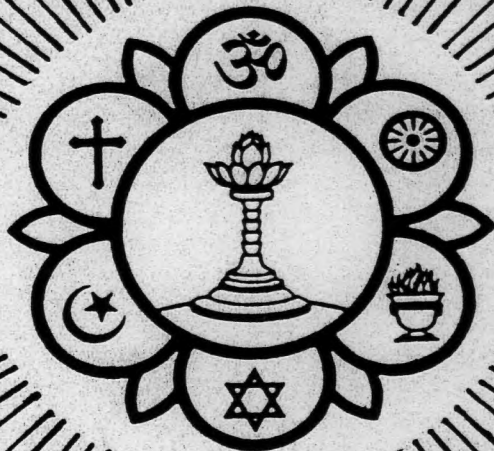


Sathya Sai Newsletter
1800 E. Garvey Avenue
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SATHYA SAI NEWSLETTER

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

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All worldly things are just passing clouds--they come and go, come and go. Nothing in the world is permanent--all are only passing clouds, not enduring. Occasionally you may experience sorrow or grief, but that passes away also. Sorrow is not permanent. Don't worry about sorrow and grief. Don't worry about anything. Worry is just a mentally created thing. Keep worry away and experience lasting joy by thinking about God. A single, fervent, intense prayer will disperse all your troubles. Reduce all your talk, actions, and concerns. Concentrate your mind on God, then you will remain happy.

--Sathya Sai Baba
From a Divine Discourse, 1988

DISCOVERING GOD WITHIN

I am illusion; you are illusion.

All spiritual principles are illusion.

Ideas about God, Iswara, are illusion.

Therefore, this world is illusion.

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*:

This is the illusion that deludes mankind. What appears to the eyes, whatever reaches the ears, whatever occurs in the mind, whatever moves the heart—all these are capable of deluding the individual. The whole cosmos is an expression of the combination of the *seen (drisya)* and the *Seer (Drashta)*. The world that we see is nothing but illusion. *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute) is the *Seer*. Creation is a manifestation of the union of the *Seer* and the *seen*.

In this land of *Bharat* (India) the ancient, sacred relationship between spiritual preceptor and pupil has vanished. Truthfulness and morality have declined. Faith in God and devotion have declined. Assertion of freedom without responsibility has grown beyond bounds. Wealth has become the sole aim, and righteousness has re-

ceded to the background. What else can I convey to you, oh good and noble people?

Know Thyself

Embodiments of Divine Love, in this vast universe there are innumerable things to be learned. For example, what is the inner reason for the emphasis placed by *Vedanta* on the meaning of the word *I*, used by everyone? In fact, if man is able to grasp the true meaning of the infinite *Atma* (*I*, or the Indwelling Divinity), he will be able to comprehend everything else in the world. "Knowing *that*, by which all else becomes known," is the declaration of the *Sruti (Veda)*.^{*} When man is able to understand the meaning of *I*, he will be in a position to understand everything.

"Birth and action are My Divine aspects." This is stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*. "You will attain me, oh Arjuna! I will liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve!" In several places in the *Gita* there are references to *I* and *me*. In the great scriptures and epics, you find the statement, "Inquiry into the Self leads to liberation." All scriptures urge us to, "Know thyself."

^{*}The *Vedas* are called *Sruti* meaning that which is heard. This is because *Vedic* wisdom was taught for thousands of years by word of mouth.

The I Principle

When anyone introduces himself, he declares, "I am Ranga," "I am Linga," "I am Rama," and so on. Even animals and birds use the term *I* in their own respective languages to indicate what they are--whether a fox or a dog, a leopard or a tiger, an eagle or a parrot. *I* runs like a thread in a garland in all beings, whatever their name or form. Hence, everyone has to recognize the significance of this always present term, *I*. Unfortunately, mankind is falling prey to innumerable difficulties by identifying this *I* with the body.

The *Vedas* declare, "I am not this." They teach in this statement that the *I* is different from the form. The *Sruthi* gives us wisdom, and also teaches the profound truth about *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

In the statement, "I am not this," there are three distinct terms: "I," "am not," and "this." What is the *I*? On the authority of the *Vedas*, the *I* has been described under various names as *Atma*, *Brahman*,* *Paramaatma*, and the like. It must be noted that this *I* is present in every individual as *Vaiswaanara*. In the form of *Vaiswaanara*, the *I* principle digests the food taken by a person and carries the nourishment through the circulat-

ing blood to every part of the body. Thus in the *Gita*, Krishna declared, "Assuming the form of *Vaiswaanara*, *I* enter the bodies of all living beings and through the *praana* and *aapaana*, (inhaling and exhaling) consume the four kinds of food. . . . *I* am present as *Vaiswaanara* in every human being." The significance of the term *Paramaatma* is: He who transcends the senses of action, perception, mind, intellect, and ego. The *Paramaatma* principle is envisaged as *Brahman*, the Supreme Absolute. *Brahman* is characterized by all-pervasiveness. The *I* principle is present in every human heart. This omnipresent *I* is *Brahman*. *I* is therefore a manifestation of *Brahman*, the Universal Absolute.

Then there is the term, *this*. *This* refers to every object that is seen in the universe. This is a microphone, this is a cloth, etc. *This* is used when referring to the sun, moon, hill, or dale. The inner meaning of the term *this* refers to everything that can be perceived. If a pointed reference is not made by the use of *this*, then the question will be asked what one is referring to when using a word like cloth. By stating, "This is cloth," the precise object is indicated. Thus, in all objects, *this* is present as an all-pervading quality. *This* is the *seen* (*drisya*). The *I*, is the *Seer* (*Drashta*). It follows that

**Brahman*, synonymous with *Brahmam*, means the Universal Absolute. These terms are not to be confused with *Brahmin* which is the priestly caste.

the *Seer* is not the *seen*. *I* am not the body, that is just my garment. So as *I* see other things, *I* am also seeing my body. This is how one should recognize the distinction between the *Seer* and the *seen*. If this logic is understood, is it not a sign of ignorance to identify the body with the *I*? The body is like other perceived objects. Hence, to identify the body with one's Self is preposterous.

In the dream state, deep sleep state, and in *samadhi* (super conscious, perfect equanimity), one is not aware of the body. Hence, you are not the body. You are the *Drashta*, the *Seer*. In this vast creation, with its myriad forms and names, there is one basic principle which sustains all of them. It is from this basic principle that everything else has emerged. Nothing can be installed without a base. A variety of ornaments are made from gold. The ornaments may vary in form and name, but their basic substance is the same gold. The gold remains and shines even when the ornaments are melted. The yellow metal itself remains unchanged. Likewise, for the world of perception, with its myriad names and forms--the *seen* and the *Seer*--the *I* principle is the basis. Everything emerges from *I*. Hence the commonly used term, *I*, should not be interpreted in its superficial meaning. *I* am *Atma* (the Indwelling Divinity). It is only when mankind recognizes this basic truth that trouble and misery can be overcome, and real bliss can be experi-

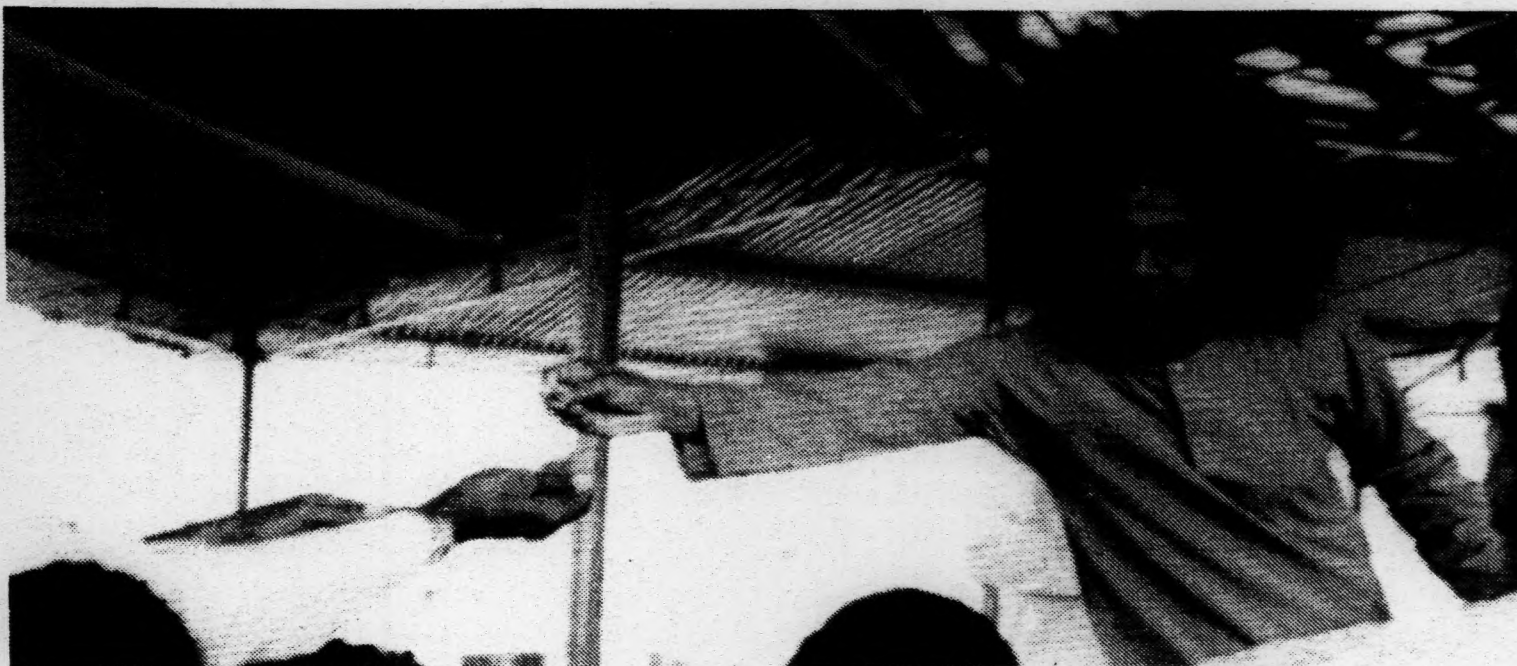
enced. All the myriad forms cannot exist without this basic truth. Therefore, the basis underlying all forms is the principle of the *I* which is eternal and true.

The first sound that emanates from every man and from all beings is *I*. *I* emerged even before the *Pranava* (*Om*). But just because the *I* is in common use and is part of the daily experience of everyone, it tends to be treated as a cheap cliché. Because of this tendency, people fall prey to innumerable troubles and difficulties.

