!" He shakes his head in awe even now after all these years.

When his parents divorced, he chose to go to England with his father. By then he felt close to the new consciousness fervor sweeping the world. Rather than a university, he went to work in one of his dad's factories in Northern England.

"And was that an education! It didn't just make an impression on me, it dented me!" he says. Once, he led a successful wildcat strike against management. It was more than just shouting slogans; the issue was noise

suppression. "Hey," his voice rises as he recalls the clamor, "those machines were so loud that people were going deaf, and management (my father) wouldn't even listen to them!" (The poetry of it: "Goin' deaf and they won't hear." Sounds like a rock song.)

After that, Isaac made a little money buying old Rolls Royces for resale in the States. But his social conscience was still in the driver's seat. Standing on Bond Street one day, he watched a bobby routinely roust a lad who, from his cap and demeanor, didn't belong out of the East End. Isaac still burns. "That was the epitome of the Victorian class system," he sniffs. "The kid couldn't even go to the other side of town without being shooed back where he came from!"

He sets his jaw and continues, a quiet sincerity in his voice. "In England, in those days, the classes were still completely separated. There was literally no place in London where a baker and a banker could meet to talk. They each had their own eating establishments, their own clubs or pubs, and they simply never came together." And apparently that "dented" him too. "I wanted to break that system," he says with zealotry showing through the quiet. (Break it? That's revolutionary language.)

So this young idealist, not yet twenty, not really accomplished at anything but deeply caring, decides to open a restaurant---an absolutely classless restaurant. He flies back to the States, uses the family name to wrangle a \$60,000 loan from home town bankers, returns to London, and rents space in the middle of ultra fancy Mayfair.

London was the center of "the movement" then; it was the heart of the new consciousness on the planet. It was headquarters for all this energy. The movement was youth-based and youth-oriented. They talked a lot about "love." Its heroes were musicians. "Music was politics, man, not just popular songs," says Isaac.

He capitalizes on all those energies. Talk about symbolism! Isaac seems drawn to it like he was reared with it—which, when you think of it, he was. He opens the first "American" restaurant in England—in Europe—in the world, that's associated with the "movement." His blow for equality on the planet is a friendly, Tennessee truck stop in London. The dreams, the ideals, the idea, the timing, the city, and the place itself couldn't have been more appropriate.

From opening day it's a smashing success. Standing in line waiting for

tables are the bankers and the bakers and the taxi drivers and the executives, blue collars and white. These are the souls who people the system he's out to break—readily participating in the breaking. Also there from the start are the movement's heroes, now allies: Jimi Hendrix, Cream, the Beatles, the Stones, and all the others. People love the restaurant. It's an instantly famous happening.

Isaac had pledged that if he ever got the opportunity to run a business he wouldn't do it like any he had ever seen. "I was the third or fourth youngest person in the place and knew nothing about the restaurant business, so I had to follow my heart," he says. "There simply were not any guidelines for creating the kind of place I had in mind (and heart)."

He hires every one of the employees. "My rainbow collection," he calls them. "We had twenty-five different native languages on the staff." He holds daily and then weekly "family meetings" with the entire staff. "Teach me this business," he tells them, "and I'll provide the juice and the rudder."

The meetings are wild and full of energy. "We train and train some more," he says. "Every week, we talk about kindness, about quality-through-politeness, and about our

theme: classlessness and aggressive American friendliness. We really work to offset the usual English reserve. We want the place to exude love."

They institute the first profit sharing plan in a restaurant company in England. Profits are doled out to every employee based on a scoring system that includes friendliness, helpfulness, and fitting into the "family," as well as more conventional work performance items. They treat everybody equally. Women in those days were paid exactly half of men's wages; at the Hard Rock they were paid exactly the same.

About that time he hears of this powerful holy man in India, Sai Baba. Wanting some reassurance of this life trip—which he saw as an inner spiritual adventure as well as a worldly one—Isaac wonders whether Baba might give him some guidance. He's terribly busy but the pull is strong, so he arranges things and hops a plane to India. When he gets there, Baba smiles at him and that's all. "Huh! Nine thousand miles for one of those smiles?" Isaac, in a hurry as usual, sits and cools his heels for two weeks. He asks, pleads for a private talk with Baba, but doesn't even get any more smiles. "Oh well," he philosophizes, picks himself up, dusts off his hands, and hops back on the London plane. "It was a good couple of weeks," he tells

himself on the way home. Something of value sticks.

"You won't find a more *dharmic* (righteous) manager than me," he laughs. "I knew everybody by name and everybody knew me. And they all had my phone number and knew they could directly contact me. I spent 70% of my time on the phone. We had a special relationship. We even put Fax machines in each of the employee lounges, direct to my office. Every employee in the world knew they could contact me any time.

"I empowered certain people as management or supervisors, and then helped them not to abuse that power. I held them responsible for certain business matters, and accountable as human beings too. Whether through ego or ignorance or simply habit, if their actions went counter to what we were aiming for in our work environment, it became an opportunity to give them more help.

"I gave the personnel manager power to overrule the general manager in matters of heart and common courtesy versus pocketbook. For example, pay shortages or advances before a holiday, or something. These people don't make much money, the least we can do is be sensitive and stretch a little for them. Respect was the key. We respected people and expected respect in return.

Isaac's eyes light up when he talks about the company. "Being one of the Hard Rock Cafe family was therapy for people. Even if they came from a violent home life, here they were loved, and they loved in return. I could hire people no one else would take, and in six to seven months they'd be new persons. I called it my 'High School' and I told 'em I wanted everyone to graduate. I realized early that we were creating habits, that's all, just habits—so I determined to create good ones. We graduated some great souls.

"Everybody loved the place," he continues, beaming. "Everybody felt bigger working there. We were famous. Just walk into the place and this great energy hit you immediately. Employees were proud of the place, from the dishwasher on up." He uses "spirit" and "love" and "*dharmic*" and "energy" as though they are interchangeable.

"And the same goes for customers," he continues. Then he explains that because of his own aversion to waiting in lines, he felt a special concern for the people in the long lines always outside the front door. "I especially hated seeing people in the queue in bad weather," he laments. "But what can you do? We talked about it a lot in our meetings, and finally hit on an elegant idea.

"We decided to extend the boundary of our restaurant to the end of the waiting line, wherever that was, and sometimes it was way around the park. We didn't consult lawyers or any of that stuff, we just proclaimed it. We appointed a Queue Maitre d.' He was constantly out there making people more comfortable. He would bring umbrellas out in rainy weather (and we never lost one), and when it was hot, iced tea, and when it was icy, cocoa or soup. "That sort of captures how it was," he says, and then repeats, "Everybody loved the place!"

After he got back from his India trip it struck him, "If we're so famous, if people love the Hard Rock so much, why not take that and reflect it back at them with a message?" So he started printing epigrams that he had gotten in India, little aphorisms with a message: "Start the day with love." "Do good, be good, see good," etc. on paychecks, and later on T-shirts and sweatshirts. "I sold millions of sweatshirts to lots of different kinds of people," he says with an impish gleam, "and on every one of them was that sign 'Love All, Serve All.' That must've done some good."

We have to think about that for a long while, coming back toward the world, back to Isaac and the Hard Rock. When we left this young restaurant executive, he was flying

around the globe, and whisking around within the white mists of spirit. As he spins out his life thread, he's pretty sure he's doing it right, but doesn't really know.

"What is *YOUR* way?"

Isaac's India connection continues, and thickens, but in a peculiar way. Once or twice a year he travels there for a fortnight, his brisk lifestyle halts while he sits and muses, seeking the holy man's blessing and guidance. Year-after-year, for fifteen years the thread spins, life bringing its inevitable highs and lows, Isaac growing all the while, his life convictions thickening and mellowing. Thousands of times he asks, "Am I on the right track?" But he never gets to talk directly with Sai Baba. His answers have to come from within. More and more, he learns to look toward spirit and, eventually, to live in a state of constant spiritual awareness.

All he knows for sure is that things are going well. In fact, the restaurant's success can't be contained. Over the years they open several more restaurants in leading world cities like New York, Stockholm, Mexico, and Tokyo. And later they expand even more through a sister company. Times change, especially in that business, but Isaac's strategies take the company into the far different '80s and then into the '90s. Business continues to boom, and the

Hard Rock clothing line becomes a more important part of it.

On all paychecks are printed the various aphorisms of love. In every kitchen in big brass letters is "Love all, serve all." On one wall of every restaurant is a large photo of Sai Baba. People look, blink, shake their heads and ask, "Who's that?" "That's the God-wall," is the reply. "Oh," they mumble and continue chewing. Isaac closely protects the basic concept of friendly classlessness. In the different cultures they enter, it's not easy. His primary strategy is to create a friendly, loving classlessness within the staffs. And that's not easy either.

"In Tokyo," he says, "we had to train people not to bow—unheard of in Japan! And we insisted that women, who are non-entities there, be treated absolutely equally. In Stockholm we couldn't get people to flash a smile and approach people in a friendly way. The Swedes may be quiet and proper, but they're nice people, so how come? So I started asking people. About half the waitresses finally admitted they were reluctant because people in Sweden think you're off your rocker or drunk if you act that way. We eventually worked it out. Now it's the most successful restaurant in the city, as are all of our restaurants in each of their cities."

All this is reflected in the selling price, an unheard-of value in that industry. Why did he sell? "Oh, I finished that *karma* (duty or action). It's time to move on, and the world has changed, too," he says seriously. "But we did set things straight, b'god—and isn't that what *dharma* (righteousness) is all about?"

He switches the subject to the spirit behind it all. "All I did," he reflects, "is put spirit and business together in that big mixing bowl and add love. I didn't care about anything but the people. Just cherish them, look after them, be sensitive to them and their lives." The care he feels shines through his blue eyes. "That important relationship with my staff is what made the Hard Rock—nothing else! It was an opportunity to blend spiritual life and business life."

Some time later, walking down the street, I hear someone hail me. It's Isaac! We exchange greetings and he says, "Sai Baba finally took me in for a personal talk!" "Great," I say, eager to hear more. Isaac tells me the story. He and six others were invited into Baba's private interview room. At the start of the meeting Baba looked from one person to the next, asking about their spiritual path. "And how do you go toward Truth, sir? Then He'd move on to the next: "And what is your way to Spirit, madam?" And so on, around the room.

"I was last in line," Isaac relates. "As the others talked, I mentally rehearsed my answers; I didn't want to blow it after waiting so long. Finally Baba got to me, but He didn't ask the question. He just leaned over, put His face close, smiled with a twinkle in His eye, and very deliberately said, 'Love all, serve all.' "

Then, in a subdued voice, Isaac breathes, "It was a confirmation of twenty years of hard work. We both

stand quiet, there in the busy street, for a few moments. He glances up and then at me, there's just a slight hint of that outraged teenager in his eyes. "Y'know, there are other things for me to do in this world." We shake hands warmly, promise to meet again, and walk our separate ways.

—Jack Hawley, Ph.D.

Excerpted from his soon-to-be-released book, *Dharmic Management*



Peace is not a gift from God, instead it depends on the individual's thoughts and actions. Develop thoughts of love and peace. Love all, serve all.

—Sathya Sai Baba, February 15, 1988

VALENTINE'S DAY DOWNTOWN

I went downtown to take care of some business, and on the way back to my car I passed a homeless man standing on a cold, windy corner. He had some light-blue cards in his hand and was calling out, "Handmade Valentine cards, only five cents or ten cents." After a pause he would add, "So I can buy food."

It was 11:30 in the morning and lots of well-dressed office people were passing by but ignoring him. I passed by too, but then quickly turned back and bought a card, giving him fifty cents. He smiled and said, "God bless you."

As I continued to my car, I looked at the card. Though a simple card, it was rather nice. It had a nice saying and he obviously took some time making it, using multicolored pens. I could see that whatever his present circumstances, he had artistic abilities.

Actually, I didn't need a Valentine card and wondered what I would do with it. Then I thought, "I'll give it to Baba." I was happy and went home and put "Dear Sai" on the card and signed my name and placed it on my altar at Baba's feet. I had some things to do at home, and later on in the afternoon as I sat with Swami, I

looked at the card and thought about that homeless man.

On the way home I had felt sort of cheap, and thought that I should have given him a dollar. Any card you buy in the store costs at least a dollar—which goes to some multi-million dollar card company and a usually well-to-do store owner—and here was a homeless man trying to eat without begging. Then I thought, even if I had given him a dollar, what could he buy with it? There aren't any supermarkets downtown. He doesn't have a stove to cook on, or a refrigerator to keep food in. All he could buy downtown would be coffee and donuts, or fast food. But still, how far would a dollar stretch under those circumstances? It's more than nothing but less than enough.

Thinking further, I recalled that I had walked right past a Jack-in-the-Box just around the corner from him. It was almost lunchtime. I had an extra twenty-dollar bill in my wallet. The parking meter still had thirty minutes left. Then I felt sad. I realized that if I were really looking for service opportunities, I should have taken that man to Jack-in-the-Box and bought him a nice lunch, but I blew it!

I thought about how happy that man would have been if someone had actually bought him whatever he wanted for lunch. Everything was all set up, yet I missed the chance. I had been too immersed in thinking about my own affairs to realize that an opportunity for service had presented itself.

I tried consoling myself with the thought that, even if I had bought him lunch—he'd only be hungry again the next day—and I really wouldn't have helped him all that much. Then I remembered reading in *Sathya Sai Speaks* that Baba mentioned that very point. He said giving food to hungry people is the highest form of service, and that even if you give only one nice meal—and make them happy just that once—you are doing a great service. How that man's spirits would have soared—despite his bleak existence—had I taken him to lunch. I felt very bad and asked Sai Baba to forgive me and to help me recognize future service opportunities as they present themselves.

I'm telling this story to remind everyone to be on the lookout for these unexpected service opportunities and to be less immersed in their own concerns. In that way we can recognize the needs of others and do what we can to help them. Baba is everywhere and service opportunities are all around us.