Playing A Role

You must remember that Divinity is in humanity and is not divided or separated from humanity. For instance, take the case of an actor named Rama who was appearing in the role of Hiran-yakasipu. When he appeared on the stage, the stage director asked him, "Who are you?" In his costume as Hiran-yakasipu, he was oblivious to his original name, Rama. In stentorian language he answered, "Don't you know that I am the all-powerful, universally dreaded monarch of the world, Hiran-yakasipu? Don't you know that I have mastered my senses and control everything in the world?" He answered boastfully.

The actor was named Rama. The role he was playing was that of Hiran-yakasipu. He was one and the same person who was playing two roles: as



Rama and as Hiranyakasipu. The individual (*jiva*) is in the body; the Divine is in the heart. Both the individual and God sport together and part from each other. There is a Supreme Puppeteer who runs the show using individuals as puppets. [Baba illustrated this idea with a poem.]

The actor, Rama, in the role of Hiranyakisipu on the stage,

Is recognized only as Hiranyakasipu by the audience.

Similarly, all human beings, with their different names and forms,

Are also playing different roles on the stage of life.

But there is only one principle in both good and bad.

The one principle in all is Atma.

Forgetting this basic truth about the inherent Divinity of mankind,

Believing in the manifold forms and garments worn by human beings,

People are involving themselves in numerous difficulties.

When you find out who the person is who has put on the garb for a certain role, you will discover the transient nature of the role. In everyone, the all-pervading Divine is present. When one becomes aware of the Divine within themselves, they become the Divine. Through the knowledge of *Brahman*, one attains the Supreme. "The knower of the *Atma* overcomes sorrow. There is no multiplicity here, only the One abides. There is only One without a second." These are the truths declared by the *Vedas*. Because people have ignored these *Vedic* truths, they have forgotten their own Divine Nature.

JOURNEY TO PUTTAPARTHI

Love knows no fear, no untruth, no anxiety, no grief. I am Love; I shower Love; I share Love.

--Sathya Sai Baba

To anyone contemplating for the first time a journey to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, be prepared for discomfort, but don't on any account let it prevent you from going. You are faced with a long international plane flight, the wait in the heat and bustle of Bombay for a connecting flight to Bangalore, and then on to Puttaparthi, a 110-mile journey through Karnataka State and into Andhra Pradesh.

The tiny village and *ashram* lie in a sun-baked bowl, surrounded by blue hills, and the weather is far hotter than Bangalore. As Puttaparthi emerges in the dust and heat, striking contrasts appear. Growing up alongside this primitive village with its shacks and ragged children, bullock carts and stray dogs, is a university campus with beautiful buildings and an *ashram* for many thousands, which has been awarded the status of township. Sathya Sai Baba's volunteers feed the poor and provide work in the *ashram* for laundry girls, builders, etc. Baba urges us not to give money to beggars, but rather encourages us to offer food. If we wish, we may participate in programs for the purpose of feeding hundreds, sometimes thousands, of the poor and needy. The descent on such an isolated village of so

many thousands of devotees from all over the world must have astonished the simple villagers in the early days. Some devotees ride through the village streets in rickshaws; others walk. There are a few little cafes and shops and, of course, innumerable stalls selling photographs of Sai Baba. Where else on earth could you enter a village post office and find such sayings on the wall as, "Seek out your faults and other's merits." "Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting." "Fire is latent in wood, as God is in man."

The Old Hospital

Sathya Sai Baba's presence is particularly felt in the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital where doors open only after a daily morning service of dedication to the Lord. Sai Baba's picture, spreading calmness and compassion, hangs in every room. The staff works devotedly. One doctor has not taken a holiday for eight years, nor does she want to; the doctors feel themselves to be Sai Baba's instruments. The hospital is spotlessly clean, and everyone leaves his shoes outside. Prescriptions are dispensed entirely free, but the amount of medicine is usually only for a day or two to avoid waste. If you are still ill, you go back for more. Consultations

are disconcertingly public, with everyone crowding around and listening. The hospital is usually in need of extra help during crowded festival times.

Beyond the hospital, on the road leading out of the village, lay the impressive Krishna-colored (pale blue, pink, and cream) buildings which house the schools, students' hostel, and university. They are the evidence of the extraordinary achievement of this *Avatar*, who was born in poverty, who as a child used thorns for buttons, and who had no formal education after the age of 13. Another fascinating building is the Siva Temple built on the site of Sathya Sai Baba's birthplace, and the wish-fulfilling tree above the Chitravati River, the scene of so many of Sai Baba's *leelas* (divine play).

Abode of Perfect Peace

From the hubbub of the village it is a pleasure to pass into the peace and silence of Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of perfect peace. The air is scented with *vibuthi* (holy ash), jasmine, and joss sticks. Palm trees shade your path. On the way to the *mandir* (temple), painted tablets show more of Sai's words: "The heart with compassion is the temple of God." "Start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love; that is the way to God."

It is not hard to imagine the excitement we felt when we stepped through the colonnade and onto the swept

surface of the temple forecourt, waiting in the hush for Sathya Sai Baba to appear. Suddenly the familiar, slender, orange-clad figure was standing on the veranda. He paused before moving slowly and gracefully towards the waiting lines. During those first few days, He appeared a remote figure as He moved among the crowds. Many of my English group thought that they had felt closer to Him at home than they did here, when seated before Him. In a short time, however, the detachment of the early days gave way to awe and fascination as we became more aware of His majesty and power, and finally to adoration as we observed this example of love in action. No *darshan* (seeing a holy being) ever seemed the same. He would emerge from the *mandir*, pausing to listen to the thoughts of the thousands gathered in silence, and would always be calm and unhurried. Sometimes He would linger to talk gently to some, admonishing with His hand those who were over-enthusiastic, allowing some to touch His feet and carefully skirting others not ready for this privilege, calling people for interview, creating *vibuthi*, blessing pendants and photographs, and gently taking letters offered up to Him until His left hand was full. With only His right hand, He would continue to console, pacify, and encourage.

His tenderness and love for children was touching to see. Two little children, late with their offering of flow-

ers, received gentle, chiding pats on the cheek. One little boy, sitting cross-legged, evidently got permission to take Swami's photograph, which he proceeded to do with Swami smiling down on him. Baba paid particular attention to His students, sitting in rows on the temple porch, and eagerly turning to face Him whichever way He walked. At a sign from Him they would rise to move forward to the temple door to hear the *bhajans* (devotional songs), and His small form would be lost to view as they milled around Him.

The temple itself, adorned with birds and elephants, and crowned with domes, is beautiful and unique. Nowhere else in the world is there a hall of prayer which bears the emblems of the five major world religions--Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, and Christianity [which in India includes the Jewish faith]. To share in Sathya Sai Baba's enjoyment of the music during *bhajans* in His temple was a special experience. The hall also had a magical quality in the candlelight in the early morning when the sacred word *Om* is sounded 21 times.

The meditation tree is a peaceful spot from which to watch the dawn spreading gold over the hills and listen to the *bhajan* singers moving in procession around the *ashram*, awakening the inhabitants. Sathya Sai Baba has placed beneath the banyan tree a metal plate bearing mystic inscriptions to help in meditation. A fine

view of the *ashram* can be obtained from the impressive university administration building where the oval couch with a cobra's head, Sai Baba's bed for eight years, is on display.

It seems that much building and painting is always going on. Visitors sleep in apartments or in communal halls without furniture. They purchase buckets, thin flock mattresses, and mosquito nets when they arrive. Men usually wear white, and women wear long skirts or *saris*. A shawl is worn over caftans and blouses. Visitors should not garland themselves with flowers; that honor is reserved for Swami's pictures. We soon learned to make ourselves half our normal size so as to squeeze into the temple. We lost weight in the heat anyway.

The *ashram* canteen serves nourishing meals and has plenty of cool water, safe throughout the *ashram*. It is vital to drink enough in the heat. The walls are adorned with Sai Baba's sayings: "Love all. Serve all." "Being is lost in becoming." "All are one. Be alike to everyone." It is staffed by volunteers who appreciate help in the morning chopping all the vegetables. No meat, fish, or eggs may be consumed in the *ashram*, and no smoking is allowed. Desperate visitors must go to the village for such indulgences. We were told that visiting the everyday environment of the village can undo hours of *sadhana* (spiritual practice). The ten o'clock morning lecture is Swami's

gentle way of keeping visitors occupied while it is still cool enough to be tempted to go outside.

World Village

One of the pleasures of the *ashram* was the variety of nationalities there. It was like a world village. I found myself in a constant dilemma, surrounded by people with whom I had an instant rapport, who all had unique experiences of Sai Baba to tell, yet we were supposed to be silent. Added to this was the dilemma posed by Swami Himself. Should one be asking Him to bless pendants, photos, *vibuthi* (my pockets were spilling out, I brought them so often to *darshan*), or for a chance to touch His feet? It took eight days before He accepted the letters I had brought with me. He apparently liked us to be brave enough to ask for an interview, but He disapproved of overdoing it. His warning glances were all part of the training in "duty, discipline, and devotion," but required much soul-searching to interpret. Since He pledges to grant your request, you have to be careful what you ask Him for. We felt that He was well aware of everything that was going on in the *ashram*. "This is the spiritual laboratory," said the speaker at one of the lectures, "everyone is subject to constant experiments and tests in order to be made self-confident and sweet, courageous and courteous, straight and spiritual."

Going simply to pay homage to the *Avatar* and to experience life in the *ashram*, I had not expected the personal relationship that Sai Baba develops with each one in the most subtle way, a relationship based on pure love, which reaches directly to the heart of the visitor. In fact, strange things seemed to happen to the heart *chakra* until love for Him grew so great that, after a few short weeks, parting from Him was an agonizing experience. Only later did we recognize that His permanent presence in our hearts obviates the necessity for being in His physical presence.

A great joy was meeting so many people from groups in Germany, Holland, and Mexico who were at the *ashram* at the same time. We met daily before afternoon *darshan*. That Swami supported us, we had no doubt. Our letter asking His blessing on our work, signed individually by 10 of us just minutes before *darshan*, was accepted at once by Swami. My own unforgettable experience was being blessed by Swami in the *darshan* line, a moment to treasure all my life.

On our last morning, my friend and I skipped the morning lecture and went down to say good-bye to Sai Gita, Swami's elephant. In the distance we saw Swami's white car approaching. He waved at us as the car glided slowly past. Sai Gita went down on one knee, lifted her trunk, and trumpeted to

Him. It was, for us, a perfect good-bye. We left the *ashram* with great sadness, but felt we had gained a small measure of inner stillness with the knowledge of Sai Baba's presence in our hearts. We returned home with a

deep sense of commitment to service in this world in return for the immeasurable sacrifice of His incarnation among us.