—A Devotee

THE LOVE OF SEVA

Whenever hearts are happy,
It's a simple thing to do,
To seek some other, sadder heart,
And make it happy, too.

The joy we share with others,
Is the joy that's multiplied.
It will be a perfect life,
If no one is left outside.

Central Region Service Quarterly
—Sunipa Bhattacharjee
Grade 6, Austin, Texas

*An opportunity to be of some service to a fellow human being
comes as a gift from God.*

—Sathya Sai Baba, *Voice of the Avatar*, Part II, page 209

LOVE IS THE BASIS FOR ALL

It is possible to master various types
of knowledge,
And to achieve victory in arguments
in the courts.
It is also possible to fight valiantly
on the battlefield.
It is possible to be born an emperor
and rule a kingdom in all glory.

It is possible to give gold and cows
to charity
It is possible to count the stars in the
sky.
It may also be possible to name all
the numerous species of life.
It may be possible to master the
eight-fold path of knowledge.
It is even possible to reach the
moon.
But is it possible to control the mind
and the senses,
To introvert them and continuously
have equal-mindedness?
It is not possible.

Embodiments of Divine Love:

God is living in the heart just as
the sun is in the sky. Sun and shade
are closely linked and interdepend-
ent. Similar is the relationship be-
tween God and the individual soul.
They are inextricably related, as God
dwells in the heart of man. The
shade may be different, but the sun

is one and the same. The relation-
ship between God and man is simi-
lar. Beings and forms are many, but
God is one. Man is restricted by the
human body, but God does not have
any such restrictions. He is the
indweller in all.

MAKING SENSE OF THE SENSES

The ancient ones undertook a num-
ber of sacrifices (*yagnas* and *yagas*),
recognizing, experiencing, and en-
joying this truth. To the physical
body, sense organs are very impor-
tant. The sensations that arise in
the sense organs are more powerful
than the senses themselves—sound,
touch, taste, sight, and smell. Mind
is the master of all five of these
senses. Intellect is the master of the
mind; the individual soul is the master
of the intellect; and God is the master
of the individual soul. When the
senses are in union with the mind,
the mind in tune with the intellect,
the intellect with the individual soul,
then you will understand the unity
between the individual soul and the
Supreme Soul.

The tongue is the most important
and powerful of the sense organs. If
you can control the tongue you can

control all the other sense organs. The tongue performs two functions: eating and talking. When the tongue comes in close union with the mind, words stop and the mind starts talking. If you want the mind to stop talking, alert the intellect. If you can awaken the intellect, it will help control the mind and stop its talking. When the senses come in contact with the mind, and the mind in turn comes in contact with the intellect, the intellect must be properly utilized to go in the direction of the individual soul. Only when the intellect turns to the individual soul, does the individual soul merge in the Supreme Soul. This is the proper *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). Man does not realize that this particular basic truth is for his own good. Thus, he is turning his mind and senses outward, seeking external enjoyments and pleasures and the fulfillment of his desires.

INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL

Perhaps this is not man's mistake. The sense organs naturally turn outward—the eyes open outward, the ears are directed outward, the mouth and nose are also directed externally. As the sense organs naturally tend to go externally, man starts thinking of the external world. But there is an intricate relationship

between the external world and the inner world.

Man has to make an effort to understand this close relationship between the two. Is it the physical body or the mind which enjoys when it sees some external beauty, or when it listens to some melodious tune, or when it smells something very fragrant? On proper inquiry you will realize that it is the *Atma* (indwelling divinity) which is really enjoying all this, and not the body.

The most important duty of man is to enjoy the bliss of the *Atma*. The *Atma* is the basis for the outer world and the world within. What is meant by *Atmananda* or bliss of the *Atma*? Man thinks that he is enjoying himself when he has all physical and bodily comforts to the fullest extent. Actually, physical bliss is very, very small. We forget ourselves and get intoxicated with these small, trifling joys. There are several types of bliss far above worldly bliss. The highest of these is the bliss of *Atma* which is one hundred times to the power of seven, (1,000,000,000,000) or one trillion. Once you have experienced this *Atmic* bliss, how can you remember anything else? We forget everything else, and we merge and immerse ourselves in the bliss of the *Atma*. There is no place in the world which is not filled with this bliss. Every object in the world contains this innate bliss.

Thyagaraja was able to experience, through his spiritual discipline, that every object in the universe is filled with the bliss of the Lord. He also asked, "How can I describe it?"

THE SACRED SOUND

There is a close relationship between humanity and nature. Water is the essence of nature. It is water which is responsible for the growth of food and grain. From food comes the individual. The essence of a human being is his word. The feeling which comes from this word has taken the form of *rik* (sacred Vedic verse). *Sama* (Vedic chant) is the beauty of *rik*. *Om* is the very essence of *sama*. When you ask where *Om* has come from, the answer is that it has come from the earth. All objects found on earth are filled with the sound of *Om*. All sound is a manifestation of *Om*.

Whenever you are chanting any holy name, you start with the prefix *Om*, followed by the name. Without the sound of *Om* the earth does not have any value. *Rig Veda* is also found embedded in the *Sama Veda*. *Sama* is made up of the sounds *sa* and *ma*. *Sa* stands for earth, and *ama* stands for fire. *Sa + ama = sama*.