--Idina Le Geyt

Printed courtesy, *Share International*

When you ask yourself the question, "Why have I come to India?" The answer will be, "I have come to achieve spiritual progress." But then, you must ask yourself another question, "Having come for spiritual purposes, am I pursuing my spiritual goals here, or am I getting side-tracked by involving myself in numerous worldly activities?"

--Sathya Sai Baba

From a Discourse, 1988



Puttaparti, the birthplace of Sathya Sai Baba, is located on the banks of the Chitravati River.

TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE:
THE DEVOTEE'S DILEMMA
A Sai-Liloquy

To see or not to see, that is the question:
Whether 'tis wiser in the mind to suffer
The yearning to see Swami,
Or to take planes across the seas between us,
Proposing then to see Him! To sit enplaned. . .
No more. Yet by "sit" I mean to subject
This Western flesh to a thousand natural shocks
It has not dreamed of! 'Tis a destination
Not lightly to be wished. We hope to sleep,
Perchance to dream. Aye, there's the rub.
On that sleepless flight what dreams we dream
Of interviews with Baba when we will spread
By thousands across the sacred *ashram* soil,
Must give us cause. Yet, there's an aspect,
The Bombay layover of such long wait
Where we must bear the quips and scorns of petty chiefs,
The inspector's tone, the proud man's insolence,
The gangs of eager porters all the way.
The patient *bhakta* of inconveniences
Takes no heed, but focuses all thought
On *darshan* of the Lord of Love, while we
Of incomplete resolve concern ourselves
With native diet, suspect water, *dhobi* itch,
And prospects of lotus seats on concrete pillows
Should focus on beloved Baba's words of truth and hope.
Thus does comfort make cowards of us all.
And thus do we of frailer stuff postpone
The *ashram* visit, voice as our excuse
The fact that Baba lives in every heart and home
And waits our wish wherever we may be.
Soft you now--it's *puja* time. O Swami,
In Your Loving Heart be all my prayers remembered!

--Jay Jarrett
Stone Mountain, Georgia

COME AND SEE

The palm of His hand is turned toward you and the whole arm is raised just enough to compliment His expressive face. The smile around His lips is subtle, gentle, benevolent, and radiates great warmth, but His deep penetrating eyes are particularly noticeable; they seem to see the very depths of your heart. His head is framed in a halo of bushy black hair. What we have depicted here is one of the most popular photographic representations of Sathya Sai Baba in the *abhaya*, "fear not" gesture, His hand outstretched in blessing.

Certainly this is what the gesture means to those who live in the Indian tradition, whether in India or the West. But, personally, I could hardly ever see any welcoming or benevolence in this blessing hand gesture. To me, who came from Eastern Europe, it implied, rather, the signal of halting: do not come any closer, stop!

But to literally millions, Sai Baba is much more than just a wonderful man with a friendly smile and welcoming gesture. He is much, much more! In fact, Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, and Parsees view Baba as an *Avatar*, a God-man. For me, such a notion could only mean a fundamental contradiction of my beliefs, an idea too radical to contemplate.

Nevertheless, my furious opposition to any kind of encounter with Baba made me recognize the sense of threat as more of a challenge to my entrenched views, than as a real danger to my soul. Once I realized that, then the next step could only be a fearless, face-to-face confrontation. I decided to introduce myself to Him in a letter in a sincere attempt to establish a relationship which would not compromise my beliefs and affiliations. Love was the most natural choice as the language of communication. And that was how I started to relate to Him.

Who is Sai Baba? It took me turbulent hours and months of confusion, hard thinking, and praying before I came to the realization that these questions are irrelevant sidetracks. The only important question is simply HOW He is! How He is in terms of everything He says and does, how He relates to individuals and to the world. I had to see it with my own eyes before the answer could come to me clearly and loudly; With LOVE! He always responds to everything and everyone with Love, always Love.

Of course, many visitors to Sai Baba's *ashram*, Prasanthi Nilayam, as well as those who have just read His books or seen films or videotapes about Him, are struck with awe and wonder when

faced with the incredible things which He does so effortlessly and naturally: healings of bodies, minds, and souls, giving loving protection in mortal peril, unexplainable conversions and transformations, all this merely upon exposure to His presence. He provides us with all these things because they lead us toward an increase in the quality of life and of the spirit. You may question such events, but they can be confirmed by witnesses.

Sathya Sai Baba is to you whatever you accept Him to be. Whatever framework you impose on this relationship, as long as it is a *real* relationship, it is all right. This means approaching Him in truthfulness, sincerity, simplicity, with good will, and above all, with a pure heart. With Him you will be what you are, only better--more deeply, more lovingly, and more consciously better.

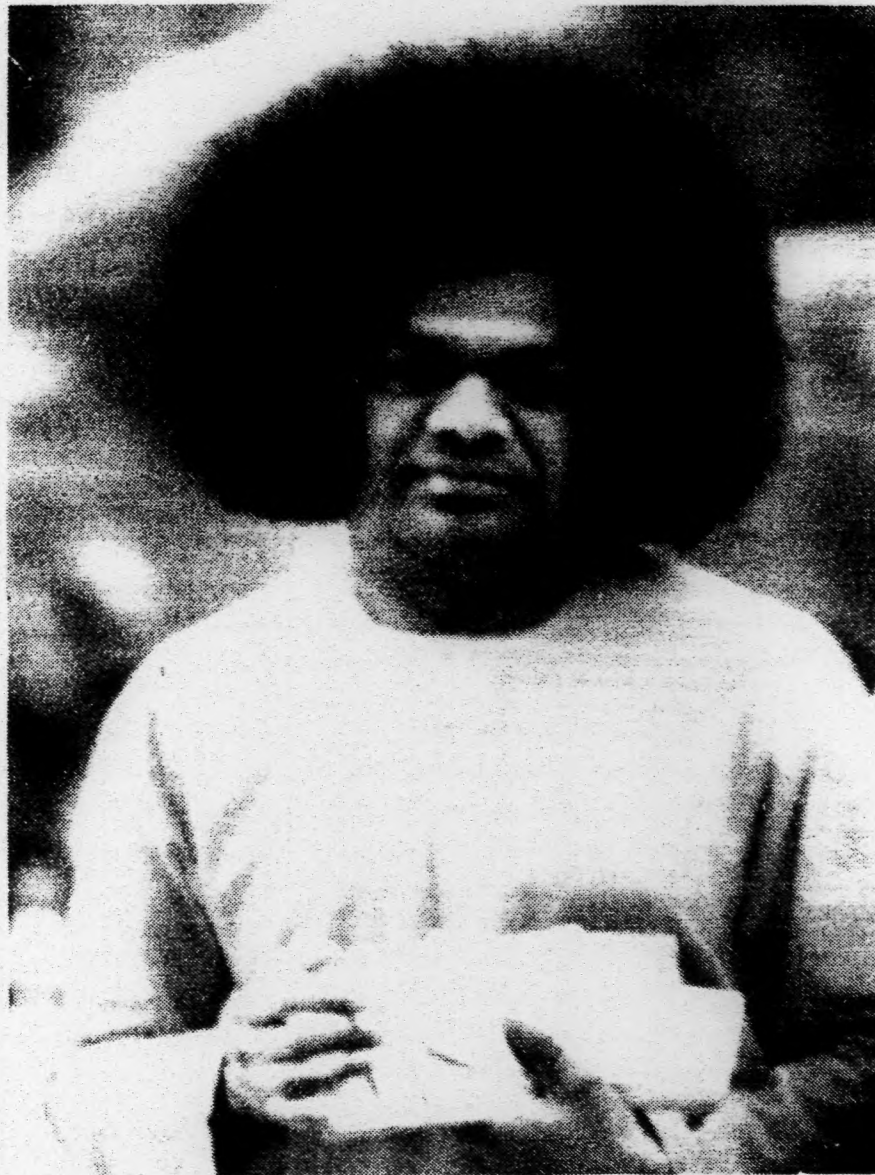
Once you start listening to what people say about Baba, you may become exposed to all sorts of dogmatic and creedal declarations. Let them not disturb you. Take for your own whatever strikes you as truthful and meaningful, and reflect deeply on it. Listen to the song that the Lord is singing in your heart. Learn the lesson of how to follow the inner voice, how to live a good life, and how to serve others.

Already, just through reading these words, you have been exposed to the message of Sai Baba. His call is direct:

Come, see for yourself, and decide. It is a call for growth and expansion.

My favorite picture of Baba accompanies this article. The expression is enigmatic and the smile transcendental. His eyes are looking straight into the heart and are knowing and understanding. His hands hold a pile of letters close to his chest. His head is slightly tilted to the side. There is no gesture of any kind. The whole image conveys less of "sweetness" than of peace and acceptance. I took this picture on my first and only visit to Puttaparthi, the place of Baba's birth and the location of His *ashram*.

While at the *ashram*, I had a half-dream, half-vision. I was in that state between sleeping yet thinking clearly when images flash through one's head. I was sitting on the ground in front of Baba, and He was taking my letter. The image was like a still photo, devoid of any action, just a moment frozen in time. His hand was already on the letter, and my hand was still holding it in a gesture of giving. The impression was of something beyond time, a moment extended into eternity. My interpretation of this was that the line of communication between us is forever open and uninterrupted. It gave me the sense of a personal covenant. After this experience, I felt compelled to ask Baba for a sign: "If my interpretation is valid, then would You please accept my letters." And that is exactly what happened in my last hour in His



The author's favorite picture

presence. I was given the first real chance to give my letters to Him and He accepted them.

Before leaving India, I had a notion that the real treasure of my visit would not be apparent until after I returned to New York. When I returned and my pictures were developed I realized that, indeed, Baba had provided me with some gentle attention. A number of images revealed that He was looking directly at me, straight into my eyes and all the way into my heart.

To anyone considering a relationship with Baba, I can only suggest to take seriously His invitation to, "Come and see, then decide." How closely this corresponds to the words of Jesus given to His first disciples who wanted to know where He resides, "Come and see" (St John 1: 39). One may realize that one's own heart already contains all the answers.

--Matt Sliwowski
New York, New York

IMPRESSIONS OF A FIRST VISIT

I am writing this as my visit [to Prasanthi Nilayam] is nearing its end. This has the advantage of freshness, but the disadvantage of my not having sorted out my reactions as yet. So I hope you can forgive if the following is a bit disjointed.

I went as a Catholic who had heard of Baba only a year before. I first went to see Him after I read some *Sathya Sai Speaks* books and saw the video *Love is My Form*. I was quite disconcerted to find that I already believed Baba to be an incarnation of God. Many of you will know this feeling of panic. How does one react to the fact that God has again become man and has been living in India for the past 65 years? And so, over the past year, all my reading or talking with Sai devotees has only deepened my belief.

I came to Prasanthi Nilayam, convinced that I was to see God Incarnate but quite uncertain as to how to deal with this conviction. I was also quite apprehensive as to how He would deal with me. Would He see me as being only superficially spiritual, or would He accept my yearning [for God] as being real? Since I've been here I realize that there were two deeper fears: First, what if I find that I'm someone else altogether? Second, and even worse, what if I don't react at all?

The journey was trouble free mainly because I had come with a group for whom all the details of airports, hotels, and taxis had been previously arranged. We arrived at the *ashram* on Thursday and settled in quickly. Living conditions are primitive by Western standards and following the discipline of the community is demanding. However, one adapts.

The first *darshan* was a bit of a disappointment. I saw Baba from close up, but all I could feel was that He was something more than a man. This first reaction I can only put down to jet lag and culture shock, but perhaps Baba was even at that time teaching me something.

For the next few days I felt rather like someone at a party who was being ignored by the host. Baba didn't even look in my direction, and yet every time I saw Him I felt His enormous power more and more. Outwardly I was quite calm and relaxed, but inwardly I was in continuous turmoil. I questioned my whole religious background--did I really live like someone who believed in God? Was I too blunt spiritually to react to the Divine? All the time part of me was aware that this reaction was too sudden, too extreme to be normal (ordinarily I'm not easily ruffled). So I hoped desperately

that Baba was working on me. By Monday night I would not have minded if Baba had kicked me. All my doubts and confusion had distilled down to the one yearning, aching plea, "Please, Lord Baba, just let me know, somehow, that You accept me." If the foregoing seems to have happened too quickly to be real, believe me that is the pace of things near Him.

On Tuesday morning from 3:00 AM until *darshan* at 6:30, I felt a sort of desperate calmness. I now knew that there was only one thing which was important to me. I was prepared to wait forever, if need be, to find out if He accepted me.

We drew the front line for *darshan*. As Baba came along the line, I could feel the power coming from Him, but I could not return it with any feeling of love, only a single-minded intent of looking for some sign of recognition. As He passed me I remember thinking, "I'll wait, I'll wait, I know You'll answer me."

The next thing I knew, the members of our group were getting up--Baba had called us for an interview. How I missed His conversation with our leader or His instruction to go into the *mandir* I'll never know. I thought I'd been watching Him all the time.

Obviously, in an account such as this, it would be unfair not to write about the interview, but it involved 28

people and, as such, is private. However, a few details are in order. As we were sitting outside the interview room waiting for Baba to finish *darshan*, I was shaking all over and crying. I remember thinking, "He's called me, He's called me, He must accept me."

Soon Baba was there ushering us into a very small room, about 12 feet square, with His chair in one corner. I was against a wall about six feet from Baba. He began putting us at ease with a few half-serious, half-humorous observations about our group. Then He began asking questions of individuals. He discussed such things as social work, etc. He asked some people, "What do you want?" He made some interesting observations about having money, comparing it to a pair of shoes, "... too small and they pinch, too large and you fall over," and about astrology, "The past is past, the future is not sure, the present is now."

During the interview Baba materialized two rings--both gold with inlaid silver--and changed a copper ring to gold with a large emerald surrounded by diamonds. We were all shown the copper ring first. He also materialized some *vibuthi* (holy ash).

To witness four materializations from close range should be mind-blowing, but my mind could not perceive them as such. There is no mumbo-jumbo, simply a wave of the hand and there it is. In the case of the copper ring, He

simply held it in view with three fingers and blew on it, and there was the new ring.

Many people will tell you that they cannot remember the details of exactly what happened in an interview. I have the same problem. I think the reason is that, when we were in there with Him, we all felt like children who were totally absorbed in the moment.

After the interview, we each went our own way so that we could just come to terms with what had happened. Later, we met as a group to share the experience. I remember thinking that I would have to be careful lest the rest of the visit was a bit of a letdown after the highlight of the interview.

But that evening it was delightful to realize that the interview was not some temporary highlight, but the beginning of a new, more insightful phase of my life.

I gained two things from my time there: First, I now feel that I am accepted as I am by Baba. Second, I am much more aware that every moment Baba is here to help, to guide, to turn to, and especially that His giving is unconditional. He has come to help each of us, and He never stops.

You would think that after these wondrous experiences, I would be a living example of sanctity, wouldn't you? But no, I'm still the same with the same reactions. The difference is that now there is no point in worrying about the past, or being anxious about the future. All I have to do is try to approach life living in the now, according to the example given by Baba. A thousand times a day I forget this, but it doesn't matter as long as my direction is always guided by Him. Eventually practice creates change, but only if you practice. What Baba has taught me most of all is that it is okay to start from where I am. In Him there is a blueprint for each moment. Truly, His Life is His Message.

I hope that as you read this you will realize that what happened to me on this visit was perfectly in accordance with my process, and that the language I use is just as it comes into my head. Please remember, therefore, that for you He will use your process, and the way He communicates supercedes any language. I wish I could convey what it feels like to be so close to Him, but He is omnipresent, so just relax and look inside. *Om Sai Ram.*

--G. McNern

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You are not seeking any pleasures here, you are not even seeking comfort. You are content to listen to Swami, to see Swami, and for an interview. You are immersed in one thing, but you must make it permanent.

--Sathya Sai Baba

From a Discourse, February 17, 1989

SAI TALKS TO WESTERN PILGRIMS

All of you have heard of Sai Baba from books, friends, and devotees. That is *jnatum*. From the moment you hear of Baba, you develop a yearning: I want to go to India; I want to see Baba and speak to Him. So you come to Puttaparthi and have the *darshan* of Baba. You see Him and He sees you. That is *drashtum*; it is the happiness that you derive from seeing. But this is not complete happiness. Only after Swami calls you for an interview, speaks to you, addresses your doubts, and helps with your problems--then you have *praveshtum*--and you are really happy. Then your happiness is complete. So the stages are hearing and knowing about Swami, coming and seeing Swami, and then, experiencing the loving connection with Swami. This is the secret of *Vedanta*.

When you ask yourself the question, "Why have I come to India?" The answer will be, "I have come to achieve spiritual progress." But then, you must ask yourself another question, "Having come for spiritual purposes, am I pursuing my spiritual goals here, or am I getting side-tracked by involving myself in numerous worldly activities?" In the spiritual pursuit for which you have come, there should be only one line and one direction--straight between Sai Baba and you--heart-to-heart and

love-to-love. Concentrate completely on developing that relationship. Since you have come for spiritual purposes, do not get lost in all kinds of distractions and unnecessary activities.

Now, you are cultivating connections with all kinds of people. But this will only hinder your progress on the spiritual path. The first thing you must do is to avoid all excessive talk. Too much talk is not good. When you meet someone you know, it is enough to exchange with them, "Hello." "Hello." "How are you?" "How are you?" "Good-bye." "Good-bye." Or just greet each other with "*Sai Ram*" and go on your way. That is enough, but that is not what you are doing today. You are developing connections with all kinds of people. Some of you come alone and then develop attachments and relationships. First there is friendship, then there is a relationship, and then it is husband and wife. This is not good. You have come to see Swami. Do not get distracted from that. Everything you do here should be devoted only to deepening your connection with Swami.

Spiritual centers like this attract all kinds of people, good and bad. Some will try to make friends with you, discover what valuables you have such as rings, watches, tape recorders, or



The devotees of the United States take this opportunity to convey their love and gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We honor the day on which this Avatar took human form, November 23. HAPPY BIRTHDAY SWAMI ♡

cameras--and then scheme to take them from you. Do not get involved with anyone by developing new relationships. Think only of one connection, your permanent connection with God.

It may not be easy for you to understand Sai. Because Sai talks like an ordinary person and moves freely among you, you may be deluded into thinking that He's like any other human being. But this is not so. The entire universe is in Sai's hand. Sai can transform the whole world in one instant. Gold, diamonds, everything is here. You are misunderstanding this Sai phenomenon. By one movement of

Swami's hand, instantly there will appear a big diamond. [Swami waved His hand and a huge, beautiful diamond ring appeared. Then, by one puff of Swami's breath, it disappeared again. There was a great exclamation of wonder and delight from the devotees seated in the hall.] Anything that Swami wills must happen. The real nature of Divinity cannot be understood by everybody. For this there must be faith.

The first step in developing faith is self-confidence. When you have self-confidence then you will gain self-satisfaction. Self-confidence is the foun-

dation on which the mansion of self-realization is built. The walls are self-satisfaction. The roof is self-sacrifice. Only when you are prepared to fully sacrifice yourself will you be able to enter into this mansion of self-realization. Therefore, it is of primary importance that you be ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of God.

Do not waste a single moment of your time. Should you meet together as a group, discuss only good things and keep your mind and conversation on God. Don't discuss any personal matters or talk about this or that person. Never, never speak ill of anybody. The Divine exists in everyone. Whenever you speak ill of someone, you are really speaking ill of God. The best thing is to avoid talking to anyone altogether; remain silent and immersed within yourself as much as possible.

Many of you have traveled thousands of miles to get here. Instead of staying within the precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam, you go wandering about outside. Outside, the vibrations are all worldly vibrations; there you can easily get into bad company and become involved in contacts which will be harmful to you spiritually. Make the best use of the spiritual atmosphere, the supreme peace, and the divine vibrations that are concentrated here in Prasanthi Nilayam. Please avoid any connections with anyone, particularly strangers. Let the only connection be the loving connection that you wish to

develop between Baba and yourself. This is the direct connection; Baba has no ambassadors or intermediaries. Yearning for that direct connection, heart-to-heart, is true devotion.

Occasionally some bad thoughts may come to you. Pay no heed to them. It is only when you follow your thoughts with actions that all kinds of difficulties may ensue. Even if bad thoughts come, as long as you maintain control over your body, no regretful actions will result. When the negative and positive get linked together, a current will start to flow. The mind is the negative; the body is the positive. When these two are combined, actions will result. Therefore, while you are here, keep your body within the confines of Prasanthi Nilayam and fix your mind steadily on God. Then, only divine thoughts and actions will arise.

You have not come here to waste your time. You have come to lead a pure, sacred life. You must secure such a sacred and happy life, a healthful and peaceful life. Concentrate on God and all your desires will be taken care of. Make your prayer the ancient Vedic prayer by saying, "May all the worlds be happy." Let everyone in every part of the world be happy, not just the people of your own country, but everyone everywhere in the world.