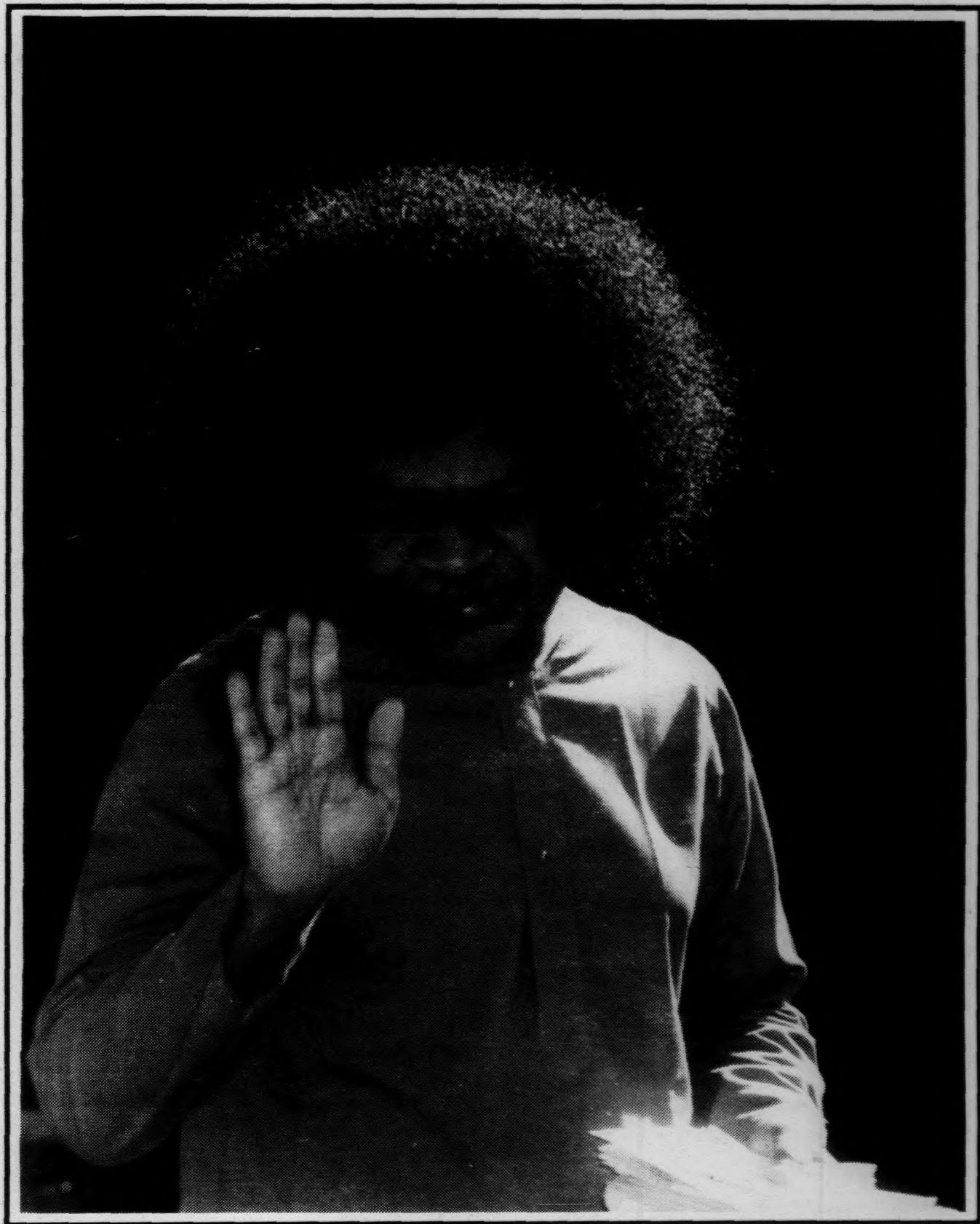
Fire is the very essence of the *Rig Veda*. The earth is the very essence

of *Sama Veda*. *Rig* and *Sama* become one, and this is the essence of *Sama Veda* itself. One of the names of *Om* is *udgeeta*. *Uth* means life force, *gee* means word, and *tha* means food. *Om* is found in the *Atma*, in the mind, and in the physical body. Another name for this is *prajna* (constant integrated awareness). Everyone's form consists of these three entities. There is no form on earth that does not have all these things. We have to recognize this fact that our form is full of this *Om*kara, and conduct ourselves in the light of this understanding.

The very essence of the *Vedas* is the teaching of unity. Everything has taken its birth from *Om*kara or the sound of *Om*, which is *Brahmam* (all-pervasive). There is a word called *tatjalath* in the *Vedas*. *Tatjalath* means that which is born from one entity, dissolves in the very same entity, and also grows in it as well.

THREE TIME PERIODS LIVE TO 116

The *Vedas* have such great, precious teachings, but there are no people who can explain the real meaning of these things. This has resulted in misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and going off in the wrong direction. The quintessence of all this is that man's life is full of *yagnas* (sacrifices).



The entire world is the form of God.

For all the actions performed by man, there are three time periods with which they are associated—sunrise, noon, and sunset. In our life, the first twenty-four years is called *praathah-yagna*. In this period of life, man has to pay attention to education and learning. He has to keep his own future in view and make plans for shaping his own life. This stage is also called *balya sthithi* (childhood).

The next stage is called *maadhyaana samaya* (intermediate or middle stage). This consists of a forty-four year time period. The evening part of our lives is forty-eight years. This sums up to a life span of 116 years. Man, who is supposed to live for 116 years, is dying much earlier. What is the reason? Man is giving up the right, royal, proper path laid down for him and taking the wrong path, thereby ruining himself and causing premature death. The conduct which man has to follow is already found in his heart. Today's man is wasting his entire life, concerning himself with doubts.

LOVE ALL

The entire world is the form of God. The world is the form of *Vishnu*, the protector of the world. All objects found in the universe are verily the form of *Brahma* or God. Truly, if you

love God, you should love every being. You should not hate anyone. You should not make fun of anyone. You should not criticize anyone. All are forms of God. If a man leads his life with this attitude, he will enjoy the life span, and also enjoy his full and true nature. Today's man is suffering a premature death because of narrow feelings of 'mine and thine.'

"DO"

WITHOUT ATTACHMENT

One can consider everything as one's own, but one should not have attachment for it all. For example, a cowherd boy collects the cattle from the village, lets them graze in the green meadows, brings them back to the village in the evening, and leaves them at their respective homes. If anyone can follow the attitude of this cowherd boy, his life will be sanctified. When he takes the cattle for grazing, he says, "My cow has given birth to a calf; my calf has sustained an injury," etc. Thus he takes care of them, referring to them as "my cow" and "my calf."

He knows full well that they do not belong to him. Although the cows and calves are not his, he takes care of them as if they were his own. Similarly, you must make an effort to take care of everything in the world as your own. Or, if you do not take care of them, you should not

get in the way of their well-being. That is good enough. The essence of the eighteen *Puranas* may be told in two sentences: "Help ever. Hurt never." Virtue is helping others, and hurting others is a sin.

You may not help, but you should not hurt. That, in itself, is a great help. Man can develop such nice, great, grand, noble, broad, and sacred ideas only when he is associated with divinity. But when he is filling himself with the world, he can never, never have this. Therefore, every man should make the effort to develop noble feelings.

From the ancient times, sages have undertaken these sacrifices with the noble idea of popularizing these divine thoughts and feelings.

INTEGRATED AWARENESS

Embodiments of divine Love, one cannot understand the nature of God and His divinity. If every individual carefully examines his own conduct, keeping his conscience in view, one can know whether one is doing right or wrong.

Either in an excited mood or in anger, one may use abusive words against another person. Once a per-

son becomes cool and calms down, one's own conscience and heart makes one feel repentant, but one does not show that repentance. One tries to subdue that repentance. If it is true repentance, then he will not repeat such words. Committing mistakes and repenting, committing mistakes and repenting—if this process continues—it is a series of pluses and minuses resulting in a zero at the end. In today's world, experience shows that people commit mistakes one day, repent the following day, commit mistakes again, followed by repentance the next day. If that repentance is real, then how can they repeat those mistakes? Once you realize that you have committed those mistakes, you should see that those errors are never repeated. We should firmly believe that every thought, word, and deed is filled with divinity, and conduct ourselves accordingly.

Constant integrated awareness is inseparable and with us at all times, inside the home and outside—everywhere. Not recognizing this truth can only be called ignorance. We cannot acquire this knowledge from education or the study of books. We can understand this only through daily experiences. What is the use of any amount of studying. Who can change what is destined for one? If wrong thoughts take hold in your mind, your thinking becomes dry, and you go on the wrong path.

It is not proper for man to go on criticizing, condemning, and constantly finding fault with others. Criticism is the characteristic of *danas* (demons). Such a person can never find peace at any time during his life. He has to change his bad nature. Without changing himself, and without rectifying his own affairs in his own home, he wants to attempt to change the world. First of all, one should have faith that God is omnipresent—everywhere.

SAINTS AND SCIENTISTS

One scientist, on looking at the sun, calls it a hydrogen ball. But a lover and a believer of God will look at it as the sun god, his protector. There is no creation without the sun. The sun is the basis for all the seasons, for the changes in day and night, and for all activity in nature. This is how the devotee worships the sun. You can notice the difference between the scientist and the saint. If that person considers the sun as only a hydrogen ball, how ignorant he is. Every power, every energy, comes from the sun. What research can be carried on without the sun? A person without gratitude is not a man. Everyone has to show gratitude for what he has seen and experienced, for what he gets, and what he enjoys. When a devotee sees a green tree or a green mountain, he is

enthralled by its beauty. He feels that all this beauty of nature is the beauty of God, and he exclaims, "God is nature." When the scientist sees the same green tree and hillock, he says that it is thus on account of chlorophyll. You can see the great difference in approach between the scientist and the devotee. The scientist has a narrow-minded approach, while the devotee has developed a spiritual and more noble outlook.

A person who is building a wall goes upwards day by day, while a person who is digging a well goes downwards day by day. Like the person constructing a wall, saints develop noble and sacred ideas and move upward, while scientists with these narrow ideas keep going downwards, like the well-digger.

There is no defect in man as such, but all the defects lie in man's thinking. Experience things in the way that you should experience them. Think along the proper lines, the way you are supposed to think. Treating everything with indifference is the result of arrogance. As Sundar Iyer [a lecturer at the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning] has said, "As long as man has ego and pomposity, he can never experience the bliss of the *Atma*."

SUMMARY

Embodiments of divine Love, do not give room for ego in you. How small we are in this great big universe! With this feeling you should remove the ego from your heart. Develop equal-mindedness on the basis that the same *Atma* dwells in every person. Just as shadows are different, bodies may be different.

Because of the sunlight, the shadows exist. There can be no shadow without sunlight. Even in the shadow there is the light of the sun, for the two exist side by side. Once you eliminate the body-consciousness, you will see the oneness of the *Atma*. Remove the physical body, and there is no difference between the individual soul and God.

Embodiments of the divine *Atma*, when you develop broad-mindedness and noble ideas, and live together as children of God, you will experience joy and peace in the world. Right from the ancient days, Bharat (India) has been imparting spirituality to the entire world. May all the worlds be happy.

Do not try to find faults in others. Who gets hurt by such behavior? It is the one who finds defects in others who suffers. This reaction will come back to you. If you go on wishing well for others, God will bless you, and

the good will come back to you. There is a proverb in Telegu which translates, "You will be ruined if you try to ruin others." Never desire anything bad for anyone else.

Desiring the good and well-being of everyone, try to experience the world with divine and *Atmic* feelings. Enjoy nature with a divine outlook. This is the very essence of all the *Vedas* and the basis of all the *Sastras* (scriptures). This is the secret of all goals. This is the very place where man should be. Man should not waste this sacred opportunity. We have to make every effort to achieve harmony in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. It is only then that we will be true human beings. If there is one thought, a different word, and a totally different action, then you really become a demon.

Whatever we constantly think, we become. That is why it is said, "Be good, do good, and see good. That is the way to God." This is the true feeling, true devotion, and nature of the essence of divinity.

—Sathya Sai Baba
Prasanthi Nilayam
October 8, 1989

BLIND FAITH IN BABA

It took becoming blind for me to really see. I am twenty-nine years old, and I have been seriously ill with multiple sclerosis since age fifteen. At the onset of my illness it was misdiagnosed as "chemically induced depression and loss of coordination." Neurological changes caused my healthy and extremely athletic body to slowly deteriorate. Fatigue made it impossible for me to maintain my over-achiever's straight A-plus status in the gifted advanced placement classes at school. For six years my illness was diagnosed as a "hysterical, psychotic, depressive disorder." My legs became sluggish, my grades dropped, and the fear within me grew to terror. The psychiatrists methodically quizzed me on whether I felt like committing suicide. After six weeks of such questioning, I began describing to the doctor how I wanted to do it. Then, at age sixteen, I was committed to an adolescent psychiatric institute for nine months.

For me, there was no God. The psychiatrists told me there was only a God for people who were weak and could not believe in themselves. After they taught me all about suicide, I took three massive overdoses which left me breathless and comatose.

After awakening from the coma, I should have felt blessed to feel the sunshine and to be alive; however, I did not. But I still had some of my sight then, and a constant curiosity about the world.

My curiosity has often made me wonder: What did my little brother grow up to look like? How old, or young, did my mom look when she died four years ago? Is my dad's bald spot bigger? Do I look my age? Are my eyes the same color, or are they glassy, lifeless, and dull? What do these 3-D video games look like? Recalling my last sighted video creation, it was the ping-pong game with two short lines as paddles, and a slow-moving dot for a ball. What do these amazing new computer graphics look like today? Did the extra-terrestrial in the movie *E.T.* look real? Do I have gray hairs, or will I ever live that long? The darkness inhibits my sense of this fast-changing world. At times the frustration brings tears to eyes that don't see but can still cry.

My condition worsened after a head-on crash on my moped, in which I impacted my head at 30 mph into a telephone pole. My jaw and the bones of my face were crushed. A

massive reconstructive surgery was done, and the optic nerve deterioration was clearly seen in my eyes. The damage was severe and irreversible. Labor Day 1980, the day of my accident, was the last time I drove a motor vehicle. I was twenty years old. Again I was diagnosed, this time accurately, as having multiple sclerosis. M.S. meant to me, "no treatment, no cure." I lost the rest of my sight. I succumbed to a wheelchair. I was forced to quit Cal Poly University. I became bedridden, blind, mentally and physically beaten. I entered a nursing home, ready to die . . . that was January, 1983.

However, there was a change—I am now a world-renowned Olympic Equestrian Champion. My will gave me the power to win against all odds. No, there was another will within me, not Darwin's evolution, but my love for my parents and family. The will to live came back when my mom said she loved me, so it was all right for me to "go." My will was to help the mentally ill at that institution where I had been labelled "hysterical," and to defend the other kids there who could not defend themselves. I desired to show the world a heart, a love that never quits striving to honor those I love, especially my little brother, who came into my ICU room when I was full of tubes to keep me alive. (He was only ten years old, and he still cries when we

speak of it now.) And I honor the love of my mom, reading my desolate poetry to my comatose body—refusing to leave me for sleep, food, or drink—so I would not die alone. And the love grew within me. Could it be God, or will? Or are love and will together—God?