--Sathya Sai Baba
From a Divine Discourse
given to Westerners in 1988

GOING TO INDIA

Who is Sai Baba and why is it said that He is for everyone? If children grow up to value actions of truth, right conduct, harmlessness, and peace; if they have ideals of serving those who are distressed, lonely, and lost; if they courageously become examples of doing good, being good, and seeing good; if they show reverence for the earth and all living things, then our world will become a place of harmony, peace, and joy, renewed with meaning and hope. As people from all walks of life, from every country of our planet, continue to gather at Prasanthi Nilayam to acknowledge their differences, while uniting in their common goal, then we may see the birth of a new world.

But the work is hard and the route to the ideal is not a glamorous one. Sai Baba asks us to see our attitudes of criticizing and judging others, of anger and resentment, and to shed them completely if we are to give more than lip service to love. He wants us to

travel the inner road, to rely on that love which resides deep inside our heart of hearts. To rely on seeing Sai Baba in His physical form as He pours out His love in blissful, abundant joy will not bring us to the final goal. It is easy to receive Sai Baba's bliss today, only to forget it tomorrow in our human world with its tragedies and victories, its losses and its gains, its acceptances and its rejections. To place yourself in the fire of the *ashram* at Prasanthi Nilayam is to mingle with thousands of people under rather difficult circumstances. To take up the task of endurance, determination, desire for oneness with God, and for the realization of Divinity within, is to take a step closer to becoming a living flame of love, peace, and brotherhood.

Prayer for peace: *Lokaa Samastaah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy.).

--Joan Englander
Ojai, California

It is because of your deep devotion and faith that you have come all the way here [to Prasanthi Nilayam]. If there were no such devotion or faith, you would never come. Having come, you must see that you pursue your spiritual effort. Merely staying here is of no use. You must continually ask, "At what stage am I? How am I improving, changing?" Sai is interested only in quality, not quantity. To what extent have your old habits changed? If there is no transformation, then there is no meaning to your having come.

--Sathya Sai Baba

From a Discourse given February 17, 1989

DON'T TRY, DO! AND DO HEART-TO-HEART

The Ceiling on Desires program at our Center was quite unsuccessful until recently. The president tried to be obedient to Baba's request and Council instructions, but the members showed no interest. Efforts to share experiences resulted in a rehearsal of failures. One member summed it up this way, "When I think of trying to put a ceiling on my desires, I feel as if I am in a very small room. The ceiling is getting lower and lower, the walls are closing in, and I am about to be suffocated or crushed to death."

Our service program was somewhat more effective. It involved visits to a convalescent hospital. When Baba began emphasizing service "heart-to-heart," opportunities began to present themselves to serve individuals with immediate needs. The first breakthrough came when the Sathya Sai Baba Society referred an inquiry to us from a city about 45 miles from our Center. We mailed literature and several months passed. Then one day the young man who had inquired called the Sathya Sai Baba Center for further information. The president made an appointment to go visit him and his mother. She found two people who were meeting disabling physical challenges with cheerful hearts and love for Baba. It became evident that they

were subordinating their self-serving desires to other-serving desires. Even though walking was painful and difficult, they had made a trip to a market to obtain wholesome refreshment for their guest. The one chair in the home was for the guest. They sat on the floor. It came out that they slept, and took their meals on the floor also, since a series of incidents had recently deprived them of their furniture. They said that they found sleeping on the floor to be healthful and that they were grateful to be released from their attachment to things. They were emphatic that they had no desire for any more furniture.

The three friends spent several hours in joyful *satsang*, discussing Baba's teachings and His love. The couple had only one book about Baba, which had been read and reread until the picture on the cover had been completely worn away and the pages had to be held together by a rubber band. The Center president presented them with several new books, which were received with great appreciation and held in deepest reverence. The only request made was for assistance in subscribing to *Sanathana Sarathi*. They had no transportation and, like many of us, found the subscription procedure a little baffling.

When this call came, the travel time plus visit had been allotted three hours in a day filled with activities. However, as the visit presented greater opportunities to serve than had been expected, it became very easy to save time by reestablishing priorities. Three additional hours were found by limiting desires that had seemed very important, and spending the time in activity that was *genuinely* important.

This visit, cited as an example of Baba's Love, enabling His people to transcend physical and financial difficulties, became an inspiration to many. One devotee came forward with a donation of money. Another placed the subscription to *Sanathana Sarathi* and the *Sathya Sai Newsletter*. A couple provided two comfortable chairs and delivered them on Mother's Day, making them such a loving gift that they were accepted. In each case, personal desires had to be surrendered in order to serve, but since no one felt anything but joy in doing, that aspect was almost overlooked.

We discovered that the mother and son were utilizing their very limited energy and financial resources in order to regularly visit another student of Sai's teachings who has outlived her family and is now institutionalized and bedridden.

With this inspiration to guide us, we prepared for our poor feeding with enthusiasm. One Center member con-

tacted the local HELP Organization and was given the names of families who would greatly benefit from a good, hot, nourishing meal. The situation in our locality does not seem to lend itself to a feeding in a central location, so we decided on a Meals-on-Wheels type of delivery.

At 6:00 AM, May 6, preparation began in the kitchen of the Center. A member, who had to take time off from his work to do so, chopped cabbages and grated carrots to make coleslaw. Finally finishing this, he volunteered to also grate cheese for the casserole. While grating the pounds of cheese required, he suddenly looked up with a blissful Sai smile and asked the other workers, "Isn't this fun?"

One member ground wheat and baked a loaf of bread for each family. Another prepared a vegetable. Another bought fruit and delivered it to the Center. A Center friend who had just returned home following a stay in the hospital and was receiving Meals-on-Wheels for herself and her husband, insisted on contributing the money to buy containers for packaging the food.

When the meals were delivered by a member and her husband, they were gratefully received. And those of us who participated received blessings which were unmatched by anything we had experienced in previous such projects.

One mother of three, to whom a meal had been delivered, called us to see if we might be able to help her keep her children in school the remaining five weeks of this term. She was caught in the battered wife syndrome and knew she must move out of the area as soon as the school term ended. We checked with various experienced people and agencies to be sure that our action would be the appropriate one. The story was related to the Center members as merely part of the report on the poor feeding project. Although no donations were requested, the response was immediate. Everyone in the room reached for purse or wallet and, despite the fact that many are living on small retirement incomes, they set aside their own desires in order to provide for one needier than themselves. The following day, when we had completed our analysis of the situation and found that sixty-one dollars was the minimum immediate need, we opened the box in which the members had placed their contributions the night before and found exactly sixty-one dollars.

One more incident illustrates the high correlation between ceiling on desires and service. A friend of the

Center took a broken chair home with him to mend. Even though he had just moved into a new home, had a long list of projects he wanted to do for himself, and was trying to get ready to leave on a trip, he put repairing the chair at the top of his list. He returned it looking nearly new and very sturdy. It is available to fill our next need for furniture.

Baba's words now have new meaning for us. He has said so often: "Don't try; do!" We tried to put a ceiling on our desires, but couldn't seem to find a way to do it. Depriving ourselves of the desired thing seemed to leave a vacuum which just pulled us deeper into self-serving behavior. Now we find that when we "do" for others we don't have to try to deny or limit our own desires. It just happens effortlessly. The day we cooked for the poor, we didn't even consider making lunch for ourselves. All of the food, energy, and time was needed to serve others. Had our plan been to just go without lunch, we might have felt deprived. Baba, in His great wisdom, has given us the two programs together [Ceiling on Desires and Selfless Service] because together, they work!

--Joy Thomas
Cherry Valley, California

Compassion must express itself in action to relieve suffering. . . . True compassion should emanate from the heart. . . . Everything that is done to help the poor and suffering should be based on feelings coming from the heart and appealing to the hearts of those who are helped.

--Sathya Sai Baba
Sanathana Sarathi, July 1984

WITH A GROUP OR ALONE?

With a group or by oneself? Devotees often ask if it is better to go alone on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam, or if the odds of having an interview are improved if one is with a group. When I am there I do see groups invited for interview. Usually the group is identified by the wearing of similar garments such as scarves of the same color. But one also sees individuals selected to join an interview group. One difference does seem to be that more people are included in a group interview, and fewer, when Swami selects individuals. For whatever it's worth, and however erroneous it may be, I do have the impression that an individual's chance for an interview is not reduced if he or she is a member of a group.

I might end this item by saying that interviews are as extraordinary, as shattering to the mind, and as invigorating to the heart as ever. But it should be understood that an interview is not essential for a big lift in one's spiritual life. The *darshan* of the Divine--the direct seeing with one's own eyes of the Divine personified, of the person of Sai, gives a new and profound impetus to one's inner spiritual unfoldment. Years ago, Swami Himself told me this.

-Jack Hislop, Ed.D.

Retired President, Sathya Sai Baba Council of USA

THE INNER JOURNEY

Man studies the stars in search for an understanding of the origin of the universe. Even today, with all the modern equipment to assist him, he remains mystified. The more he learns, the less he understands, as all he finds is an ever-increasing expansion of the existing mystery. Man cannot understand the universe, nor can he understand God. God and the universe are one.

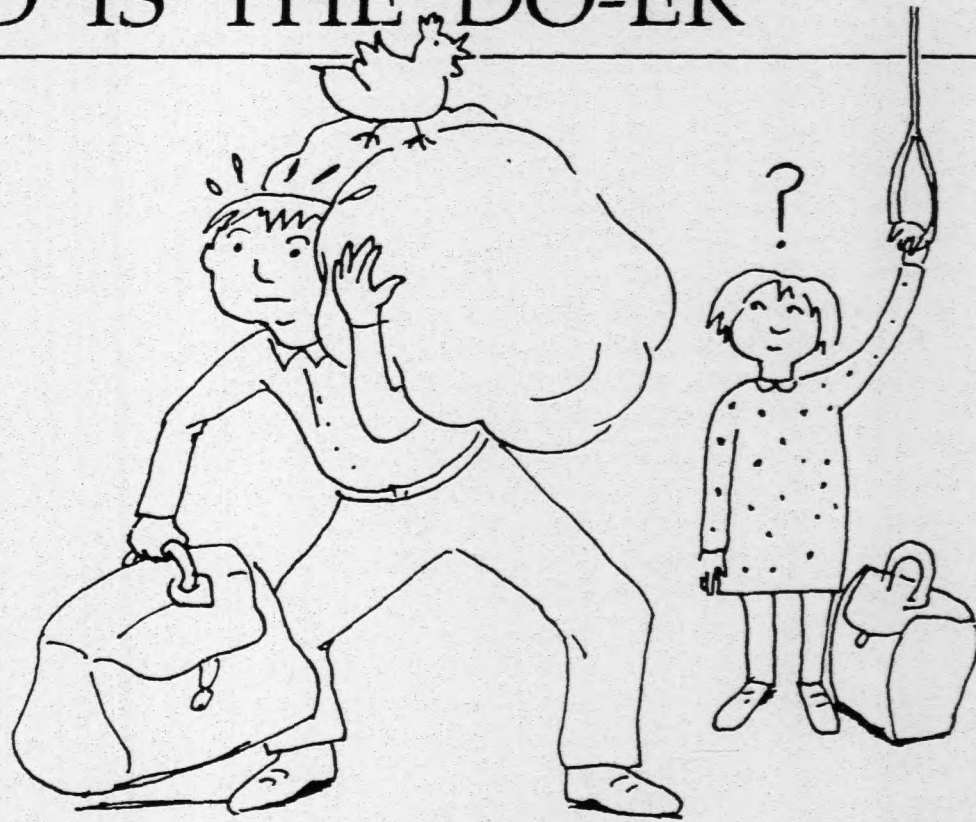
Man should search within, for then he will learn something worthwhile from a study of himself. Even that is an unending journey into the heart of the soul, a journey which will finally lead to God. The end of that journey is a new beginning along the spiritual path, a journey into the known instead of the unknown. That journey should start now, in quiet contemplation of the Truth, "I and my Father are One."