I am still blind, but only through my blindness do I see. Could God have given it to me as a gift? I began training on horseback from a wheelchair. My trainer used an intricate language of verbal cues over a walkie-talkie to guide me around an otherwise darkened arena. At first I could barely sit up. My hands shook with the effort to hold the reins. I circled aimlessly, hopelessly off the rail at barely a walk. However I persisted until I won the 1984 Olympic Equestrian title in New York. I had to win two "golds" in the Texas Nationals the year before to be one of ten selected to make the U.S. team. The year before my Texas win, I had to take first place in the state preliminaries to qualify for the Nationals. [Not to be confused with the Special Olympics, these games are under the auspices of the Olympic Committee, and are known as the International Games for the Disabled.]

I am the only blind rider on the U. S. circuit. My glorified walkie-talkie communication and the story of having been bedridden has filled the hearts of millions who have read

my story in publications throughout the world. I trained for three years straight in exercise, visual imagery, and riding meditation. My motto in the speeches I have made is, "A silver medalist takes the weekends off, I wanted to go for the gold." I wrote my life story by dictation. I can write only with special writing guides for the blind. But is this the ego speaking? How do I enter an arena and flawlessly maneuver my horse around many obstacles, weaving around poles, through L-shapes, and over as many as three jumps in a row—almost three feet high—without seeing them? Over the hurdles I have no fear, but how? I am so blessed to have had everything taken away and replaced with love. I see with my heart—and need not fear the threatening wooden bar of the jump before me—for I am blind and cannot see death. Even my mother's lonely stare—as life left her body four years ago—was not painful, for my eyes can only remember life. My wheelchair is a friend that, intermittently, gives me rest. My eyes still see me running. When I could run, did I ever thank God for that graceful speed? No, because I was sightless and crippled in other ways. Could I have ever imagined my miserable life to be a God-planned gift? Did I, too, complain on a smoggy day that I could not see the mountains? Now how grateful I would feel just to see the smog.

On the days of my gold medal victories—as the press swarmed around me pushing their microphones close, and cameras whirled and clicked—they asked, "How do you win among all the sighted competitors?" My reply was, "Love and the memories of those who loved me when I was less than nothing." "But how do you win every single time? You've won 18 state, national, and international championships—blind?" I reply, "Justice, love, and God when combined with blindness, helps one to see the light." I am neither lesser nor greater than the smallest mouse. I am not the exception, but rather the example. With sight I saw only darkness. God guides us as a traffic sign which says, "wrong way." But are we grateful that the sign is warning us of impending danger? No, instead we curse our lousy luck, meeting a turn we didn't expect. Pain is a gift God uses to test our limits.

My mother's death brought about a quantum leap in my spiritual growth. I began to see visions down a tunnel of light as answers to prayers. My mom's spirit and many others appeared in colored robes—with one man who was prominent in those visions. He was clothed in an orange robe and had Negroid features. Again and again, visions turned into future truths, and the man in the orange robe seemed to direct the visions. Could there be a physical

spirit-world as the Bible says, a kind of, "Heaven on Earth"? My heightened excitement made me want to run and shout! I've found the truth, but who are these spirits I see so clearly without sight?

Several family friends had returned from India after witnessing a man who performed great miracles before their eyes. I listened to them, but was still skeptical. I considered taking a trip to India to be in His presence, to "witness" this holy man. But I can't witness anything. I will never see for myself if it is true that He is God. Angry, I saw another vision, reminding me in moving picture form of a premonition that led to the healing of a tumor in my jaw. The strange man with the frizzy, black hair was directing the entire show. Dejected, I looked and studied Him closely. He was as clear to my unseeing eyes as though He was really there. He was short with an

orange silk robe, bare feet, kind brown eyes, and dark skin.

Still frustrated—that I could never see the holy man in India who my friend had visited—I called my friend. I thought at least she could describe the miracles, and I could imagine Him. She said "He is an *Avatar*, an incarnation of God in human form. He can do anything and knows all. He can heal from within." Feeling more blind than ever, I imagined a tall, turbaned figure. I asked, "What does He look like?" My friend said, "He is short, dark, with frizzy hair, Negroid features, loving brown eyes, wears an orange robe, and He goes around in His bare feet!"

Aghast and a little ashamed, I knew immediately that I never needed to go to India to witness this holy man. Nor did I need eyesight to see His miracles. Even in blindness, I know that God has come.

—Mikko Mayeda, Ontario, California

A number of devotees are thinking and praying that, within a moment, Swami can cure Himself. I am not that selfish. When others are injured, do I cure them immediately? Everything has a time factor. One has to put up with it until the right time comes. But the pain can be mitigated by prayer and by diverting the mind from one thing to another. You should not let the mind think about sorrows and difficulties.

—Sathya Sai Baba
August 26, 1988

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Conclusion of the Animal Alphabet

R

The rat is a very controversial creature;
It lives in holes and other dark places.
Children like some of them for pets,
But ladies scream and hide their faces.



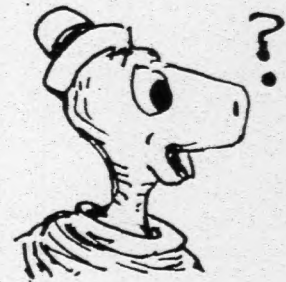
S

The squirrel is known for his curly tail,
And his taste for nuts and seeds.
He stores his food in the autumn,
Then in snowtime, he has all he needs.



T

The tortoise never hurries,
He starts early and travels slowly.
Doing this, he never worries,
And is able to appear quite holy.



U

The unicorn is a mythical beast,
No one I know has seen one.
I'm told that they eat red blossoms,
But never touch a green one.



V

The vulture is a remarkable creation,
He seeks food to meet his need.
But he chooses that which, if left,
Would spoil our world indeed.



W

The walrus is a huge sea creature,
With enormous teeth and tusks.
But he swims around quite gracefully,
And never seems to make a fuss.



X

X is a letter that is used
To represent that which is missing.
It's perfect here to stand for
The Xanimal for which we're wishing.



Y

The yak loves to graze in mountain meadows,
Where the grasses are ripe for vegetating.
The silence of the holy Himalayas,
Is also just right for meditating.



Z

Zebras, you might say, are striped horses,
Seen often on African plains.
The black and white is permanent dye,
So it doesn't run when it rains.