--Lucas Ralli

London, United Kingdom

CHILDREN'S CORNER

GOD IS THE DO-ER

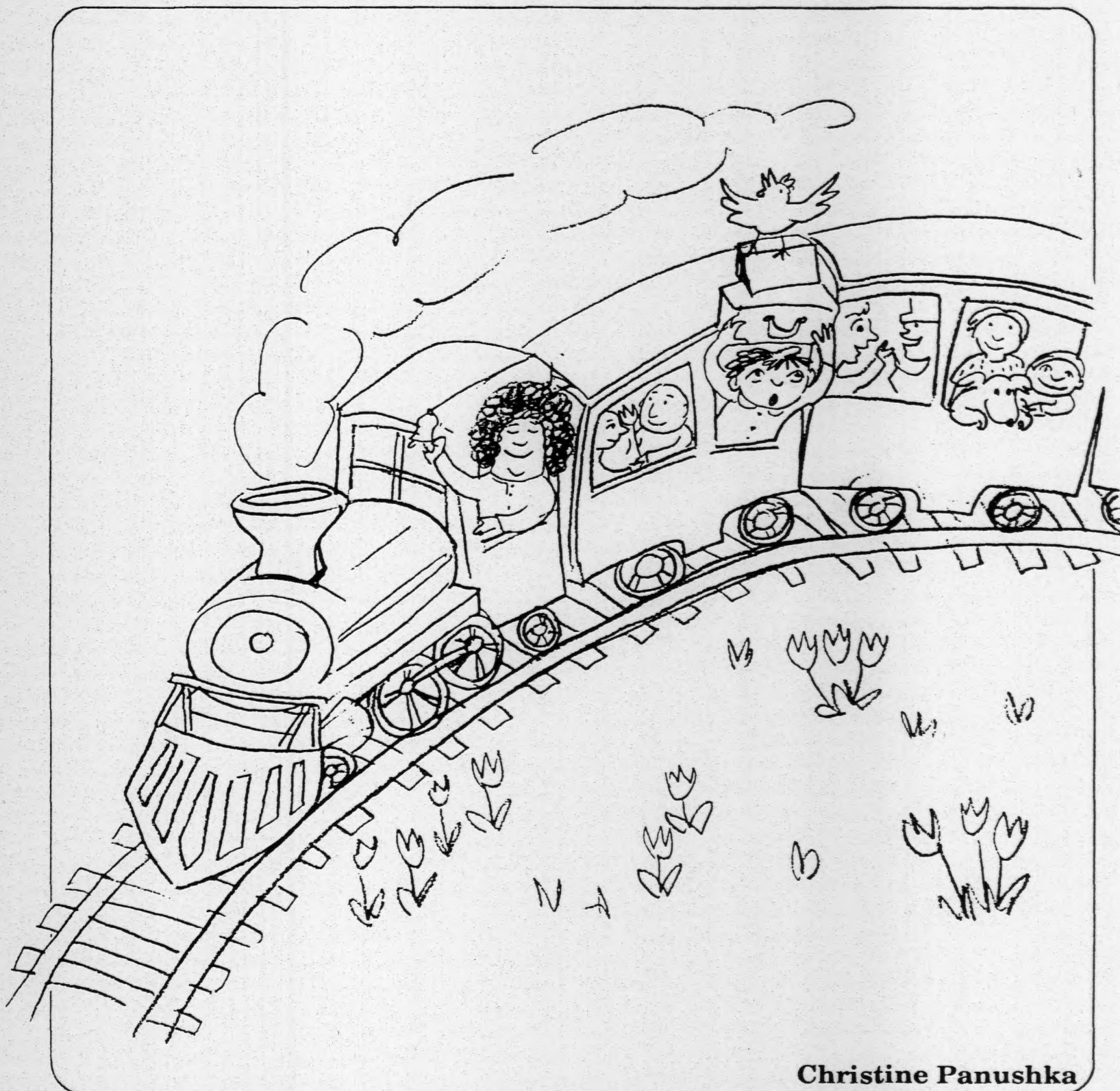


A poor, simple villager made his first journey by train. He purchased a ticket and entered a compartment. He found it already occupied by a few passengers who had put their boxes, bundles, and odd items of luggage on the racks, or under the benches on which they sat. They were unconcerned with the extra effort that the engine would have to make to drag along these boxes and bundles. "How cruel of them," thought the villager. "The engine has to pull all of their weight, and now they are imposing this additional burden on the train." He, for one, was not going to inflict this extra trouble on the poor train, so he kept his box on his shoulder and his bundle on his head. He believed that he alone was carrying his box and bundle, not the engine.

Most people behave in the same silly fashion, ignoring the fact that God is taking care of all of them, including their strengths and weaknesses. His love and care can be compared to the train that carries them and their luggage to the destination.

--Sathya Sai Baba

Excerpted from *Sathya Sai Speaks*, volume 9



Christine Panushka

Less luggage gives more comfort and makes travel a pleasure. Reduce your desires and this journey to Sai will be a real joy for you.

--Sathya Sai Baba
From a Discourse, August 5, 1988

Who Are You?

Mankind should endeavor to know *That* (Supreme Reality) by which everything else is known. For instance, if the nature of clay is known, then all objects made from clay can be known and understood. Clay is in a mud pot, but the mud pot is not in the clay. The pot is an artificial product. Likewise, what is *perceived* (*drisya*) is in the *Perceiver* (*Drashta*), but the *Perceiver* is not in what is *perceived*.

Recognize the fact that *you* are the *Seer* (*Drashta*). This *Seer* is known by many names. In the waking state, He is the cognizer in all beings, and hence is called *Virata Swaroopa* (the Cosmic Being). Because He is engaged in a variety of activities, He is also called *Vyavahaarika*. Because of attachment to every object in the world, He is called *Vishwudu*. In the dream state, the *I* is also known by different names. He is known as the creator of dreams, and because only the mind functions in this state, He is known as *Pra-tyagaatma*. As He is seeking to attain a higher state, He is also known as *Chitta Ekaagratah*, the one-pointed mind. In the deep sleep state, the cause of potency of the Inner Motivator, the *I*, is likely to comprehend everything and therefore is called *Taijasah* or *Prajna*. Although the universe is filled with innumerable objects with different forms and names, the one thing that is present in all of them is the *I*. The *I* principle is omnipresent.

Atma is the primary sound that emanates from everyone equally. When you call them by name, the response is *I*. This expression emanating from everyone equally is the *Atma*. You cannot find any human being or animal without the *I* consciousness. The expression *I* is used by a *yogi* (a holy person) or a *bhogi* (a pleasure loving person), by a beggar or a millionaire.

Everyone has to understand the inner significance of the *I* [or *my*]. One uses the expressions: "This is my body." "This is my house." and so on. But who is this *my*? Who are you? Without knowing who you are, how have these relationships originated? When you say, "My body," the body must be different from you. So it follows that you are not the body. The body is an object of *perception*. The senses, the mind, the intelligence, and the world are all the *seen* (*drisya*). The *I* is the *Seer*. This is the truth and the essence of *Vedanta*.

What is *Vedanta*? It is not mouthing some abracadabra, using abstruse words without knowing their meaning. It is awareness which consists of recognizing one's true Self. Failure to recognize one's Self is ignorance. Awareness is *Brahman*. Viewing the world as apart from *Brahman* is ignorance. To be aware in all the states of consciousness is true awareness. *Vedanta* has declared that constant awareness in all states of consciousness is realization of the Self.

Desires

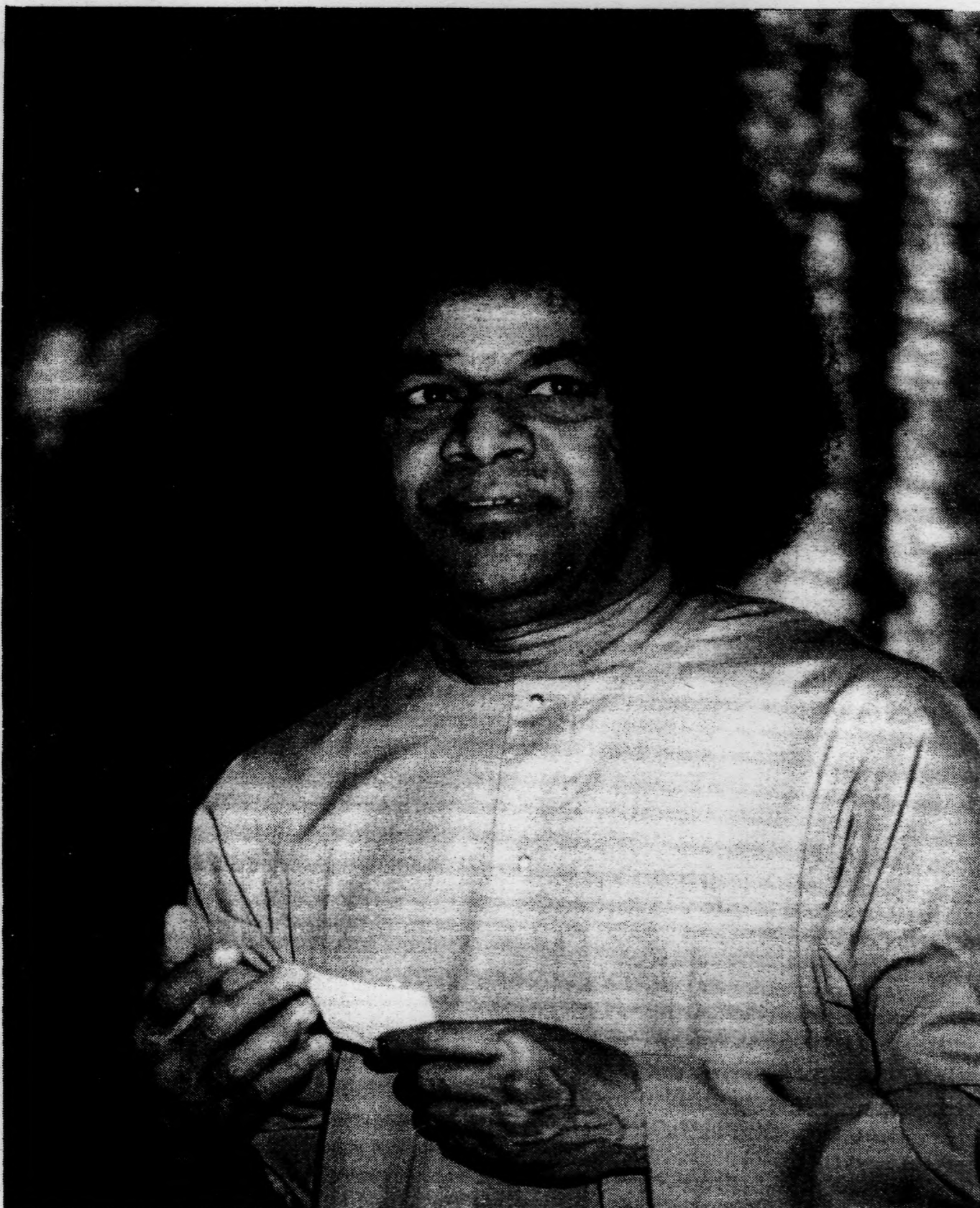
In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna called upon Arjuna to renounce all *dharma* and seek refuge in Him alone. What is meant by *dharma*? In this context, *dharma* refers to the specific inherent quality of each object. Heat, for instance, is the *dharma* of fire in a burning charcoal. Without heat, it is merely charcoal. Sweetness is the *dharma*, or natural quality of sugar. Without sweetness, it ceases to be sugar; it becomes sand. Likewise, there is a *dharma* or natural tendency for mankind. What is it? Desire for things! It is natural for people to multiply their desires. Giving up all desires is called *vairagya* (detachment or renunciation). Less luggage gives more comfort and makes travel a pleasure; desires are our biggest luggage. People everywhere have lost their mental bearing because of the limitless growth of desires. The result is that they behave as if intoxicated. Desires have to be kept under control. Animals are content to satisfy their hunger, but man's appetite for eating and enjoying is insatiable. Animals and birds do not indulge in exploitation or hoarding, while mankind revels in them. The wisdom which says, "*I am the Atma*," should blossom in every human being. It is only when this wisdom dawns that one can have direct experience of the Divine. Therefore, everyone should try to manifest the Divinity within.

Regarding desires, it should be noted that besides being excessive, man is

also prone to cherish wrong desires. People today tend to forget their own parents to whom they owe everything in life. They should remember that their blood, food, head, and prosperity are gifts from the parents. Having this knowledge, how can they forget their parents or give them pain? The individual who forgets his obligation to the parents is a veritable demon. If people do not have this elementary human quality of gratitude to parents, how can they remember God? This is the mark of the *Kali Yuga* (these present times).

In the waking state, the *I* consciousness is present in its fullest extent. In the dream state, it is present only 50 percent. In the deep sleep state, it is present in its complete, subtle form. People should not allow themselves to be carried away by the temporary roles they play in life like the actor playing Hiranyakasipu on the stage. Wealth, youth, pride, and retinue are all temporary and can be lost at any moment. People must realize their true Self. Egoism, pride, ignorance, ostentatiousness, slander, and other bad qualities are the causes of misery for mankind.

Embodiments of Divine *Atma*, recognize this essential truth: Give up your selfishness and self-centeredness. How long can you be immersed in selfish concerns, forgetting other essential things? All things have to be given up sooner or later, including the world. The word *jagat* (the world) it-



**On the occasion of His Sixty-Sixth Birthday,
devotees from the United States of America will pay homage to
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

self means that which comes, *ja*, and goes, *gat*. To regard these ephemeral things as permanent is a mark of ignorance. You are Truth. The role taken up by you is not true. All the acting you do and all your experiences are not true. They are illusory. It is only when one can get rid of the illusion that one can experience the Divine.

Where Is The Guru?

Embodiments of Divine Love, what is the inner significance of this *Gurupurnima* Day? There is no guru other than the Divine. Everything is God. But as long as you consider yourself a mere human being, you may regard yourself as a disciple. When you learn this inner secret, that you are the embodiment of the *Atma*, you become your own guru. In going after gurus and teachers, people are deluding themselves and forgetting *Brahman*. Seek refuge in yourself. Recognize your own reality. That is the right path, and that is the way to revere the guru.

You take *upadesh* (a sacred mantra) from the guru and believe that by chanting this you will attain Divinity. What is the meaning of the word *upadesh*? It means that which takes you back to the place from where you came. It is not just repeating a mantra like: *Om Nama Shivaya* or *Om Namo Narayana*. These are nothing but sounds.

You are the embodiment of eight types of wealth. These are also the

attributes of *Brahman*: 1 God in the form of all-pervading sound (*Sabdha Brahmamayi*), 2 the One who is present in all movable and immovable objects (*Characharamayi*), 3 the illumined One, the embodiment of light (*Jyothirmayi*), 4 the embodiment of speech or eloquence (*Vanjmayi*), 5 the ever blissful One (*Nityaanandamayi*), 6 the One who is ever auspicious and prosperous (*Srimayi*), 7 the Supreme, Teacher of teachers, Superior to the best (*Paraathparamayi*), 8 having super natural powers and wisdom (*Mayamayi*). When you are the embodiment of these eight powers, why do you take shelter in others? Recognizing this, the *Vedas* have declared, "Self-inquiry is the way to liberation." But people today, however educated or scholarly they may be, want to know all about the world, but do not inquire about themselves. What is the use of knowing everything without knowing the Self? Even the stone-hearted Winston Churchill said that scientists try to know everything, but they do not try to know themselves. Then what is the use of science? It is only for eking out one's livelihood.

The child, Prahlada, questioned his father, Hiranyakasipu, [Baba sang the words spoken by Prahlada]: "Father, you claim to have conquered all the three worlds and acquired mastery over the elements, but what is all your power worth when you have not mastered your mind and senses? Father, in name only you are a hero, but in ac-

tual practice you are a zero." This applies equally to the scientists and scholars of today. They have mastered many subjects, but they have not learned the real science of living. They are caught up in the pursuit of mundane objects. A truly great person is the one who has mastery over the senses and the mind. A goodhearted person is more likely to be helpful to mankind than a hundred intelligent scholars. A scholar without purity of heart is a mean and lowly person.

Going Abroad

Many of our young people [in India] are going abroad. What for? To beg [for employment]. Why not do the begging here in their own country? What do they learn by going abroad? They return filled with bad qualities such as: arrogance, egoism, bad thoughts, and bad habits. This is not the right thing at all. Why should thousands of rupees be spent for this purpose? It is better to live here as a person of character than to go abroad and acquire undesirable qualities. What is the use of barrels of donkey's milk when even a teaspoon of cow's milk is nourishing and useful. Why make your parents spend large sums of money only to foul your brain? Such persons who bring disgrace to their parents are better dead than alive. Such conduct is totally unworthy of those who call themselves *Bharatiyas* (citizens of India). If you describe yourself as a *Bharatiya* you must acquire *bhagya* (all that is

good) for the country. You must acquire the wealth of wisdom. All that you want to learn can be gotten in *Bharat*. There is nothing that cannot be had here. All these sacred teachings have spread from *Bharat* to the rest of the world. *Bharat* has been the provider for the rest of the world.

What is bought from India at a low price is sent back in an attractive package at a very high price from America. We are falling prey to external attractions by buying an article worth one rupee and spending ten rupees for an attractive package. So you spend more money for the package than for the contents. Thus you become artificial by falling prey to external attractions. Art is outside and heart is inside; but today's man keeps his heart outside. This kind of living is superficial. Keep the heart inside and live properly.

Realize the greatness of *Bharat*. There is no country which is greater. Remember, that is why all the *Avatars* have incarnated in this sacred land. We are unable to appreciate the greatness of our country. We ought to be proud of our sacred motherland and lead a life in tune with its greatness. But alas, it is not so! Indeed, foreigners are coming to *Bharat* to gather all the fortune in our land, while we pick up all the impurities left behind. How unbecoming this is of those who call themselves *Bharatiyas*! *Bharatiyas* should regard themselves as the embodiment of the *Atma*. People in all

lands are equally embodiments of the *Atma*, but most of them are not able to realize this truth. *Bharatiyas* are able to recognize this truth because of the heritage of their great scriptures and the *Vedas*.

Recognize Truth

Embodiments of Divine Love, strive to recognize the Truth. Inquire into the *Vedic* declaration that, "You are the *Atma*." Embark on this Self-inquiry. Put into practice what you have learned. Only then will you understand your true nature.

The term *I*, is not just a simple word; it has countless meanings. It does not refer to the transient body. The *I* is the external witness present in all beings. All worldly knowledge and wealth relates to the senses which are transient, hence such knowledge has no permanent value. Real Truth emanates from the heart. What is received from the external returns to the external. Man is not a product of the external world. You are all Divine. Develop this conviction.

Man means one who has faith. When man lives a life true to his faith, it develops and gets confirmed. It is because man does not live true to his beliefs that faith is on the decline. So man has to practice what he believes. But instead of concentrating on the Truth, man is focussing on temporary, worldly things. Waves of different

names and forms rise from the ocean, play for a while, and merge back into the same ocean. Similarly, mankind is also derived from the Divine, is sustained by the Divine, and has to merge in the Divine. That is the goal of human life. A bubble is born in water, lives in water and merges in water. Man is the water bubble and God is the water. Realize this and know that *I* is the basis of everything. If you know the *I*, you know everything. What you are trying to search for outside is really your Self.