Sathya Sai Newsletter Staff
—Ken Peterson, Illustrations
Santa Fe, New Mexico

SAI CONFERENCES

Date and Region	Cost	Theme
May 20, Sunday only 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM Pacific Region - North	Free	"Golden Jubilee" Bal Vikas children will participate
Memorial Day Weekend May 25-28 Central Region	Adults \$69.00 Teenagers \$57.00 Children \$46.00	"How can the Sai Organization best serve its members?"
Memorial Day Weekend May 25 - 28 Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern Regions	Adults \$75.00 Teenagers \$45.00 Children 5-11 \$30.00 Children under 5 Free	"Don't Say - Do!"
July 5 - 8 Pacific Region - North	Adults in tents \$65.00 Adults days only \$25.00 Adult Commuters \$15.00 Children special rates	"Life Is Awareness"
July 6 - 8 Pacific Region - South	Adults \$45.00 Children 3-18, half price Family Maximum: \$150	"Guru Poornima" Separate Programs for Bal Vikas and Teenagers
July 14 One day only Pacific Region - North	Free	"Awareness of the One"

RETREATS FOR 1990

Location	Information and Reservations
Sacramento, California	Marty & Suzy Mendenhall 137 Perraud Drive Folsom, CA 95630 (916) 983-7632
Camp Wyman, Eureka, Missouri near St. Louis	Chuck Chakraverty 12404 Bernie Lane Maryland Heights, MO 63043 (314) 469-3804
Camp Colang Lord's Valley Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania	Suman Govindan 12 Ludlowe Road New Canaan, CT 06840 (203) 966-8851
Private property in Grants Pass, Oregon	Ella Evers 4466 Fox Hollow Road Eugene, OR 97405 (503) 484-9373
Camp Colby in the Angeles Forest near Los Angeles	Randy Kehr 6121 Hamshire Drive Huntington Beach, CA 92647 (714) 848-0458
Incline Village Lake Tahoe, Nevada	Karen O'Brien 2730 Spinnaker Reno, NV 89509 (702) 826-1581

Date and Region	Cost	Theme
Labor Day Weekend September 1 - 2 all day Saturday, half day Sunday Central Region	Free	Not yet known
Labor Day Weekend August 31 - Sept. 3 Southwestern Region	Adults \$65.00 for the weekend	"A Silent Retreat" (Sorry, no facilities for children)
September 21 - 23 Pacific Region - North	Adult cabins \$66.00 Adult tent \$55.00 Children, special rates Families, special rates	"Golden Year of the Avatar"
September 28 - 30 Pacific Region - South	Cost not established	"Devotion to Mother Sai" Will also honor the holy celebrations of <i>Dasara</i> and <i>Yom Kippur</i>

SHARING OF

The entire five days of the Pacific Northwest Regional Conference in 1989 were the most intense that I have ever experienced. We were up at 4:45 in the morning for *Omkar* and singing devotional songs to God. Throughout the days and evenings there were workshops to attend, speakers to listen to, and worship services for contemplation. The spiritual atmosphere was so dynamic that it was difficult to leave.

Even though the atmosphere was spiritually charged, there was some confu-

sion about the speakers. It was feared that there would not be major speakers to fill all the available time.

It is my opinion that the focus must be on the living *Avatar*. Certainly I enjoy listening to all of the well-known speakers, and I feel that everyone should have an opportunity to hear them. However, I also think that if we don't try to develop speakers in our own Sathya Sai Baba Centers, we are missing the point of what Baba is teaching us. The reason for attending any conference should be

Location	Information and Reservations
To be held either in Dallas or Houston, Texas	Scott & Eltrue Sorenson 1514 Bighorn Houston, TX 77090 (713) 583-1524
Bodhi Mandala Jemez Springs near Albuquerque, New Mexico	Connie Dillon 720 Acequia Madre #1 Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 982-1583
Camp La Honda in the Santa Cruz Mountains between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, California	Kathy Townsend 175 Espada Place Fremont, CA 94539 (415) 793-2458
Camp Cedar Glen northeast of San Diego near Julian, California	Connie Fox 2737 Fairfield Street San Diego, CA 92110 (619) 276-1356

EXPERIENCES

to immerse ourselves, one-pointedly, on the path to our own inner self. A conference is a great chance to advance on that path. When we have the opportunity to listen to some of the well-known devotees talk, that is only an added bonus.

The problem of a shortage of speakers was solved by asking for volunteers from the assembled group to share their experiences. Most were happy to comply. Some were not seasoned speakers, but they all spoke from their hearts, and everyone benefited from what they had to say.

After an awkward beginning, there was no problem in getting others to share some of their knowledge and feelings. We learned that the "big gun" speakers were not necessary to hold the audiences' attention. It was heart-warming to listen to the less well-known devotees, and to feel the love that was inspired by their direct impressions of the *Avatar*. The memory of this whole episode will stay with me for a long, long time.

—Loleta DuGoff
Rockledge, Florida

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For Travelers

The Sathya Sai Baba Council of the USA has formed a group travel project. This project will be facilitated in each region by a travel advisor who will regularly contact each Sai Center to provide information about groups who will be traveling to India to see Sathya Sai Baba. Many devotees have expressed a desire to travel to India with a group, and we hope this project will be helpful.

Children's Day

May 6, is **Easwaramma Day**, a day set aside by Sathya Sai Baba in recognition of His mother, Easwaramma. In the book, *Easwaramma, The Chosen Mother*, by the late Prof. N. Kasturi, Baba provides greater detail in a discourse given May 6, 1983. *This day is Easwaramma Day. The significance of the day is that it is celebrated as Children's Day, a time when little children are to be reminded of the Ideal. . . . It is recognized as the culmination of a week-long Festival of Children all over the world. The Easwaramma School at Puttaparthi stands as a monument for the Mother's (Easwaramma) abiding affection toward children and her desire to help them unfold their talents, skills, and divinity.*

Guru Poornima Day

July 7, a day set aside for the adoration of the *guru*, or spiritual preceptor.

Handicapped Day

A day for Sai devotees in the U. S. to give service, to remind devotees that the less fortunate need a helping hand all year long.

SATHYA SAI SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The second 1990 issue of the *Sathya Sai Service Opportunities* publication will not be included with the Summer *Sathya Sai Newsletter* as planned. Instead, the service newsletter will be sent out with the special Fall issue of the *Sathya Sai Newsletter* honoring Baba's birthday.

A Chance to Serve

The staff of the *Sathya Sai Service Opportunities* is looking for articles on Sai service projects that are planned in honor of the Fifth World Conference and the Sixty-Fifth Birthday. All descriptions of Center Birthday projects would be appreciated. The information is needed by August 15, in time for the Fall 1990 issue. Please contact Judith Wechsler, 131 Joralemon Street, #66, Brooklyn, New York 11201; (718) 875-8404.

FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SAI ORGANIZATIONS

World Conference and the Birthday

The Fifth World Conference of the Sri Sathya Sai Organizations will be held from the 18th to the 21st of November, 1990, and coincide with the celebration of Sathya Sai Baba's Sixty-Fifth Birthday. The theme of the conference will be: **"How more and more devotees can be involved in the activities of the organization."**

There will be no limit to the number of devotees who may attend from each overseas Sathya Sai Baba Center. Members as well as officers are eligible to attend as delegates.

Book Exhibition

An exhibition of books in different languages, by or about Sathya Sai Baba is to be presented. The books to be exhibited will be largely translations of books published by the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam. The Central Office at Prasanthi Nilayam wishes to receive two copies of each book by September 30, 1990.

Photography Exhibition

A photo exhibition of Sai Organization activities conducted in various countries is also to be presented. Posters, charts, and other visual displays will be included. The Central Office would appreciate having such materials, along with suitable write-ups, by September 15, 1990.

—*Sanathana Sarathi*, February, 1990

You should consider the Sai Organization as your very own organization. Your personal work is not more important than Sai Organization work.