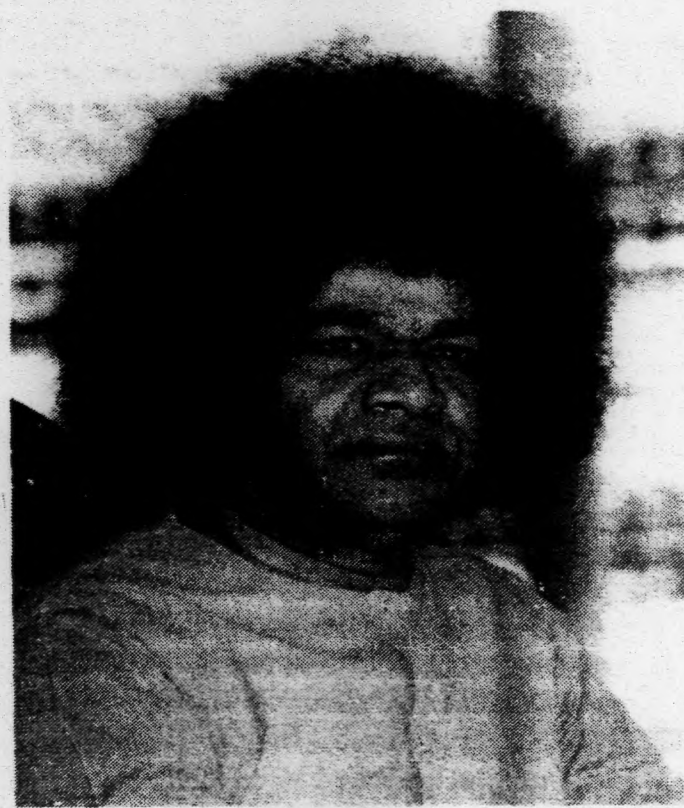
A man is searching for something in a room; he sees many things, but he cannot see himself as the *Seer*. It is real ignorance that he is not searching for his true Self, but instead is searching for worldly things. If you know your real Self then you know everything else. Thyagaraja prayed, "Oh Lord! Give me strength to know, *That* by which everything else is known." Man thinks he is under the influence of the planets. Thyagaraja added, "If one has the grace of God, he has control over all things, even the planets." So he yearned for God's grace. If you have earned God's grace, you have earned everything, and then you will never be mean, lowly, weak, or poor.

Conclusion

Man is not a petty being, a weakling, or destitute. He is the most powerful being on earth. Take up spiritual prac-

tice on the strength of this belief. [Baba sang a song composed by a saint, in which the message goes]: "How can I consider myself poor when the Lord is within me? You, oh Lord, are my treasure, my all. You are my brother, teacher, wealth. You are me, and I am You. There is no difference whatsoever. As long as I have You, I am not poor." *Bharat* has had innumerable great saints who had firm faith in God. Unfortunately, their teachings have been forgotten.

Embodiments of Divine Love, forget the past, develop sacred thoughts, and lead noble lives. Think that you are a container filled with sacred nectar, and that a hole made anywhere in this container can give only nectar. Give up external things. Esteem yourselves as children of immortality. Make your thoughts, words, and deeds Divine; then you become Divine. Don't become a slave to transitory, sensual pleasures. [Baba sang a ballad in which He urged devotees to learn the truth about their Divine essence after coming to Sai.]: Don't be proud of your body. There is no beauty in the body; it is a clay doll. Attain peace by thinking of the glory, beauty, and splendor of *Atma*. Leave behind the focus on the despicable body. Be victorious. Don't be deluded by the senses, they are thieves who rob you of everything. This Sai is not a person of empty words. This Lord Sai who is short and clad in an orange robe, goes about bestowing prosperity, and takes devotees across the



Make thoughts, words, & deeds Divine

ocean of *samsara* (the ocean of life). Earlier Sai lived in Shirdi and now lives in Parthi. Open your eyes and see this Lord Sai. How sacred and Divine is this life. He shines in the eyes of those who think of Him.

Treat the body as an instrument for realizing the Divine by engaging yourselves in sacred activities. Then humanity will blossom into Divinity. Contemplation on the Divine is the only way to achieve this. Continuous contemplation leads to God-Realization, and then you become God, Himself. [Baba concluded His discourse with a devotional song.]

--Sathya Sai Baba

Divine Discourse on *Gurupurnima* Day
July 26, 1991

DATES TO REMEMBER:

September through December 1991

- ***Sunday, September 1, Sri Krishna Jayanti** gives recognition of the birth of the *Avatar* Krishna.
- ***Thursday, September 12, Ganesha Chaturthi** honors Lord Ganesha who is the remover of all obstacles and ignorance.
- Sunday, September 22, Blood Donation Day** to give blood at your local hospital, Red Cross, or blood bank.
- ***Dasara or Vijaya Dasami** which was to have been celebrated on October 18, will not be observed at Prasanthi Nilayam this year.
- ***Wednesday, November 6, Deepavali or Diwali**, the Festival of Lights commemorating the victory of righteousness over wicked forces.
- ***Saturday and Sunday, November 9-10, Akhanda Bhajan** a continuous 24 hours of devotional singing dedicated to world peace and celebrated in Sai Centers around the world, beginning 6:00 PM, Saturday and ending at 6:00 PM on Sunday.
- Saturday, November 23, the 66th Birthday** of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- Monday, December 2, Hannukah** the beginning of the Jewish holy days, proclaiming victory over the oppressor.
- Wednesday, December 25, Christmas** the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

--Central Office of Sri Sathya Sai Organizations
Prasanthi Nilayam, India

*Please note that dates or other information has changed from that which was listed in the Winter 1990-1991 issue of the **Sathya Sai Newsletter**.

RETREAT IN ATLANTA, GA

There is to be a Sathya Sai Baba Retreat/Conference November 29 through December 1, 1991 (Friday-Sunday, following Thanksgiving weekend). Estimated cost is \$75.00 per person. The theme: *Love All, Serve All*. Special programs are offered for children and young adults. The location: Simpson Woods Conference and Retreat Center in north Atlanta, Georgia. For information and reservations: Diane Justice, 273 Eureka Dr., Atlanta, GA, 30305, or call: 1(800) 875-7242.

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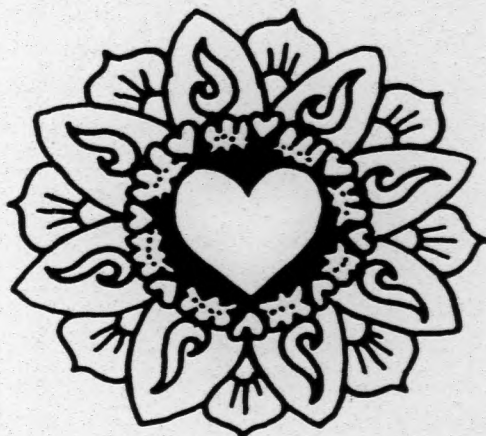
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When you have leisure time, read good devotional books. Even from these books, take what you need and discard the rest. Be careful, do not get entangled in all kinds of nets and traps.

--Sathya Sai Baba

The Greatest Adventure With Sai to Sai, First Edition, 1981

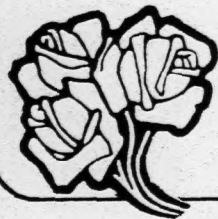
A BIRTHDAY BOUQUET

Your hands are small and brown,
but powerful enough

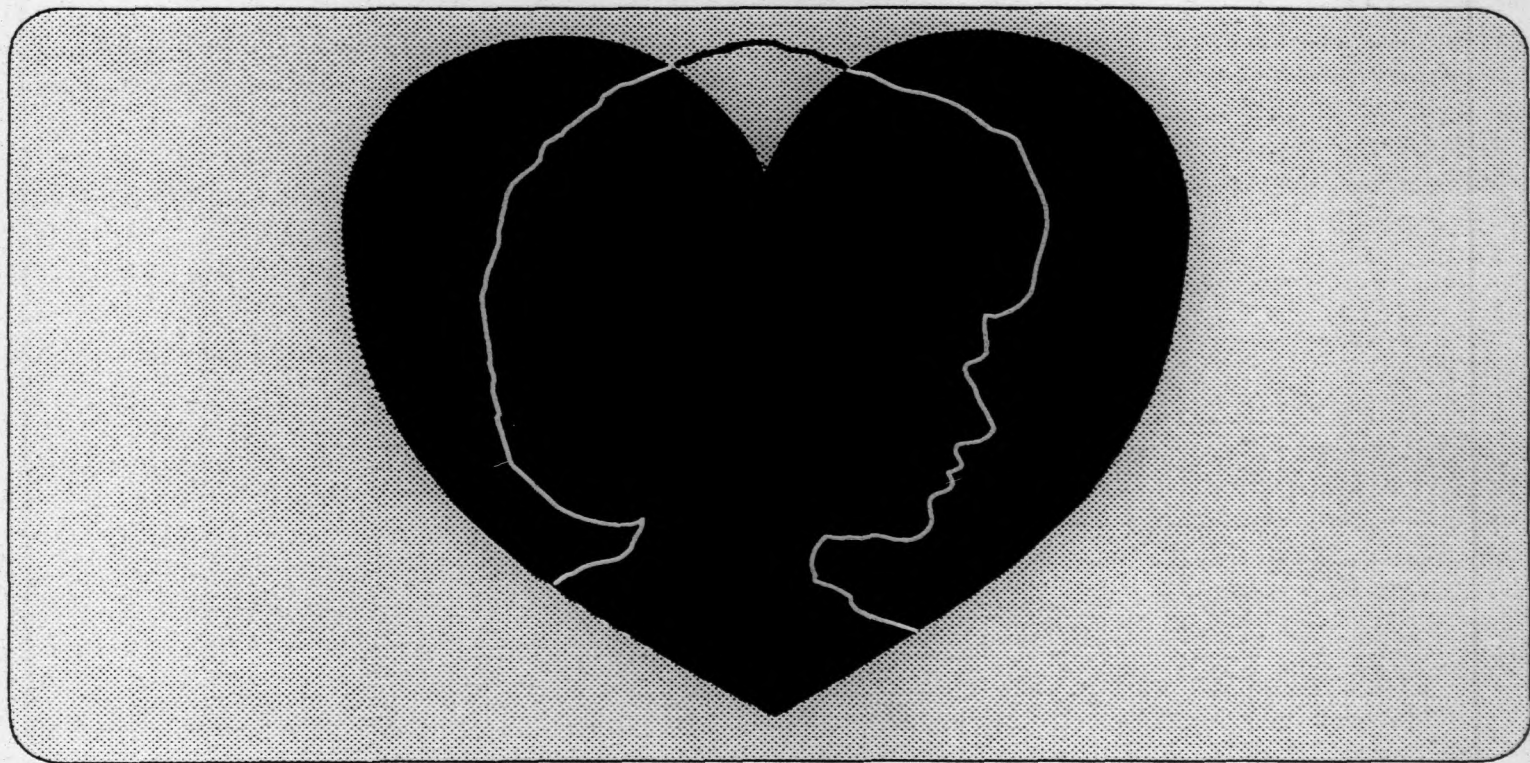
To create a garden of poems
in my mind.

If, on Your birthday,
I don't prepare a bouquet of devotion,

Then what shall I place
on the alter of my life?



--Guity Khoshdel
Tehran, Iran



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