—*Sathya Sai Baba*, February 15, 1988

TRAVELERS VIA BOMBAY

Devotees who have experienced unanticipated layovers at the Bombay Airport will welcome the following announcements. Any devotee or group of devotees will be given free facilities to rest, sleep, bathe, and relax in the *Dharmakshetra* building for not more than 24 hours. **Please note that some Bombay cab drivers know *Dharmakshetra* as the "Sai Baba Temple."**

The devotee or devotees will carry a letter from the Sathya Sai Baba Center president verifying their membership.

The *Dharmakshetra* office is to be informed at least one week before arrival.

There will be no canteen arrangement for food. However, soft drinks will be available.

There is no transportation offered by the volunteers, but, if requested in advance, taxi arrangements to and from the airport to *Dharmakshetra* or Sai Baba Temple will be arranged.

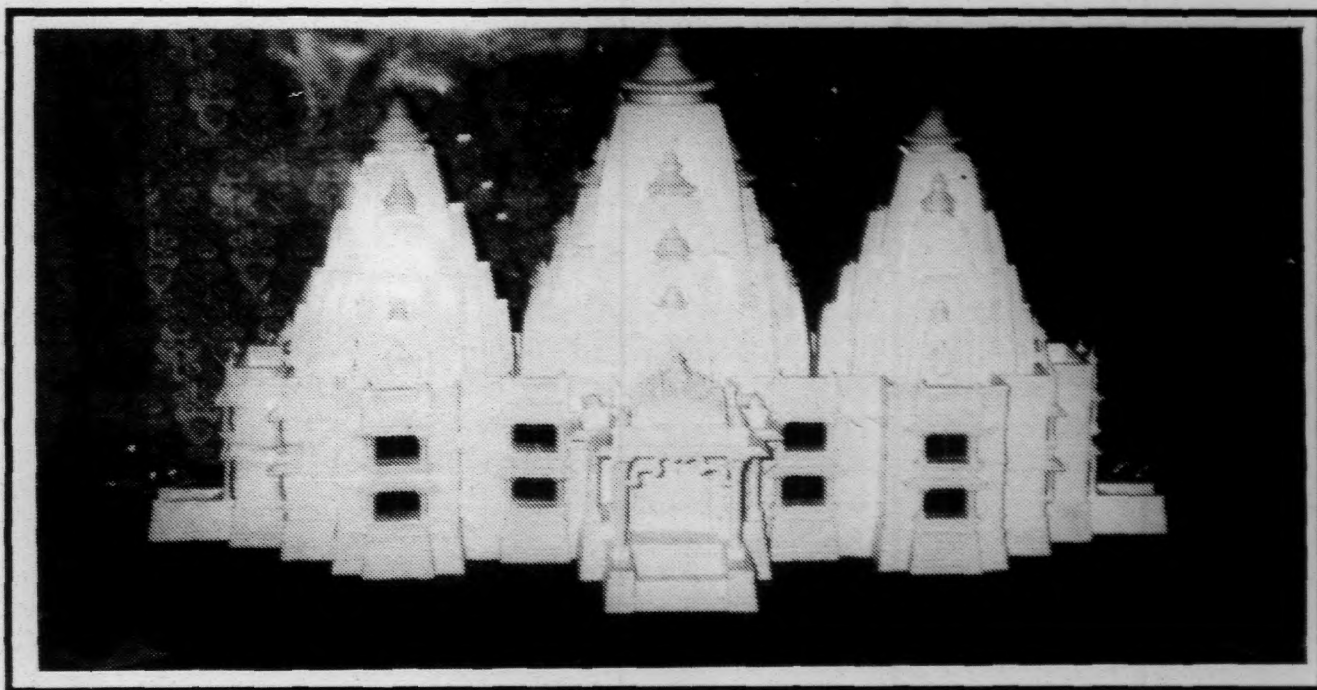
Devotees wishing to take advantage of this service should contact:

Manager, *Dharmakshetra* Complex
Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East)
Bombay, 400 093 India
632 54 94 (This phone number has been corrected since publication of the last *Sathya Sai Newsletter*.)

The following are the names and phone numbers of some of the Bombay volunteers who can offer more information to traveling devotees:

Mr. and Mrs. K.B. Santhana	634 15 77
Mr. and Mrs. Vaidya	632 67 50
Mr. and Mrs. Sampath	632 62 73
Mr. and Mrs. Tata	632 96 63
Mr. Tushar J. Swadia	204 82 58
	office 204 83 57

SPIRITUAL MUSEUM PROJECT



Scale model of the Spiritual Heritage of the World Museum

To celebrate Sathya Sai Baba's Sixty-Fifth Birthday, a museum titled, **Spiritual Heritage of the World** is now under construction. It is being built on the hill overlooking the ashram compound and the Hill View Stadium—near the Institute of Higher Learning Administration Building. Every country is invited to participate in this museum project. It will be dedicated in November 1990.

In the USA a Steering Committee has been appointed to plan, approve, construct, deliver, and install objects. This Committee works directly with Mr. Indulal Shah, the International Chairman of the Museum Project.

This museum will emphasize the role of spirituality in the evolution of man. It will display items representing the spiritual progress of mankind and the eternal message of saints and sages.

The museum will have over 20,000 square feet of exhibition space. Exhibits will be grouped by commonality of subject matter and not by country or origin. There will be rotating exhibitions.

—**Joan Brown-Hebel**, Chairperson
Museum Project Committee

SATHYA SAI BOOK CENTER OF AMERICA

305 West First Street, Tustin, California 92680, USA

(714) 669-0522

In addition to their regular hours, the Sathya Sai Book Center will now be open on Saturdays from 12:00 noon until 3:00 PM.

REPRINTED BOOKS AGAIN AVAILABLE

SATHYA SAI VAHINI, by Sathya Sai Baba, translated by the late Prof. N. Kasturi, published by the Sathya Sai Book Center of America. Baba exhorts us to admire, appreciate, and adore the seers and sages of many lands who have pioneered the discovery of Truth. He analyses the responsibilities of the individual and society, and reveals the one underlying purpose of spiritual fulfillment. 221 pages \$4.00

SAI DARSHAN, published by T. Savage. This book is an account of Mrs. Vimla Sahni's life experiences, recorded by two ashramites in Prasanthi Nilayam. Her intimate relationship with God is told in the various chapters. 76 pages \$3.00

TEACHINGS OF SRI SATHYA SAI BABA, published by the Sathya Sai Book Center of America. Included in this book are 110 thoughts and instructions given to individuals and groups by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. First compiled by Professor N. Kasturi and published in India. This edited version has been reproduced by Roy Eugene Davis. 144 pages \$2.35

NEW AUDIO CASSETTE TAPE

SAI WISDOM TAPE, Vol. III Sai Baba the Purpose of Life, by Connie Shaw and Om Productions, Inc. Selected readings from Baba's discourses are presented using three different voices and background music. 42 minutes \$6.50

1990 CALENDAR

1990 INDIAN---WESTERN WALL CALENDAR has a black and white picture of Sathya Sai Baba. \$3.50

SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

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USA

Editor: **Barbara Bozzani**

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Spring 1990

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